Competing Dreams:
Delhi and its Migrants

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This brief note, part of the larger research work, gives an introduction to the various proposed sections and topics which further explorations and enquiry. Sources and quotes have not been attributed here due to paucity of time and nature of this note but will be included in the final paper.

Delhi. A World Class City ! Cities have dreams too. It is a century of existence for the New Delhi, the capital city built by British. The desire to be a world class city continues. The dream acquired enormous proportions just before the Asiad Games in 1982 and then the Common Wealth Games in 2010. The Master Plan redrafted every 20 years takes in account the aspirations to be a world class city. However, it doesn't take in account the unintended growth of the city fulled by faulty planning and anti poor bias of the planners. In addition, the city being the capital of India, also continues to draw citizens from all over and as per a recent report of Indian Institute of Human Settlements, Delhi receives the highest number of migrants compared to any other city. People migrate for fulfilling their dreams of a better future, lured by the opportunities city offers for employment and social mobility. Those with resources and skills find it easy but the largely working class population often suffers and struggles for a dignified place of dwelling and livelihood. They create and occupy spaces in the cracks of the planned urban development and contribute to growing population living in slums and unauthorised colonies. These slums and unauthorised colonies, keep making way for beautification and infrastructure development in the city, every now and then.

This paper is an attempt at analysing the competing dreams of Delhi becoming a world class city and dreams of its 'unwanted' residents – a dignified place to live. The dream of world class city has got a new euphemism now, building 'smart' cities. The paper argues that inherent within the logic of planning and urban governance, as it exists today, is the growth of unauthorised colonies and slums in the city. It also argues that the struggle for a place to live in the city is a class struggle, a struggle of basic survival, since the executive, judiciary and various institutions all favour the privileged citizens and often work against the housing rights of the underprivileged, who contribute immensely to the development of the city.

Towards a World Class City

The Master Plan of Delhi 2021 outlines its vision as :

> **Vision-2021 is to make Delhi a global metropolis and a world-class city**, where all the people would be engaged in productive work with a better quality of life, living in a sustainable environment. This will, amongst other things, necessitate planning and action to meet the challenge of population growth and in-migration into Delhi; provision of adequate housing, particularly for the weaker sections of the society; addressing the problems of small enterprises, particularly in the unorganized informal sector; dealing with the issue of slums, up-gradation of old and dilapidated areas of the city; provision of adequate infrastructure services; conservation of the environment; preservation of Delhi's heritage and blending it with the new and complex modern patterns of development; and doing all this within a framework of sustainable development, public-private and community participation and a spirit of ownership and a sense of belonging among its citizens.

The process of planned development began in Delhi with the enactment of the Delhi Development Act, 1957 followed by drafting of the Master Plan of Delhi for 1981, 2001 and now 2021. After five decades of planned development in Delhi, one of the key challenges mentioned in the MPD 2021is the phenomenon of unauthorized colonies and squatter /jhuggi jhopri settlements. As on today there are 1642 unauthorised colonies which exist and await regularisation. An estimated 7 lakh families lives in these unauthorised colonies and equal number in the slums and bastis of Delhi.

Inflow of migrant population in the city and growing slum population

Delhi's population has nearly doubled in 20 years from 1991 to 2011, making it the second biggest metropolis, population wise, after Greater Mumbai. The slum population in Delhi has been on the rise from 5% in 1951 to 18% in 1991 to 27% in 1998 to 49% in 2010 as per estimates from Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) living in slums and non regularised settlements, and roughly 25% living in planned areas. All together the slums occupy under 10% of the total land in Delhi. An expert committee has estimated that the shortfall in housing in the National Capital Territory of Delhi is roughly 72% and by civil society estimates, 1,50,000 people in Delhi are homeless (living on streets), 10,000 of them women. In the decade (1994-2004) the Delhi Development Authority promised to build 16.2 lakh dwellings but built only 5, 60,000. None of these were homes that the poor could

afford. As per another estimate almost 50% of Delhi's population stays in low-income settlements and about 3.5 million people, comprising a quarter of Delhi's population stays in 60,000 slum dwellings.

