

"UNAUTHORISED COLONIES" AND THE CITY OF DELHI

by

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Bachelor of Architecture  
School of Planning and Architecture  
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree Master of Science in Architecture Studies  
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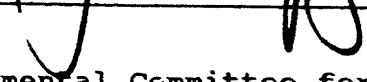
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## ABSTRACT

This research was undertaken, to understand the phenomenon of "unauthorised colonies" in relation to the city of Delhi, to which they belong. "Unauthorised Colonies" is the label given by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), to the hundreds of residential colonies that have evolved in Delhi over the past twenty years, without DDA's authorisation and in complete disregard to the city's masterplan regulations. The research has been to discover and understand the hidden issues and underlying meanings of the various incidents in time that have shaped the evolution of unauthorised colonies and the city of Delhi.

There has been no attempt at the start of this research to prove any predetermined issues or hypotheses. This investigation therefore, may be thought of as raising various issues as the exploration follows the evolution of these colonies through time. In the end it has been attempted to "tie" all the issues together to present a picture of these colonies that is more complete and has a greater depth than the simplistic image presented by DDA's definition. The effort has been to present unauthorised colonies as an integral part of the overall city, from the point of view of the colony dwellers, and the dominant interest groups in Delhi. To explain the city's functioning as a condition of interdependence that exists between the authorised portions of Delhi and the unauthorised colonies, at levels that are not just physical but also political, social and economic.

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Title: Lecturer in Architecture

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Snehanshu Mukherjee

May 3 1988

MIT

# PREFACE

## A Letter to a Friend

Dear Madhu,

You guessed it, my thesis is at last over! This letter is to show you that I am gradually resuming normal activities and by the time I return to Delhi in July I should be completely normal! At the same time I hope that I dont revert to what I used to consider as being "normal", that is before I decided to write this thesis. I am not so sure any longer if that is the way to exist, in a crumbling "ivory tower" with a motto of "ignorance is bliss".

I dont claim that my research on unauthorised colonies has been an "eye opener". Instead it worked as a "can opener" that opened a "can of worms". Maybe the "can" contained too few worms, but I think they were sufficient to at least make me question my complacent existence. I think all of us, the privileged section of Delhi's population, are far too complacent about the way things exist in Delhi. I think we like to maintain a situation of status quo, so that we can carry on exploiting the limited resources; basically have a good time by ourselves and leave the rest of the population to fend for themselves.

The unauthorised colonies are finally accepted through "authorisation" not because we recognise their efforts or their indigenous development methods. The colonies are "authorised" because they become middle

class, they are finally one of us. It is a success story for the colony dwellers, but what about all those who couldnt make it? We dont really care, we want to keep Delhi to ourselves, we dont wish to share the resources.

You and I are very much part of the system, in fact all 36 of us (these days 60!) who graduate from SPA each year as professionals in the field of urban development, are all trained to keep alive a city of expensive buildings and beautiful parks that works only for the rich elites and a rising middle class . Then we go around talking about our search for an "Indian identity"; which some of us "discover" in rather strange ways, for instance in the currently imported fad of "Post-Modernism". Remember how we had imported "Modernism" in past? Then of course the purpose was to "modernise". Things havent changed since, we are still looking for western development models to show us our way to progress but we dont stop to look at what is happening within our cities. We try our best to outlaw indigenous development for they do not fit the masterplan!

I cant but help expressing my frustration at the unfairness and the irony of the situation. We as the "responsible" professionals, at first disregard the examples that we can learn from - like the development of unauthorised colonies and then succesfully out law them. That is where the conflict lies; we outlaw them on purpose because we are also the minority privileged class, we want to keep the limited resources to ourselves, refusing to share them, lest they diminish our share. We exploit the poor and their development, we exploit anything we can, situations, conditions, people and establishments purely for our own individual gains. This is the "philosophy" of our times. We have no ethics, no future goals we dont believe in a common cause. We live for the moment, and we care for nothing else. This

attitude is responsible for the pettiness and chaos that exists everywhere in the country, in politics, in the government, in our personal lives, everywhere! That is why DDA responsible for an egalitarian development of Delhi, ends up speculating with public land.

