

Landscape Change: The Story of Delhi

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Abstract: Space is always appreciated when it's dynamic the moment it becomes static they say that it loses charm. Indeed change is the only unchanging phenomenon but whether it's a good change or a bad one is always a controversial question. This paper tries to throw light on the landscape change which Delhi has experienced over the ages. How it has evolved and after being created and destroyed for a number of times is still so viable and thriving.

Keywords: Landscape, Delhi, Mughal, India, history

1. Introduction

“Kaun zaye phir Zauk Dilli ki galiyon ko chodkar”

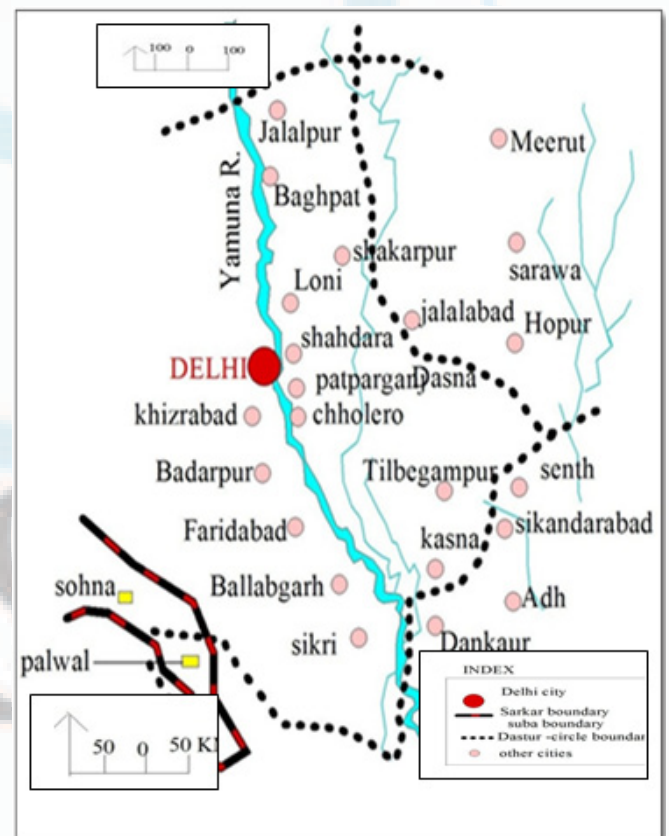
Delhi is a very significant historical city. It is one such city which has gone through various stages of destruction and growth during the period of its evolution as a city. Time and again it was built and destroyed. Though it was brought to ruins at many occasions nevertheless the astonishing fact is that it was selected by many empire builders to be the capital of their empire. Such was the charm of this city that the two most powerful empires which ruled India shifted their capital to Delhi from other parts of the country.



Map 1: Delhi: Suburbs of Shahjahanabad 1739

During the Mughal period it was found that Delhi fulfilled almost all the necessary requirements of being the capital of the town. Once the decision was taken by the Mughals the city was developed with great grandeur and opulence.

The remains of the seven cities of Delhi can still be seen transversely the landscape from Lal Kot which was a Tomar city in 10th century. The next one was Siri in 1303. The other cities were Tughluqabad which flourished in 1321, Jahapanah grew in 1327 and Firuzabad in 1354. The Mughals erected Purana Qila and Shahjahanabad in 1533 and 1639 respectively. The eighth city which was established by Britishers was the New Delhi. Broadly there are three distinct phases in the development of modern Delhi.

