

Decentralized Development and Planning Process in National Capital Region

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Abstract: *“Unequal spatial development may occur anywhere in this world. Wherever a dominant area extracts resources base from its periphery this kind of pattern occurs. But govt. interventions can eliminate this kind of uneven spatial development. Decentralization has been a major tool for such as activity in recent years. But a regional development approach whereby all peripheral units are taken care of, need to be developed in order to realize balanced spatial development. The present paper aims at recording the decentralized development and planning process in National Capital Region (NCR) in India. The regional dimension is suitable for redefining the meaning of sustainable social, economic and environmental systems in a way which is practical and very close to the people and to the operative public decisions. It is a theoretical paper analyzing the development and planning process in context of NCR in India. All the data sources are secondary.”*

Introduction: Development is considered as the core issue in planning corridors. Development which is a dynamic process has different meanings for different people. Some people say it means increase in income; others lay emphasis on employment, income, quality of life and so on. Still others give stress on meeting the basic needs of the life of people. It is indeed so many things for so many people. The only thing on which everyone agrees is that development is necessary. Development is defined as "a process of growth, expansion or realization of potential, bringing regional resources into full productive use."

But another important thing which is considered necessary for development is its spatial characteristic. Development is considered as 'never spatial phenomenon' Albert O. Hirschman in his 'Trickle Down and polarization theory' stated that "development is unbalanced process in itself."

Marxists also believe that a spatial variation in level of development between regions is an integral part of development process. However, as Gunnar Myrdal stated in his commutative causation theory "Nothing other than government intervention can stop this widening gap

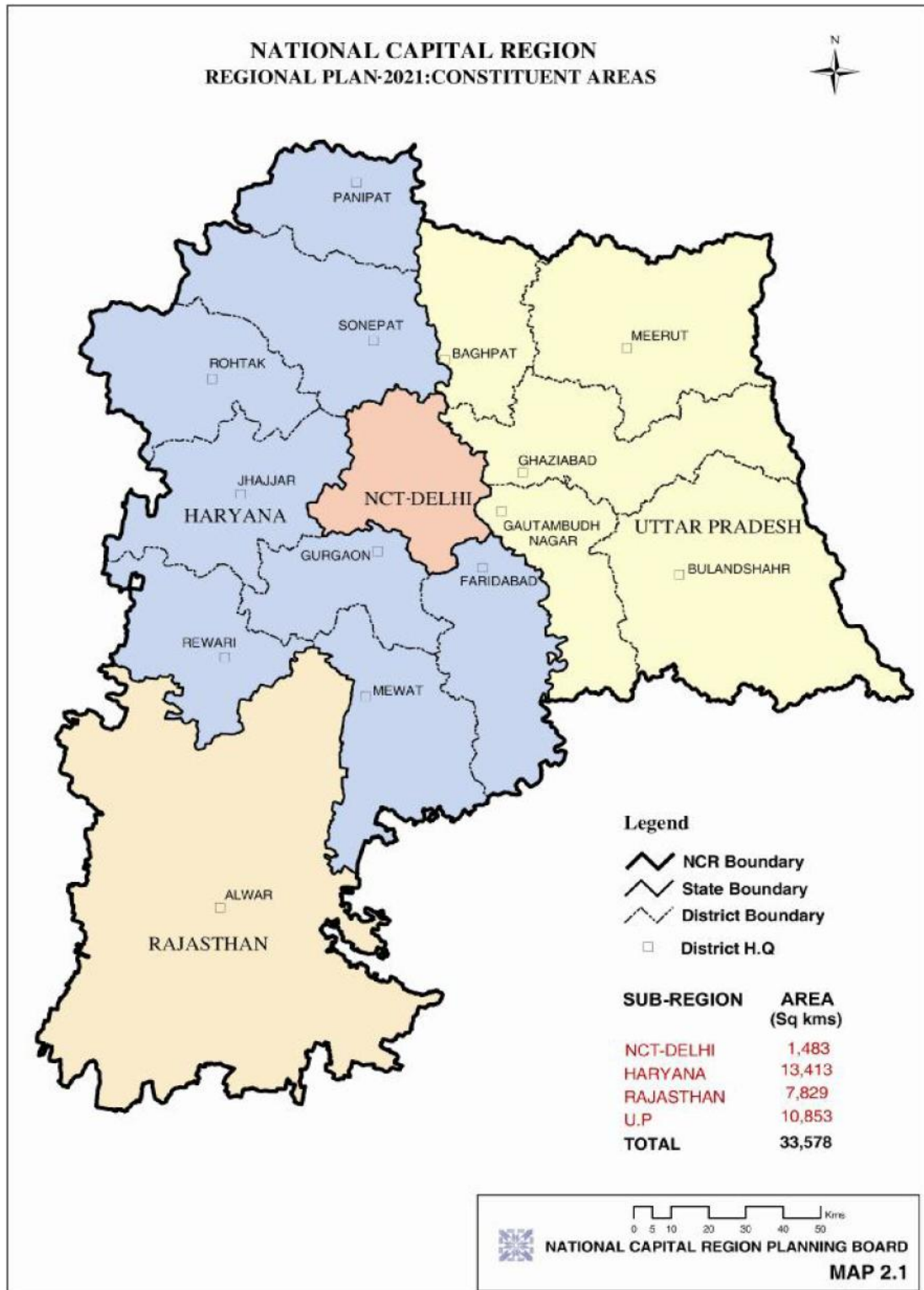
between core and periphery i.e. uneven spatial development." Thus Gunnar Myrdal's statement very well explains the genesis of National Capital Region in India.