I know this letter has been incoherent, but I cant express my thoughts any better at this moment. Unauthorised colonies are a small success in the times we live in, it is a hard earned success for the colony dwellers. What I have felt after the research is what I have tried to express through this letter, in a collection of random thoughts. I feel that the situation should not be allowed to continue in this fashion. I think we as professionals as citizens, have a responsibility to fulfill. We should stop believing that "ignorance is bliss", stop evading issues and be prepared to take a positive stand. We need to question ourselves to find out what we can do and then have the courage to carry out what we decide to do.

I dont have any suggestions for the moment, this research has been merely a self realisation. My task would now be to see what can be done next. In any case I think this dialogue can carry on face to face, once you have managed to read through this exploration of mine. As you read through the chapters, maybe you will discover other things that I have missed. Maybe you will have a bright idea.

Looking forward to seeing you in July, till then.....

Love,

—  
—  
—  
May 5 1988

M.I.T.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

"Unauthorised colony" is the label that the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) uses to describe hundreds of residential colonies that have developed without their permission or authorisation, over the last twenty years in the city of Delhi. The DDA since 1957 has been responsible for all development within the city and is technically supposed to own all land within the projected urban limits of the city. Some of the farmers whose land came within the urban limits, to escape acquisition by DDA, subdivided it and sold them as cheap residential plots directly to the public forming the first unauthorised colonies.

The people who buy land or rent accomodation in these colonies represent a section of the urban poor. However, since the colony dwellers have the means to buy plots or rent accomodation they, unlike the squatters, cannot be classified as the "marginal poor" population. The residents of unauthorised colonies comprise of a heterogenous group of people which include fruit vendors, carpenters, school teachers and lower division clerks.

The authorised portions of Delhi, overwhelms the casual observer with its orderly tree lined avenues and impressive buildings. Considering this general image of Delhi, the unauthorised colonies may appear to be a few isolated cases in an otherwise well maintained a



beautiful "garden city". The importance of unauthorised colonies become obvious, once their population as a percentage of the overall population of the city is known. In a city of 5.7 million (1981 estimates) approximately 40% of the population resides in the unauthorised colonies. These figures when combined with the squatter population causes the percentage to rise to approximately 66% of the 5.7 million.

Inspite of the high population percentage of unauthorised colonies, they remain invisible, what remains visible instead is a city of multi-storey commercial centres, hotels, concrete flyovers and beautifully maintained parks. This research has resulted from a curiosity to discover more about unauthorised colonies in relation to the authorised portions of the city.

There has been no attempt at the beginning of this research to prove any predetermined issues or hypotheses. The research has been to gain a better understanding of unauthorised colonies in context of the overall city of Delhi. The purpose of this enquiry has been to analyse the various reasons that have caused unauthorised colonies to flourish till today; reasons that exist at political, social, economic and physical levels that have been responsible for giving shape to the unauthorised colonies over their years of evolution.

The writing within these pages is the documentation of a search that was undertaken to discover the hidden issues created by various incidents in time, that have shaped the evolution of unauthorised colonies and the city of Delhi. The incidents themselves are known facts for people who have followed the development of Delhi. However these facts are not usually investigated or

connected to their "not so apparent" political, economic or social implications on the development of the colonies and the city.

This investigation therefore can be thought of as pulling out various "threads" in the form of issues, as the exploration follows the evolution of the unauthorised colonies in time. At the end it would be attempted to tie the "threads" together and present a picture of these colonies that is more complete and has a greater depth than the common and simplistic image described at the beginning of this chapter.

The following chapters are presented in the manner the the research was conducted. Unauthorised colonies in the following three chapters, are traced from their evolution in 1947 with the independence of India, till the present times (1986 to 1987) when the case studies used in this research were conducted. Various issues concerning unauthorised colonies have been analysed as they have evolved in the process of historical exploration. In the last chapter (Chapter 5), the prominent issues that have recurred in the previous chapters are put together to present the picture of unauthorised colonies that emerges most prominently as a result of this research.