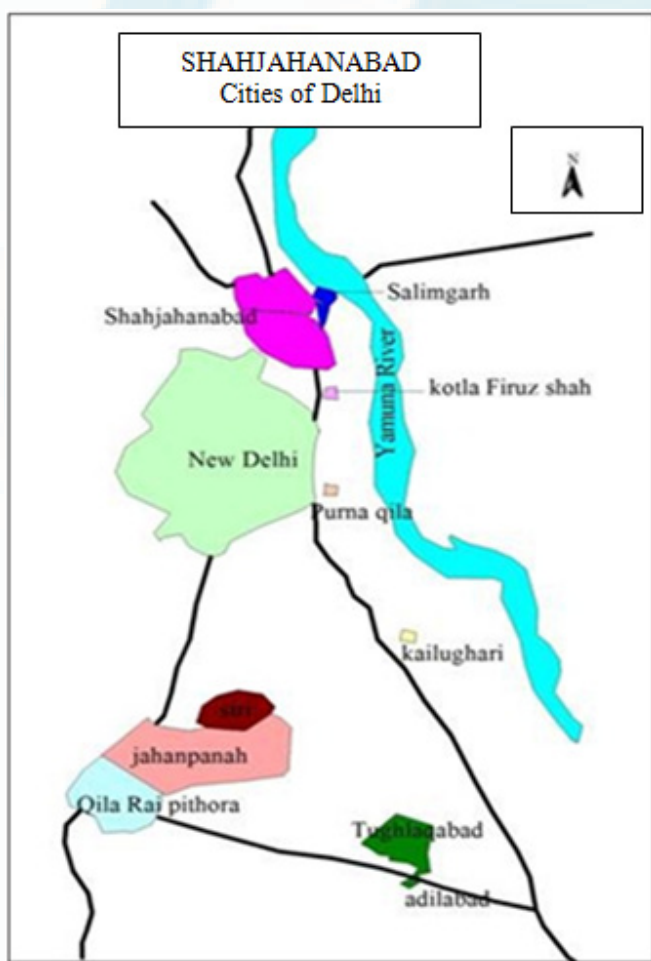


Map 2: Division of Delhi in Mughal Era 1595

The first stage may be taken to pioneer from the time the Mughal rule ended in Delhi subsequent to the events of 1857, and the British became the master. The second phase originated from the time of building of the Lutyens New Delhi after it was declared the capital of India.

.Development was restricted to the construction of a new township for the rulers and those who supported them. The area north of Delhi gate soon came to be known as Old – Delhi and still called the same .The third segment began with independence when New Delhi became the national capital .

This has been a period of speedy expansion all around, so much so that a number of towns in the nearby areas have also expanded to provide living space for the overgrowing population and to accommodate the ever increasing government and non government offices. The concept of NCR Region has evolved to cater to the diverse requisites of the expanding city. During the Mughal Period- Shahjahanabad City barely covered a radius of 5 km. Land beyond that was rural till 1803.



Map 2: Shahjahanabad

2. In the period between 1803-1857

The first English resident Charles Metcalfe erected Metcalfe house on the bank of river Yamuna near Old Secretariat in 1830. In 1857, British vacated the walled city from Red Fort to Jama Masjid for military purposes. The people, who were displaced, settled at the outer surface of the walled city in Rajpura Gurmandi on the western bank of Najafgarh drain between Rana Pratap Bagh and Kingsway Camp. Consequently for the first time city started expanding ahead of walled city.

The Land use pattern during that particular period was as follows:

- (i) Shahjahanabad
- (ii) British Cantonment (present Kingsway Camp, University and Ridge area up to Kashmere Gate
- (iii) Race Course (Present Police Lines)
- (iv) Rural Settlement-Subzi Mandi (Old Subzi Mandi), Kishan Ganj, Teliwara, Sarai Rohilla Khan, Seedipur (present Sidipura), Pahar Pur (present Paharganj), Tempalgarh, Sarai Khalil, Kalinga Bagh, Ruins of Firozabad and Slaughter House near Turkman Gate.

3. 1911 – 1947

In this particular slab of time the capital shifted to Delhi. Numerous new areas were made a part of it. The land use was comprised of the following divisions.

- i. The Rajput Cavalry Cantonment
- ii. Hindu Rao Estate
- iii. The Civil Lines
- iv. Shahjahanabad including Kashmiri Gate, Chandni Chowk, Chawri bazaar, Faiz Bazaar etc.
- v. The Dariyaganj Cantonment, i.e., Delhi Gate, Zail Area, Firozabad agricultural area.
- vi. Red Fort
- vii. The Extra-mineral and agricultural lands of Firozabad and Khandrat Kal (Slaughter House near Turkman Gate)
- viii. The suburbs, i.e., Paharganj, Telibara, Sadar Bazaar and Subzi Mandi
- ix. The gardens i.e., around Subzi Mandi, Roshanara, Gardens like Nicholsans, Qudesia, Queen and Company Garden, Rana Pratap Bagh, Gulabi Bagh
- x. Orchards at periphery
- xi. Agricultural Land

Huge expanse of rural land were bring about to build up a new township in the civil Lines Area for military and administrative operations. Village Chandrawal was shifted from Yamuna bank to the south of Cantonment near Delhi Universty. Old Secretariat was built in 1912 and Hindu Rao's house was transformed into Hospital. Pahargang and Subzimandi were residences of underprivileged people.

In 1920, a spot was selected for the new capital near Raisina Hills to the south of walled city where lands of six villages were obtained. The entire area was converted into Garden city measuring 1295 hectares, and was planned for a projected population of 65,000. To the north of this more villages were acquired for housing military cantonments. Consequently, Parliament House, War memorial (India Gate) etc were completed by 1939. Accordingly new city comprising of Connaught Place, Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhawan, Central Secretariat, Imperial Hotel, Ambassador Hotel, and Claridges Hotel along with elite colonies come into view. The present Cantonment area also comes into view alongside. The old secretariat in the

period in-between was converted into the office of Delhi Administration.

