

It has been almost two decades since NCR Plan has been under implementation. In 1980's the plan, by and large focused on the decongestion of Delhi, while the present Plan strives for the decentralization of economic activities, but in a changed economic scenario in which forces of economic liberalization and globalization are ultimately going to have large scale repercussions on the planned urban development of the DMA towns and cities. The foregoing chapters have detailed out the concept and early attempts of planned development of these towns/cities followed by description of existing scenario in terms of planned development of DMA towns, analysis of perception of residents and builders and appraisal of the NCR Plan – 2001 in terms of the proposals pertaining to these towns and cities along with efforts of NCR in terms of funding of projects and current happening in NCR through newspapers have been incorporated. Further, the cities/towns have also been viewed in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on the existing scenario as well as potentials present in them. Thus the concluding chapter discusses policy guidelines / recommendations so as to expect effective implementation of NCR Plan, 2021.

In order to make NCR Plan implementation more effective, the participating States need to adopt a proactive approach in dealing with the development /planning issues which are mutually beneficial to them. The NCR Planning Board has established the directions for future developments; however, the respective State Governments are expected to sort out developmental problems, whether they are related to transportation, water supply, power supply or coordination amongst them so that the objectives of NCR Plan are achieved to a greater extent.

NCR Planning Board needs to play key role especially in terms of coordination among the participating State Governments. The NCR Plan proposals appear to be very sound on paper; however, when it comes to actual implementation, the State Governments often do not work together. The recent impasse on bus transport between Delhi and Uttar Pradesh has had a telling effect on lakhs of commuters who commute daily between Delhi and DMA towns. These commuters are a harassed lot and the dispute between the two state governments has put them to unfold hardship. Another example of intra-state dispute is prevailing in Greater NOIDA (although not a DMA town) where due to dispute between the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) and the

Noida Power Company Limited has led to power shortage to the extent of 20 MW. The city was reeling under the long power cuts of 12-14 hrs during 2006 thereby causing lot of problems to the residents but also to the large number of industries and educational institutions, which are severely affected. Another example of inter-state dispute / disagreement is inadequate release of water by Uttar Pradesh to Sonia Vihar Plant which has led to shortage of water supply to south Delhi colonies.

Here, the role of NCR Planning Board becomes crucial wherein it should have intervened in the dispute and suggested ways for amicably settling the differences between the State Governments. The main reason for tardy implementation of NCR Plan is that NCR Planning Board is by and large more of an advisory body, which is involved in funding of projects. It becomes essential to provide adequate teeth to the Board so that it can prevail over the State Governments. In fact, NCR Planning Board should act as a tribunal and all inter or intra state disputes within the NCR should be referred to NCRPB. This will necessitate amendment to the NCRPB Act wherein NCRPB should be empowered to settle the inter or intra-state disputes within a reasonable time frame.

Section –8(b) of NCRPB Act, 1985 clearly states that one of the functions of NCRPB is to ensure preparation, enforcement of Functional Plan or Sub-Regional Plan as the case may be to be in conformity with the Regional Plan. Further, Section 29(2) of the Act also stipulates that where any participating State or Union Territory has carried out or is carrying out, any activity which is in violation of the Regional Plan, it may be given a notice in writing by the Board to stop such violations of the Regional Plan and in case of any omission or refusal on the part of the concerned State the Board shall withhold such financial assistance to them. In spite of clear-cut stipulations in the said Act, the State Governments have taken to ignoring the proposals of the Regional Plan. Since, the DMA towns have witnessed massive expansion of the spatial extent with unprecedented conversion of agricultural land to urban uses; there is no indication whether NCR Plan prevails on the large scale change of landuse in these towns.

Hence, the NCRPB is required to maintain a database, which should continuously monitor conversion of land to the urban uses. The conversion to the urban uses should be justified (or ensured) in the context that any activity proposed would ultimately benefit the concerned city and also the NCR thereby strengthening the implementation of decentralization of economic activities away from NCT Delhi.

NCR, especially the DMA Area is also witnessing development of Special Economic Zones, Hi-Tech Cities, Export Promotion Industrial Park and IT Parks. This is not in consonance with the settlement structure prescribed by the NCR Plan. With the mushrooming of this kind of development, there is every possibility that implications will be felt in the long run when these enclaves are developed without taking into consideration of regional linkages, availability of skilled manpower and efficient and fast mode of transportation. By developing these specialized centers, it could be possible that they may become island of prosperity without benefiting the rural hinterland and also will be against the spirit of balanced and harmonious development of the region.