The guiding factor through the study has been to understand unauthorised colonies, not only as entities in themselves, but also as phenomena that have evolved as a part of the overall development of the city of Delhi. However before starting the historical exploration of unauthorised colonies, there is a need to understand as a background, the nature of the social and political framework of the city and of the country, as it has evolved since the time of the independence. For it is

within this context, that the unauthorised colonies and the city of Delhi have evolved and could be best understood.

## Background

Karl Marx had argued, that Britain's colonisation of India with her exploitative imperial rule, would cause India to get rid of her caste system and fragmentary village system. Which would consequently usher in a modern age, where India would be ready to enter into a capitalist phase with it's inevitable climax of a classless society<sup>1</sup>.

Similar lines of thought were propogated by other thinkers in the industrialised west in connection with the future development of the countries that merged from colonial rule one after the other. By borrowing technology and adopting educational, legal and political institutions of the West, the developing countries (it was assumed) would undergo the same social and political changes, as the industrialised countries had done in the past to attain their present level of development.

With India's independence, the nationalist leaders opted for this form of "borrowed" development to guide the country towards progressn and prosperity. However in their adoption of the theory, they had not accounted for the fact that by simply borrowing a socio-political framework and putting it on to an existing social structure was not sufficient to ensure an "over-night"

transformation of the social and political structure of the entire country. The western industrial society had grown for over 300 years, developing the various institutions, legal systems, education and technology at the same time as the feudal society gave way to an industrial one. The transformation had occurred with a force that had gathered a momentum that no individual political power could influence.

The modern theoreticians had believed that the structure of the existing older society of India was covered by a "hard shell". This "shell", they had thought could be smashed, enabling the older society to accept the borrowed concepts and ideals of the industrialised society. Instead the older society acted as a "sponge" that was selective in its permeability. The older society would absorb an amount of the new system, that would cause minimum friction to its existing structure without altering its essential nature. The existing social structure itself had been built by a similar process of selective permeability over the millennia (Somjee 1986).

"India ever absorbs the new into its old self, using new tools in old ways, purging itself of unnecessary mind, maintaining its equilibrium" (Naipaul 1977).

The Western industrial societies, in their transformation did not emanate from feudalism, but from a number of historical forces put together ranging from "profit motive, efficient industrialisation and organisational means to realise it, thrift, reinvestment, religious justification of profit seeking activities, urban class, objective laws, bureaucracy, rational book keeping, land tenure, new notions of individual rights, and state authority etc" (Somjee 1986). None of these events grew

naturally in the case of India, but the end product was transplanted without living through the stages leading up to it.

Individual rights in the industrialised society were conceded gradually and almost always in delayed response to prolonged demands for them. Therefore the people were prepared in advance for the enjoyment of those rights. In India while framing the constitution, the constitutional lawyers drew upon their own experiences of constitutional law and related institutions of Anglo-Saxon countries. The stratified and associated living of traditional India was not taken into any consideration. The lawyers brought the individual to centre stage, provided the person with a list of fundamental rights and then charged the courts to uphold those rights. This system was in direct conflict with the norms of the traditional hierarchical society. The individual therefore, along with the majority of the population, did not know how to exercise their newly granted rights and were largely uneducated in using the implanted political system to either protect their own interests or the interest of the community.

There existed two conditions. One segment of society that had access to modern education, as well as economic power. They had contacts with men in public offices, and were prepared to involve themselves in the new political process. This gave them the advantage to use the various provisions within the constitution that governed public policy. This segment of society consisted of the rich elites and the rising upper middle class of the country's population. They were the minority, in terms of numbers, and resided mainly in the urban areas.

The second segment which was the majority of the population resided mostly in the rural areas. The second segment not having access to most of the above mentioned resources (even with attempted land reform) continued to adhere to the perceived stability offered by the traditional hierarchical and feudal social structure. The feudal power lords (who now also controlled the new political power) did not try to, in favour of their personal interests, expose the village population to the ideals of the newly introduced political system.

The cities continued to attract the rural poor, mainly for better economic opportunities. However from a political and social stand point, the city also gave them greater independence in the anonymity of the masses, taking them out of the direct control of single powers like the feudal land-lords of the rural areas<sup>2</sup>. The cities by their size and complexity and the existence of a form of socialistic, political framework diluted the social and political controls. The controlling power in the cities was spread out over a large number of people thereby loosening the direct control on individuals and families that had existed in the villages. Therefore it may be said that one of the factors of migration was the freedom of individual action in the cities. This freedom caused people to stay on in squatter settlements which might be much worse off in comparison with the physical living conditions of the villages they came from<sup>3</sup>.