There is a lack of accurate data on slum population given the various criteria followed to enumerate slums. The slums are often categorised as notified slums, recognised slums, informal settlements, unauthorised colonies, resettlement colonies etc. In addition, every city has its own slum clearance / redevelopment act and also cut off dates, which determines when the migrants came to the city and from which year they have been living at the place of their current settlement. In Delhi in 2000, government changed the cut off date from January 1990 to December 1998, likewise for Mumbai, in July 2014, the cut off date was revised from January 1, 1995 to January 1, 2000. These changes are made after long struggles by the slum dwelling or other civil society groups.

Many a times, the cut off dates have no scientific basis and are more on line with the political exigencies, like the cut off date for Mumbai has just been revised keeping in mind the impending assembly elections in October, 2014. The regular inflow of population to the city is attributed to the increased stress in rural hinterland and also due to increased urbanisation, like in Delhi since 1921 to 2011 the number of villages have come down from 357 to 112. Delhi has been struggling with the rising slum population, like other cities. As per 2001 Census 33.4% of the total migrant population of 60,14,458 came primarily for work/employment reasons, 14% came by way of marriage and 33.7% moved with their household, in search of a place to live.

To find a foothold in this growing national capital of a growing country is the aspiration of everyone coming to this city. It is this desire that is fuelling the massive growth to the city of Delhi compared to many other growing cities in India today.

Vision of a Slum Free India

This section will focus on the inherent contradictions within the urban planning which constantly leads to creation of more slums and unauthorised colonies in Delhi and being relegated to margins.

So, on one hand there is the aspiration to be a global city and its poor residents wanting to be part of this, but the government has another competing goal, to create slum free India, since slums are seen as only impediment to our cities being world class.

Sh. Manmohan Singh, former PM, in one of his Independence Day speeches said, "we had started the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission for the urban areas. We will accelerate this programme also. Today, lakhs of our citizen live in slums which lack basic amenities. We wish to make our country slum free as early as possible. In the next five years, we will provide better housing facilities to slum dwellers through a new scheme, Rajiv Awas Yojana".

This scheme is in line with the Indira Awas Yojana for the rural poor designed for the urban poor. Rajiv Awas Yojana for the slum dwellers and the urban poor envisages a 'Slum-free India' through encouraging States/UTs to tackle the problem of slums in a definitive manner. This would be achieved by a multi-prolonged approach focusing on:

- bringing existing slums within the formal system and enabling them to avail of the same level of basic amenities as the rest of the town;
- redressing the failures of the formal system that lie behind the creation of slums; and
- tackling the shortages of urban land and housing that keep shelter out of reach of the urban poor and force them to resort to extra-legal solutions in a bid to retain their sources of livelihood and employment.

However, how does one create slum free cities, if the norms of cut off date continue to bar millions from being recognised as legal slum dwellers eligible for RAY. This is the most recent scheme of the government trying to tackle the growth of slum population in the cities but then this is not alone. Delhi's problems stems from multiple agencies and authorities operating in the city and inability to fix a coordinated response to the same. Delhi's authority is divided amongst Centre and State government and five local bodies : a) New Delhi Municipal Corporation, b) Delhi Cantonment Board, c) North Delhi Municipal Corporation, b) South Delhi Municipal Corporation and c) East Delhi Municipal

Corporation. The DDA, created by an Act of Parliament is under the Union Ministry of Urban Development, responsible for urban planning and land management such as preparation of master plans and their implementation in coordination with other organizations. Delhi Police is under Union Home Ministry, Delhi Jal Board and electricity distribution managed by private discoms under National Capital Territory of Delhi, Delhi Metro is a joint venture of NCTD and Union Government, and solid waste management is under local municipal corporations.

A multiplicity of agencies and authorities often mean lack of coordination and complete mismanagement due to the design of the governance structure. While, these multiplicities of agencies pose as deterrent in providing housing and basic amenities to those living in the slums and unauthorised colonies, they never act as a deterrent to the demolitions and evictions carried out by the Delhi Development Authority in the name of implementing Master Plan and beautification of the city. So, to an extent Delhi slums which nearly occupy 6-10% of the total land mass of Delhi, same as in Mumbai, are not the real reason for the problems of space and service deficit in Delhi.