Hence, it becomes essential that any kind of specialized development must be in conformity of NCR Plan. The identification of these centers must be as per the hierarchy of settlements as advocated by NCR Plan duly considering the future potential of the urban and rural settlements.

All the DMA cities/towns do have Master Plan, however, their preparation appears to be respective city centric without taking into consideration the spillover of Delhi. Further, it may be highlighted here that there is no representation of NCRPB, Ministry of Urban Development and Government of NCT Delhi in their Planning bodies and at the same time DDA also does not have any representative of DMA cities and towns planning agencies. Hence, there is virtually no interaction between these agencies. The immediate fallout in this regard is unregulated development of fringe areas. All the DMA cities/towns have not come together to spell out what should be the policy for the fringe areas and what kind of buffer need to be put so as to control the haphazard development.

Hence, NCR must coordinate among all the planning bodies of these cities/towns so that the Master Plan proposals are synchronized keeping in view reduction on the burden on infrastructure of NCT Delhi and have effective control on regulated development. Although the Master Plans of these cities /towns are referred to NCRPB but the same may not be in conformity with the sub-regional plans or functional plans.

It may also be highlighted that NCT Delhi has experienced large scale unauthorized construction and rampant misuse of residential premises. There are almost 5 lakh shops and almost 50 lakh persons are depending on retail trade businesses. With the directions of Supreme Court, the shops in the residential localities have been subjected to sealing. In this regard, it may be stated that no efforts were made neither

at the Central Government level or State Government level to assess the availability of commercial spaces in DMA cities/towns and even in NCT Delhi, so that the traders could have got an option to shift to these towns. NCRPB should have taken initiative in close coordination with the planning bodies of DMA cities/towns to assess the availability of commercial spaces in the DMA cities/towns. In fact, the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court with regard to misuse of residential premises should have been taken as blessing in disguise especially for NCR as this was the right time to take steps to encourage decentralization of economic activities which otherwise has not taken place as desired right from the inception of NCR concept. In fact, this would have been welcomed by the traders of Delhi.

In this regard, NCR should take initiative along with the participating states to decentralize trade and commerce activity by preparing an inventory on availability of commercial/office spaces both with the private sector and the Development Authorities of the concerned DMA cities/towns. This will also provide much needed impetus to market forces in the real estate in these cities/towns.

There is no doubt that to make the NCR concept a success, the NCRPB had proposed not only uniformity in the tax regime across the region but also a unified power and transport authority and integration of the housing sector. But most of the proposals made in NCRPB's Regional Plan-2021 will remain only on paper until and unless there is strong political will to overcome all the inter and intra-state disputes. ***In other words NCRPB is required to sensitize all stakeholders on these issues and emphasize the importance of the NCR wherein unified services could make the region self-sustainable and pave the way for harmonious development*** otherwise poor enforcement may lead to not only slowing down the process of integration of all areas but will also hamper the development of the NCR and some areas may develop fast, while others may lag far behind negating the very concept of NCR.

While there has been some sort of integration in the telecom sector, however, a lot more needs to be done in power, water and housing sectors. ***With regard to housing the NCRPB should propose a joint venture between DDA and the Development Authorities of DMA cities/towns to provide adequate housing.*** While DDA provides housing in Delhi, in NCR the large scale housing is being mostly provided by private developers, resulting in skewed development. ***A common Housing Board for NCR will go a long way in solving the housing problem in the NCR and make housing an affordable proposition.***

In spite of non-implementation of NCR Plan proposals, there is no doubt that in respect of development of DMA cities/towns; NCR has witnessed rapid real estate development in commercial, retail and residential segments. This kind of development, while creating opportunities for many, has placed pressure on infrastructure and resources, and brought into focus a number of issues related to city management and governance.

There should be faster sharing of information between NCR towns. A system can be evolved where common police force have total jurisdiction in NCR. This will help save time and will make law-and-order system in and around NCR much more efficient.

Similarly the extension of Metro rail appears to be the only solution in present context to provide integrated transport system. **A lot of ground work will have to be done when Metro begins its service to these cities/towns like common ticketing, revenue sharing among the State Transport Buses etc, which is only possible when NCRPB suggests various options so that there are no divergent views and stakes of the transport authorities of the participating states and the same are taken into account and suitably addressed.** At present there is no public transport available from Delhi Airport and Delhi Railway Stations to DMA towns and commuters have to pay between Rs. 700 – 1200 so as to reach their destination in these towns. Further, free movement of Taxies and Auto rickshaws in NCR and NCT Delhi vice versa appears to be a distant dream, while NCR was developed with the idea to decongest Delhi, with the forethought in establishing quick and efficient transport network through out NCR.