In an attempt to understand such a complex situation in a somewhat simplistic fashion, it could be said: that the experiments with the "new order" of democracy (equality and individual rights), had become superimposed on to the "older order" of feudalism, and a hierarchic, stratified social structure, causing the different orders to coexist

simultaneously. The two orders do not exist at all times in equal intensities. There can be at a time or place, a greater dominance of the "older order" than the newer one with reverse conditions in another situation. The way in which the political and social conditions vary from the villages to the cities illustrate this point.

The position of the "new order" is more dominant in the cities than in the villages, where the "older order" is still the stronger one. The influence of the "new order" is probably the strongest in Delhi, the political capital of a centrally controlled country. The existence of the two orders is visible in the city in the form of the "formal"/authorised and the "informal"/unauthorised parts that the city is divided into.

The "new order" in the case of Delhi is represented in the "formal" or "authorised" part of the city. This part of the city could be interpreted as the result of rationalisation attempts of the masterplan under the planners. The idea of the masterplan was part of the various "development models" that were borrowed from the advanced industrialised countries of the west. These models were designed to be applied in various fields to achieve rapid development of the country into an industrialised nation. The Delhi masterplan is an example of one such model, used for the express purpose of achieving development in the field of urbanisation<sup>4</sup>. In a way it was also an acceptance of the precedent set by British New Delhi, with its segregated zoning byelaws, and exclusive specifications as the standards of modernisation.

However till today approximately only 34%<sup>5</sup> of the total population of the city, can afford to stay in the authorised areas of the city. These authorised portions of the city are the areas where the privileged elites and the rising middle class population resides. The rest of the 66% of the population are those who started with a handicap, and they inhabitant various squatter settlements and unauthorised colonies of Delhi.

The inhabitants of squatter colonies are usually those who have come from the rural areas of the country, still structured according to the feudal, hierarchical, stratified social systems of the villages. As new migrants, they come and stay with other squatters who are of the same caste/social strata, or who have come from the same village or region. This way they gain a foothold in the city, getting to understand the new system, and finally learning to exercise their rights in the new "quasi-democratic" framework of the city.

Dwellers of unauthorised colonies also form a part of the underprivileged urban poor; like the squatters they too are structured according to the older social order. However there exists a difference between squatter settlements and unauthorised colonies. The basic difference has already been stated at the beginning of this chapter, unlike squatters, unauthorised colony dwellers are not part of the marginal urban population of the city. The unauthorised colony dwellers have the resources to buy plots or rent accomodation in these colonies. Therefore the first improvement from the status of squatters to unauthorised colony residents is that of land tenure. Unlike squatters the residents' of unauthorised colonies, have to buy the land, although the transaction is illegal, the property does pass from one



ownership to another. The transaction is carried out by a "power of attorney" which is a recognised procedure in the law courts. Through this method, using the legal system for conducting the transfer, the colonies have begun participating in the legal systems of the "new order". This shows the another difference between the squatters and unauthorised colony dwellers who are more familiar with the legal and institutional structure of the city.

The physical consolidation of unauthorised colonies is much more rapid than the squatter settlements (given the same time frame), because of higher investment capabilities of the colony residents which is a result of the higher tenure security. The houses are constructed out of permanent materials like brick and stone unlike cardboard and plastic shacks of the squatters. The solidness of the houses and physical consolidation of the colonies also help, to a certain extent, to resist the demolition orders of the authorities. Finally the residents through their economic success and political efforts, manage to extend the city services into these colonies, and ultimately achieve authorisation.

Achieving authorisation also illustrate the residents' superior position over the squatters in understanding and manipulating the political system. Authorisation means an official acceptance of the unauthorised colonies by the authorities, a level which the squatters rarely reach. Therefore the unauthorised colonies, in comparison to the squatters start with a much better position to establish themselves permanently in the city of Delhi.