National Capital Region (NCR): NCR is spread over an area of 33,578 sq.km. in National Capital Territory of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The Uttar Pradesh Sub region comprises five districts of Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautambuddha Nagar and Bulandshahr covering an area of 10,853 sq. km. The population of NCR as per 2001 Census, was 1.15 cr. with an average decadal rate of growth of about 29% in the last three decades.

The average decadal rate of growth of urban population, however, has been much higher at 62% in the same period. U.P. accounts for 31.2% of total N.C.R. population while NCT, Delhi contributes 37.2%, Haryana 23.5% and Rajasthan 8.1%, as per 2001 census. If we look at the decadal rate of growth in different sub regions of NCR, NCT-Delhi's share of population has increased from 31.3% in 1981 to 37.2% in 2001. While there has been marginal decline in the population shares of Haryana and Rajasthan sub-regions to 23.5% and 8.1% in 2001 from 24.8% and 8.8% respectively in 1981, the share of U.P. sub-region has declined substantially from 35.1% in 1981 to 1-2% in 2001 which shows that in-migration to Delhi from U.P. sub-region has been the maximum. If we analyse the pattern of growth of population of NCT Delhi, in 1991 40.8% of the growth was on account of net migration to Delhi out of which 48.3% was contributed by U.P., Haryana contributed 11.5%, Bihar 10.7%, Rajasthan 6% and Punjab 5.3%.

Reasons for this kind of unusual development are not difficult to find out. U.P. sub-region is the closest to the NCT Delhi and the state of employment and basic civic infrastructure, sewerage, drainage, solid waste management, water supply, electric supply and the transport and communication is the poorest and the most pathetic in this region. The economic boom and consequent employment potential generated by the setting up industries in seventies and eighties has evaporated. Most of the industries have closed down for different reasons. The unemployed population and small entrepreneurs do not have any choice but to move to Delhi. The main reasons for migration to Delhi, as per 1991 census, were 41.5% on account of family movement, 31.3% employment, 15.6% marriage and 14.1 % business. The unprecedented growth of population specially during post independence era and the consequent clustering of development leading to haphazard development been putting severe pressure on infrastructure of Delhi. Therefore, it was suggested through various planning

exercises that serious consideration should be given for a planned decentralization to outer areas and even outside the Delhi region.



Source: National Capital Region Plan – 2021, (NCR Planning Board)

NCR Planning Board Act, 1985: Thus, time and again, the need was felt to plan Delhi in the regional context under a suitable legislation which would promote development in the areas falling in the region. Finally, the parliament enacted the planning Board Act in 1985 with concurrence of the constituent states of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and Union Territory of Delhi. National Capital Region Planning Board which was constituted with mandate for preparing a Plan for the development of the National Capital Region and for coordinating & monitoring the implementation of such Plan and for evolving harmonized policies for the control of land-uses and development of infrastructure in the region so as to avoid any haphazard development thereof.