4. During 1947 and Onwards

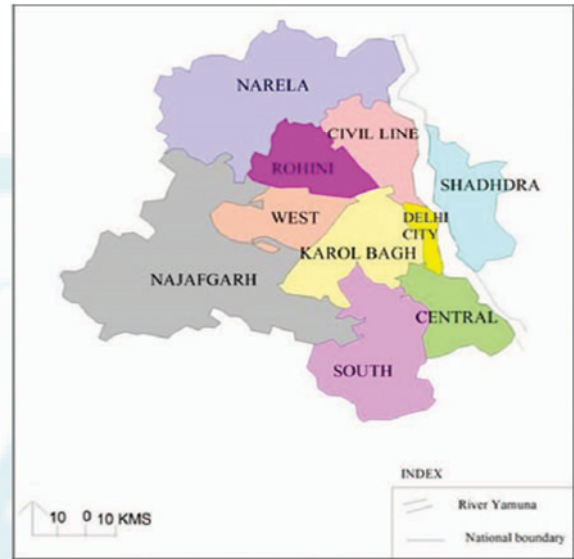
The country was partitioned in 1947 and it brought foremost changes whereby considerable swathe of rural land were acquired to abide the new immigrants.

- (i) Agricultural land of Nizamuddin, Garhi, Zamarudpur, Hauz Rani and Begumpur villages were gained and new colonies such as Lajpat Nagar, Defence Colony, Kalkaji, Malviya Nagar and Nizamuddin emerged.
- (ii) In the west agricultural land of Shadipur, Basaidpur, Tatarpur and Khampur Raya villages were attained to built new colonies such as Rajender Nagar, Patel Nagar, Kirti Nagar, Moti Nagar, Ramesh Nagar, Tilak Nagar.
- (iii) Kingsway Camp and Vijayanagar, Parmanand Colony was built on the agricultural land taken from Dhaka, Malikpur and Dheerpur Villages.
- (iv) Seelampur Village gave land for the development of Gandhi Nagar.

Development of new railway line and roads necessitated getting hold of of huge areas between Chandni Chowk and Kashmiri Gate. The building of Ring Road in 1956 untied a new area for development. Gradually with due course of time, the remains of historic city of Indraprastha, Qila Raipithora, Tughlakabad, Siri, Jahanpanah, Firozabad were put together with Shajahanabad and New Delhi to structure a foremost urban conglomeration.

- Previous to 1931, city developed in the northern and western part of walled city but the urban growth to the south of walled city started with the groundwork of New Delhi, when six villages were acquired.
- During 1951-61, twenty-six villages were urbanized in the southern and western parts of Delhi.
- Subsequent to opening of Indraprastha bridge areas to the east became further easy to get to and development started in the rapid rate of knots. Amid 1951-61, the area of forty-eight villages was acquired. In the next decade city expanded due to heavy migration from other states. By the 1971, forty more villages were acquired.
- In the intervening time the first master plan came up. By 1981, the area of twenty more villages was acquired.
- Between 1981 and 1991, as many as eleven more villages were acquired.

On the other hand, though master plan existed there were large-scale unauthorized constructions. In 1991 there were 730 unauthorized colonies and 540 Jhuggi-Jhopri.



Map 4: Delhi Zone Map

5. Delhi Urban Area 2021

At the contemporary scenario if one looks one finds that about 702 sq km is anticipated to have been developed as built up areas accepting about 138-lakh population. To house the projected population of 230 lakh by the year 2021, a three Branched approach is recommended (i) to discover conduct sby which the population growth in Delhi can be checked. ii) To augment the population holding scope of the area within accessible urban restrictions through redevelopment, and also turn aside part of the population in the NCR outside Delhi; and iii) Extension of the present urban limits to the extent necessary. On an average the space required per person would be 40 sq.m., covering about 920 sq.km of urban area for a projected population of 230 lakh in year 2021.

The total area of the Union Territory of Delhi is 148,639 ha, out of this 44,777 ha. had been earlier included in urbanizable limits given in the plan. This area as per 1981 census accommodated 54.5-lac urban population. The balance urban population resided in 17 settlements declared as towns in the 1981 census and Najafgarh & Narela. To accommodate the 122-lac population, a two-pronged strategy was recommended:

- Increase the population holding capacity of the existing urbanisable limits i.e. Delhi Urban Area (DUA) - 1981. By this way the population holding capacity could be increased to about 82 lacs.
- Extension of present urban limits to the extent necessary i.e. Delhi Urban Area (DUA) – 2001
- Studies exposed that in-order to accommodate the balance 40 lac population an extension of DUA - 1981 to the tune of approximately 18,000 - 24,000 ha was required. This would form DUA-2001 i.e. the proposed urban extension.
- The extension plan to house Delhi's changing necessities named as "Urban Extension Plan". This plan was entailed development of three sub-cities

namely Rohini, Dwarka, Narela The First Master Plan for Delhi, 1961-81, was published by DDA in 1962.

- The Second Master Plan for Delhi 1981-2001, was published by DDA in 1990. The third Master Plan 2001-2021 came in 2007.

6. Postscript

Despite seeing so many ups and downs in its unique past Delhi still is a celebrated cosmopolitan city. It lures people, capital and resources from all over the world by providing equal opportunities of growth in sectors of education, employment health and enterprise etc. The significant point is that these opportunities are provided without taking in to account the caste, religion, social and regional differences. The city has experienced both the Nacropolis phase and the thriving and flourishing stage. The city is still ever-expanding and the landscape of the city is continuously modified and is expected to go through this process of change in future as well.

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