The following chapters of the text form the body of this research on unauthorised colonies, where the issues hinted at in this introduction chapter would be discussed in greater detail, illustrated by examples drawn from specific case studies.

**ENDNOTES:**

1. Interpretation from Somjee A.H. "Parallels and Actuals of Political Development" (St. Martin's Press. New York).

2. "Though attitudes are no longer feudal, they have changed only marginally." Quote from Ahmed Farzand's and Kumar Ajay's special report "Area of Darkness" (in India Today Dec.31 1986). The comment is about the dominating feudal lords of Bihar, controlling most of the land, while a majority of the population exist as "landless labourers" because of the lack of an effective land reform.

3. This situation has been also portrayed in contemporary literature and serious films. The film "Paar" (The Crossing) by Gautam Ghose released in 1985 is based on the same theme. The film shows the flight of a lower caste couple from their village, to escape the wrath of the local higher caste landlord who lost the elections to the lower caste opponent (who is subsequently murdered). The couple come to the city (Calcutta), but would not return to the village, for the fear of being murdered by the landlord. In the city at least they are safe from direct persecution of any one group.

4. An example of the largest of such borrowed development models are the country's "Five Year Plans", designed for the development of the entire country.

5. The statistic is from K. Bharati's master's thesis "Housing Sub Systems in Delhi: Development and Policy Intervention." (School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi 1986).

## 2. INDEPENDENCE TO MASTERPLAN

To understand the relevance of Unauthorised Colonies to the city of Delhi today, it becomes necessary to understand their evolution over time as related to the growth of the city. In other words, before examining the growth of unauthorised colonies, it is necessary to understand among other factors, their relationship with the conditions of the land and housing market in Delhi from a historical stand point. This chapter will explain how the land market conditions were some of the basic reasons that prompted the unauthorised colonies to evolve to their present state, in which they accomodate approximately 40% of Delhi's total population.

When India "won" independence on 15 of August 1947 Delhi was retained as the capital city, with the "Viceregal Lodge" being renamed "Rashtrapati Bhavan" (President's House). Independence also brought to Delhi a huge influx of political refugees, a result of the partition of India, forming a new country, Pakistan. As a the result within a decade (1941-1951) Delhi's population more than doubled itself, and by 1951 it had reached 1.41 million.

However this rise in population was not solely due to the migration of refugees into Delhi. Migration from within the country also increased substantially, because Delhi as the capital of free India became a primary attraction for people looking for business and job opportunities.

The new government was busy trying to consolidate its position, building new office buildings for the expanding ministries and related administrative services.

New jobs were being created by the government offices and the private concerns, that set up their establishments in Delhi to be near the Central government. People came flocking to Delhi from various parts of the country. They ranged from government employees and businessmen to industrialists and entrepreneurs, in search of employment and business opportunities.

The migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, from the countryside also increased, as more and more people were employed in the hectic building activity of the city. As India in a frenzy of industrialisation, tried to catch up with the rest of the world, many of the migrant workers also found employment in offices and factories that were being built in and around Delhi.

With all the people coming into the city, Delhi had to expand rapidly to accomodate them. The Government as a priority chose to deal with the two largest homogenous groups in the population: the incoming refugees and its (the government's) own employees. With the result a seperate ministry was formed to deal with the refugee issue. The Ministry of Rehabilitation, built hutments and barracks in 20 seperate colonies, 4-6 kilometers away from the city centre surrounding the developed core of the city. The tenements along with the land was fully subsidised and housed 65,000 refugee households from a total of 125,000 refugee families that had migrated to the capital city.

The government also continued to build rental housing for its various "classes" (classification through income

categories<sup>1</sup>) of employees. 21,000 dwellings were built between 1947 and '62, almost 87% of it being for the lower "classes". The demand that was met by this effort was approximately 50%, which resulted in long waiting lists for future allotments.

Even in those early days, it could be seen, that the government could not keep pace with the demands. The reasons being delays caused by the time consuming legal processes in acquiring land, which in turn added to the rising construction costs (a result of the high levels of standards demanded by the codes), and a shortage of technical staff. The DIT<sup>2</sup>, created during the British period, continued to be the urban development body for Delhi. Though they actually did not do any new development by themselves, they authorised or monitored projects undertaken by private developers.