According to section 7 of NCRPB act 1985 the objective of NCRPB is: “the preparation of a plan for the development of the NCR and for co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of such plan and for evolving harmonised policies for the control of land-uses and development of infrastructure in the NCR so as to avoid any haphazard development thereof.” The objective of Regional Plan has also been identified so as to fulfil the set objectives with right direction. According to NCR Act 1985 the objective of Regional Plan has been defined in chapter 4, clause 10.2 as: “The Regional Plan shall indicate the manner in which the land in the National Capital Region shall be used, whether by carrying out development thereon or by conservation or otherwise, and such other matters as are likely to have any important influence on the development of the National Capital Region and every such Plan shall include the following elements needed to promote growth and balanced development of the National Capital Region, namely as below:

- ❖ The policy in relation to land-use and the allocation of land for different uses;
- ❖ The proposals for major urban settlement pattern;
- ❖ The proposals for providing suitable economic base for future growth;
- ❖ The proposals regarding transport & communications: railways & arterial roads in NCR;
- ❖ The proposals for the supply of drinking water and for drainage;
- ❖ Indication of the areas which require immediate development as "priority areas"; and
- ❖ Such other matters as may be included by the Board with the concurrence of the participating States and the Union territory for the proper planning of the growth and balanced development of the National Capital Region.

Master plan for Delhi: The draft Master plan for Delhi (1960) had reiterated this idea. The final Master plan for Delhi (MPD-1962), for the perspective year 1981, suggested through various planning exercises, the need for planning Delhi in its regional context. The master plan defined the composition of National capital Region and recommended the setting up of a National Capital Region Planning Board for development of the region in accordance with a Regional Plan meant of the region.

Regional Plan, 2001: In order to decongest Delhi, Regional Plan, 2001 was prepared by the NCR Planning Board in November, 1988 which visualised the important goal of "a balanced and harmoniously developed region, leading to dispersal of economic activities and immigrants to Delhi, thereby leading to a manageable Delhi." The National Capital Region Planning Board formulated a Regional Plan-2001 for NCR in 1989. This plan aimed at:

- ❖ Reducing the pressure of population on Delhi by deflecting 20 Lakh population;
- ❖ Avoid adding new pressures on to the capital;
- ❖ Remodel the pattern of settlements in NCR to enable to play their assigned role; and
- ❖ Attaining a balanced and harmonized development of NCR, in an Inter-State region consisting of NCT- Delhi, 6 districts of Haryana (now 8), 3 districts of U.P. (now 5) and part of Alwar district of Rajasthan, covering total area of 30,242 sq.kms.

But NCR Regional Plan-2001 has failed to achieve the set goals and an un-harmonised and unbalanced pattern of development has occurred in National Capital Region. Thus there is further a need to prepare a better regional plan which can be implemented to bring about a harmonized and balanced pattern of development. That is why NCR Planning Board has prepared a Regional Plan for 2021 in order to provide guidelines for development initiatives in National Capital Region.

Regional Plan-2021: The Region (as in the RP-2021 for NCR notified in 2005) consists of eight districts of Haryana, five districts of UP and one district of Rajasthan apart from NCT-Delhi. Regional Plan - 2021 aims "to promote growth and balanced development of the National Capital Region" as per Section 10, Sub-section (2) of the Act, 1985. This aim is sought to be achieved through:

- ❖ Providing suitable economic base for future growth by identification and development of regional settlements capable of absorbing the economic development impulse of NCT-Delhi.
- ❖ To provide efficient and economic rail and road based transportation networks (including mass transport systems) well integrated with the land use patterns, to support balanced regional development in such identified settlements.
- ❖ To minimize the adverse environmental impact that may occur in the process of development of the National Capital Region.
- ❖ To develop selected urban settlements with urban infrastructural facilities such as transport, power, communication, drinking water, sewerage, drainage etc. comparable with NCT-Delhi.
- ❖ To provide a rational land use pattern in order to protect and preserve good agricultural land and utilise unproductive land for urban uses.
- ❖ To promote sustainable development in the region to improve quality of life.
- ❖ To improve the efficiency of existing methods of resource mobilisation and adopt innovative methods of resource mobilisation and facilitate, attract and guide private investment in desired direction.

Conclusion: Delhi, the capital city of India, and its adjoining areas, have experienced dramatic growth in recent years. In order to mitigate the adverse impact of growth, NCR was delineated for co-ordinating growth related activities within the region. Urbanisation trends, as observed in the hierarchical restructuring of population would have implications for regional development policies. Regional development planning process aims to reduce socioeconomic inequalities by stimulating development and can apply to a subset or all of a country's regions. The process redistribute public finance spatially; can be decentralized tools for area regeneration and geographically based instruments for growth; and can operate in globalized markets. It consists of priority objectives, a multi-governance implementation system, a dedicated budget and a set of preferences regarding project content. Regional development is a volatile field – issues frequently arise, like quality of governance; link between policy interventions and free market ideologies; its classification as a macro-economic policy instrument; definition of a region; how to measure progress; evaluation; and transferability of decentralized planning know how.

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