Therefore, a beginning has to be made so that traveling between the Delhi and DMA cities / towns become a smooth affair. In fact, this has been a biggest hindrance to the integrated development of NCR. There is a need to arrange the existing transport system so that it is easily accessible to the people. The restrictions on the movement of taxi and auto rickshaws in the DMA towns should be removed to allow free movement. Besides, airports / railway / bus terminals may have shared taxi, vans and auto rickshaws services. **The policy should focus more on developing integrated transport for NCR rather than encouraging personalized modes. Hence, there is need to eliminate entry permit so as to ensure smooth movement of vehicles within the NCR region. The free movement of vehicles in the NCR region coupled with a uniform transport policy for the region should be formulated and necessary amendments may be made in the Motor Vehicles Act.** Since, passenger tax is imposed on taxies, buses and auto rickshaws, vehicles coming from DMA towns to

Delhi and hence the taxi drivers charge exorbitantly thereby forcing DMA residents have to pay more

There is a need to adopt Mission Mode approach in implementation of projects funded by NCR on the lines of JNNURM. The projects should be funded subject to reforms/actions undertaken by the implementing agencies, which are in line with the NCR Plan Proposals and Policies within a given timeframe. For example, one of the admissible components under the JNNURM is shifting of non-conforming uses to conforming uses. Similarly, the DMA cities/town should also offer option so that the non-conforming activities are encouraged to shift out of NCT Delhi. Further, NCR fund allocation need to be enhanced substantially as the investments requirements are going to increase in DMA cities/towns and the upper limit for funding may not be capped. ***The fund from Central Government to the infrastructure projects in NCR should be routed through NCR Planning Board. It would also be desirable that a comprehensive view of the fund available from all the sources is required to be taken so as to integrate development activities undertaken by various agencies. Without a mechanism of dedicated fund, it would not be feasible to effectively undertake various activities envisaged in Regional Plan. This can be achieved to a considerable extent through a 'Special Component Plan'. The requisite fund should be allocated by the Planning commission as a Sub-component of the five year plan in respect of Central Ministries of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways, Railways, Communication and Information Technology and Power as well as participating States have to go beyond their token approval to the Plan. They have to recognize the Regional Plan-2021 as their own Plan and accept the responsibility of implementing its policies, projects and proposals through their physical and financial effort, reflecting it in their five-year and annual plans and work programmes.***

A unified approval system in consonance with National Building Code should be introduced in these cities/towns. At present, DMA towns/cities have different sets of regulations regarding building bye-laws and other sanctions. Further, digital database in terms of Land / Property System need to be adopted and shared among the cities/towns.

The state level taxes too have been responsible for the pressure on prices of petroleum products in the DMA cities/towns. Sales tax collection from oil sector have consistently been contributing to a third or more of the total sales tax collections of the states thereby burdening the consumers as well as building an undesirable dependency at the state level too for revenues on a single sector. Moreover the rates of taxation vary widely – from a minimum of 20% to a maximum of 34% in the case of

petrol, and from a minimum of 9% and a maximum of 38% in the case of diesel. Coming on top of what is considered a large incidence of excise duties, heavy sales tax levies lead to a high prices. **There is need to offset the burden of irrecoverable taxes such as octroi/entry tax on crude oil so that the prices of petroleum products are uniform throughout NCR. Hence, unified tax regime under the VAT umbrella is required so that the prices of all goods are uniform throughout the NCR. The efforts towards achieving a Common Economic Regional Development Zone could only be achieved once there is uniform taxation.**

In conclusion, it may be stated that success or failure of the objectives of NCR Plan cannot be evaluated in quantifiable terms as yet. NCR Plan is theoretically strong. The successful implementation of plan proposals will depend on how the participating State Governments respond in a proactive manner and work in proper coordination so as to overcome all disputes. However, at the same time strong administration and political will is also required to succeed with the objectives of NCR Plan. Further, if the NCR Proposals are taken in a right spirit by the participating State Governments, then whole region can set an example to all the State Capitals and they could evolve a concept of *State Capital Regions* throughout the country. If thought in a broader perspective, the concept of State Capital Regions for all the State Capitals will actually pave the way for balanced urbanization. Further, the concept of decentralization of economic activities would get impetus throughout the country. This will help not only the State Capitals but also the vast hinterland wherein large-scale investments in infrastructure will be helpful in restricting migration towards the capital cities. Hence, the NCR concept should serve as a replicable model for the entire country.