Private developers and real estate agents, known as "colonisers", entered into collaboration with the local landlords and farmers, whose land surrounded the city. The land was subdivided into plots and sold to the public, hence forming residential colonies. However plans for these colonies, had to be submitted to the DIT for their approval, before the plots could be sold. Subject to DIT's approval, the colonisers would begin selling the plots. The development of the colony would proceed incrementally, as and when financed by the actual sales.

The colonies grew quickly, mostly in the South and the West of New Delhi. The direction of development was determined by the existance of city infrastructure<sup>3</sup>. The Municipal Corporation had already installed electriscity, water supply and sewerage in these areas for the government housing colonies and refugee camps that were being built in South and West Delhi.

The DIT approved privately developed colonies, because of their high land prices catered only to the rich. The polarisation existed in these colonies partly due to the high levels of standards and codes insisted upon by the DIT and MCD<sup>4</sup>. The other reason was the purely profit motivation on the part of the "colonisers", which kept the price of land at the highest sellable level.

The equation remained unbalanced between the demand for land and shelter at various income levels, and the restricted and limited supply that existed. The government concentrated on the refugees and the its own employees. These were the two largest homogenous groups, that had to be catered to or kept pacified by the ruling Congress government, to maintain its own stability at the centre.

The old city had been steadily overcrowding since the building of New Delhi, as this was the only area that the poor could afford to stay in. British New Delhi required the services of the urban poor, but effectively prohibited them from residing within the new city by pricing them out. The high land prices and rents<sup>5</sup>, acted as an effective means of social control. So the poor continued crowding the old city, as single rooms were rented out to entire families. The other option was squatting, and squatter settlements developed in areas that were out of sight of the authorities. East Delhi which grew on the other side of the river was one of the most popular areas for squatter colonies. The authorities at the time were uninterested in developing the land across the river and therefore did not check the squatters from occupying the land. For the urban poor the option of squatting continued into the post independence period. Squatting became one of the best solutions for

all those who could not find shelter in the government developed refugee and employees colonies, or afford the DIT approved private colonies.

Some of the "colonisers" along with the farmers took advantage of the polarised land market conditions and decided to subdivide agricultural land and sell them. These plots were sold at rates much cheaper than the prevalent market rates. This was possible, as these colonisers sold the land "raw", without any infrastructure or site development and therefore without DIT's approval. This method of operation was also extremely profitable for the colonisers, as there were virtually no overheads involved in acquiring or selling the land. In this fashion, land could be brought into the market virtually overnight. The added advantage was that the transfer of plots to individual buyers was legal under the Transfer of Property Act of 1882.

The colonisers made a profit of 130-150% as the land in these colonies sold at a low of Rs. 3-5/sq.yd. (with no development costs) as against the DIT approved colonies where the price was Rs. 8-20/sq.yd. The legal colonisers having to pay the high development costs to the standards set by DIT as well as the running overheads of their company. (Chatterjee 1978, Bose 1969)

The pressure on land was immense and whosoever was in the business made huge profits capitalising on the situation. The method of selling land, without the approval of the DIT, can be considered as the prototype of what later became known as "unauthorised colonies" upon the implementation of the Delhi Masterplan.

## The Masterplan

By the mid 50s, the situation had got so much out of control, that the government decided to intervene, and guide development in an effort to balance out the polarised land and real estate market.

The government decided to control future development of the city by framing a twenty year masterplan for the city, and creating a public body to implement it.

The actual Masterplan was sanctioned by 1962. While it was being framed, (1957-62) an Interim General Plan was enforced by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). DDA as the name suggests was the newly formed public body, responsible for implementing the masterplan policies.

For the government, the decision to intervene in the land market was very much in keeping with the political ideologies of "socialism" and "democracy" that was borrowed from the Industrialised West. Similarly the method of intervention, (through framing a masterplan for the city) was also a product of "rational" and "scientific" approaches to problem solving of the Industrialised Western society<sup>6</sup>. The objectives of the Masterplan showed the socialistic basis or ideologies of the new government and its political leaders. An example of those ideologies can be seen in the four major goals of the "Policies of Large Scale Land Acquisition, Development and Disposal".