The planning inadequacy and the anti poor bias inherent in the planners mindset are reflected prominently in 2021 plan, whose sole focus is to increase the market competition in land and housing, commercial value of land, make Delhi a favoured tourist destination and increase revenue. Only if, there was enough attention paid to creating affordable housing for poor and lower middle classes in the city, the planned slums would not have taken shape. A study shows that 83.7% of the land occupied by the squatter settlements are owned by DDA, 15.7% by other government agencies and then 0.6% by private individuals. So, the rise of the unauthorised colonies is a direct result of the lack of adequate and affordable housing created by DDA.

Slum Demolitions and Dispossession

Delhi has been witness to different spurts of slum demolitions and evictions, the major one being during the time of Emergency, when nearly 1,50,000 families were forcefully relocated between 1975-77. This was not only aimed at clearing the walled city but also paved the way for cleaning the city for Asian Games held in 1982. The period between 1996-2003 witnessed evictions and relocation of many industrial units out of Delhi on the basis of a PIL filed by M C Mehta, in order to improve the air quality of Delhi. If the first spate of industrial closures in 1996 had targeted 168 'hazardous' industries in the capital for relocation, this time round the figure was completely vague and could have varied from anywhere between 30,000 to 90,000 units. As per the Master Plan of Delhi in 1995, nearly

1,01,000 industrial units operated in Delhi employing nearly 9,09,000 people. In 2000 Delhi witnessed massive labour unrest following the closure of these units leading to blocked traffic and burning of government buildings and vehicles, clashes with police, tear gassing leaving scores of injured and death of three workers. These industries were moved out of Delhi and were accommodated in the neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, thus clearing the city of urban poor.

Early 2000 also saw large scale evictions along side the Yamuna bank in the name of beautification and removing encroachment but what came in its place was the games village, Akshardham temple, IT park, DTC bus depo and other such facilities on Yamuna flood plains violating the environmental laws. Yamuna Pushta evictions in 2004 in the name of polluting the river Yamuna was nothing but a complete take over of the real estate, since a study by Hazard Centre showed that their total contribution to the waste in river was 0.33% of the total sewage released in the river. As per an estimate by Housing Land Rights Network between 2004-10, two lakh people were displaced. From 1990, when the Delhi Government adopted a revised strategy for dealing with squatter settlements, until 2008, around 65,000 families from 221 demolished slums clusters were relocated in resettlement colonies in the rural fringes, relegated to the far reaches of up to 30 kms from the city centre.

A brief chronology of the demolitions in Delhi is presented below, which will be further expanded

Year	Number Of People Displaced	Number Of People Rehabilitated and Policy Governing it
During Emergency mainly in walled city (1975-77)	7,00,000	
1984 (Sikh Massacres) evicted again in 1996 from Tilak Nagar Jhuggis	600 families	Sat in Protest for months on end at Jantar Mantar but were again evicted.
1996 - Old Stables of Pataudi House	160 families evicted by BSF	No housing provided, their belongings loaded on a tuck and transported to far off place.

1996, Naya Bazar in Peeli Kothi Old Delhi	300 jhuggis	No Housing Provided
June 1997- Kasturba Camp	1500 families	The entire camp was set ablaze
1996 orders of the Supreme Court	Affected around 50, 000 workers	Majority got neither compensation nor employment in the relocated industries despite the court ordering so.
2000-2001	15,000 jhuggis housing 75,000 residents have been demolished	Most of them have not been relocated till date
2000-2004	8,00,000 people	The Delhi Government has a policy of offering land compensation to those who can offer proof of residence. Those who settled in the city before 1990 are eligible to receive, upon payment of Rs. 7,000, a plot of 18 sq. metres in Bhalaswa or Holambi Kalan or other resettlement colonies. Those who settled between 1990 and 1998 are eligible to receive a plot of 12.5 sq. metres. Entire families are squeezed into plots smaller than a three-tier railway compartment. As visits to the resettlement sites show, the "colony" is little more than a wasteland, with no amenities, 20-30 km from people's place of work.
2004 Yamuna Pushta	1,50,000 people living in 40,000	20% only i.e. about 30,000 people
Commonwealth Games	Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) estimates that at least 250,000 people in Delhi have lost their homes.	No compensation or resettlement has been provided at any of the sites surveyed. The only exception was the Dargah Bhure Shah Camp, where plots have been allotted in Savda Ghewra to around 80-85 of the 115 families who lost their homes. While the High Court of Delhi has ordered relocation for the families at Gadia Lohar Basti, they have still not received any form of rehabilitation. People of the

		demolished Shaheed Arjun Das Camp have survived by putting plastic sheets over the broken walls of what was once their home. But every morning they have to remove the plastic sheets, as they are afraid the police will destroy them.

The ferocity with which 'illegal' slums and 'unauthorised' colonies have been demolished by DDA have not been visible in them, turning a blind eye to illegal constructions in the DDA colonies and then the farm houses owned by the rich in South Delhi. The agricultural land of Delhi villages were brought by the rich in 70s-80s and more have been acquired in later decades but surprisignly have always been spared from the demolitions in fact they have been regularised much before the 1642 unauthorised colonies, whose regularisation is still pending and is used as a political tool for votes. In these colonies no legal registration of any sale or purchase of property is allowed and all transactions happen on basis of power of attorney. *(further discussion on impacts of non-regularisation of colonies and growth of such colonies.)*

Green Versus Brown Agenda

(discussion on systemic evictions in the name of greening the city)

In a systematic manner the slums, bastis and working class colonies have been demolished from different parts of the city in the name of beautification and infrastructure development. Delhi has 8.3% of tree cover ranking it 3rd amongst the states of India and a good number of parks spread across the middle class colonies all contributing to making of "Clean Delhi – Green Delhi". However, the Green Agenda has often taken precedence over the Brown Agenda – agenda of social justice for working class and urban poor. In addition, to the multiplicity of the agencies, judiciary has contributed to the large scale demolitions in the city. In name of shutting down polluting factories lakhs of workers were made unemployed and forced to move out of the city, whereas it has been shown by the numerous studies that vehicular pollution is the biggest culprit when it comes to the bad air quality of Delhi. Delhi has the dubious distinction of having more cars than that put together of Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, three other metro cities. Delhi is also the most motorised city in the country and 21% of its total land area is occupied by road network, mainly used by private vehicles owned by rich and middle classes. So, it is one more case of rich hiding behind the poor in the name of promoting green agenda and fighting climate change.

Planned Slums and Resettlement Colonies

Every time slums or UCs were demolished, they were resettled in the places further away from their original places of residence and work on supposedly, 'cheaper lands'. These efforts often lead to creation of 'planned slums', like those in Bhalaswa, Bawana, Madanpur Khadar, Savda Ghevra and other 'resettlement colonies'. Most of these colonies have complete absence of basic facilities in its initial years and people are pushed there without making any provisions for the same. Numerous studies have documented the condition of these basic facilities at these colonies. (*further discussion on the services*).

The anti-poor bias and lack of inclusive planning was visible when Delhi High Court on October 19, 2012, while disposing off a petition to implement BRT in Delhi, said, "since in a democracy it is not possible to physically seize cars and destroy them, the only democratic solution would be to dedicate road space for the buses, which would move fast, and this would act as an incentive for people to switch to Public Transport". Given the increasing population, which stands today at 18.2 million, and despite several measures taken as road widening, flyovers (46 as of now) etc. traffic congestion continues and "there is no escaping to the fact that citizens will have to use public transport, one day or other". It needs to be noted that two cars, take same space as a bus, but transport only three persons as against 60 to 70 persons in a bus during peak hours and around 40 persons during non-peak hours. A car commences and terminates its journey with the same 1.5 persons. But a bus would drop and pick up many persons en-route adding up to nearly 200 people.

In its desire to be the world class city, lakhs have been moved out of the city to its peripheries in the name of beautification and infrastructure development, even though their existence is essential for the workings of the city. The groups being pushed to the margins in the cities are the same groups who are on the margins from their original place of migration. This gives rise to an interesting phenomenon of ru-urbanisation, since at some level the rural poor and urban poor constitute the same social class. *This needs to be further examined*. Delhi as a city offers numerous insights into the way urbanisation is taking place in India. By some estimates in next twenty years or so fifty percent of India would be living in urban centres. The aspirations of global, world class or smart cities will not be fulfilled unless the planning of city takes in the account the aspirations and needs of its poorest and working class citizens. The biggest question infront of us today is, can we as a nation imagine democratic cities, which will ensure equitable access for everyone – rich and poor both ?

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