The goals were;

"To achieve optimal social use of land."

"To insure the availability of land in adequate quantities at the right times and for reasonable prices to both public authorities and individuals."



"To prevent concentration of land ownership in a few private hands and safeguard the interests of the poor and the underprivileged."

"To control land values and to eliminate speculative profits."  
(Govt. of India 1958)

The Plan had specific recommendations for various aspects of the city's development. In connection with land and housing, it aimed at providing developed land for all income levels of the population, with specific areas earmarked and developed for low income groups in each of the eight zones that the Plan had subdivided the city into. Squatters were meant to be relocated and integrated into the urban community. Previously existing urban areas (like Shajahanabad) were to be taken care of through the upkeep, upgradation and provision of facilities where it was lacking.

In the implementation of the Masterplan recommendations, the most important policy was that of public land acquisition within the projected urbanisation limit, using the Land Acquisition Act of 1894. The concept was, that the state through the public body DDA, would own all the then undeveloped land, and thereby control all transactions and development in the city. With this policy, the state hoped to avoid speculation and ensure an adequate supply of land at all times, and at prices compatible to the income groups being catered to. The land was to be leased to individuals or groups for a period of 99 years, thereby eliminating freehold property. Land prices for the Lower Income Groups (LIG) were to be subsidised through the auctioning of commercial, industrial and Higher Income Group (HIG) residential plots. While the Middle Income Groups (MIG) households paid for the actual costs of land acquisition

and development. Out of the total number of plots to be developed 50% were to be for LIG households, 30% for MIG and the remaining 20% for HIG through auction.

The Masterplan policies and implementation measures as they were framed could be interpreted as

(1) a result of the seriousness of the land crisis at that period in time. (2) a reflection of the political and social ideologies of the government through the egalitarian principles of the masterplan policies.

(3) also being in support of the belief or notion that the welfare of society, especially the poorer and the weaker sections of community was the responsibility of the community collectively, and the state through a public body like DDA would act as an agent in dealing with those responsibilities. (Chatterjee 1978)

The first step that was to be taken by DDA towards implementation of the Masterplan policies was the acquisition of all land that had not already been developed. In 1957 while the Masterplan was still in the process of being finalised<sup>7</sup>, the decision to acquire land was made public. The actual legal notices were however not served to the landowners till 1959, the physical acquisition starting after that. The decision taken by the government to control all land through DDA, meant an end to any further private or commercial transactions in the city.

The existing developed areas were however exempted from this "land freeze". This premature act, of announcing the decision to acquire land before serving legal notice and actual acquisition, on the part of DDA affected the land market in two ways. Firstly it cut off all commercialised modes of land supply (provided by colonisers), when DDA

had not even started acquiring the land. Therefore there was no hope of filling the gap with an alternative supply, as DDA had proposed.

Secondly by exempting the existing colonies from state ownership, caused the land prices in these areas to go up abnormally because of speculation. These were the only areas remaining in the city where land transactions could be carried out legally. Land prices went up rapidly as the colonisers speculated with the 25% of the total plots that they had initially held back as "reserved plots"<sup>8</sup>. The end result was that, though these colonies had never really catered for the poor, they now excluded even the middle income families from them.

The Municipal Corporations move to relocate squatters in resettlement colonies planned as "site & services" projects<sup>9</sup> in 1960, also ran into problems. The initial difficulty was to differentiate between "eligible" and "ineligible" squatters, as to who would be benefitting from the relocation. Further problems arose when some of the allottees, unable to pay the 12.79 rupees monthly development charges, sold (through a power of attorney) their plots illegally to higher income families, who were not squatters but needed land to build their homes and could not afford any other option. (Jagmohan 1978)

This was one of the examples of the commercialised mode of supply passing from the legal delivery process of the DIT period to an illegal mode of land supply. The same process occurred in the case of subsidised government employees rental housing. Government employees, were allotted subsidised apartments according to their position on a waiting list. On obtaining possession of the apartment, the employee would then proceed to sublet it

as a source of additional income, especially if the person had alternative accommodation elsewhere in the city. In other cases the families, while residing in the apartment, let out a single room to another family or single person. This system of renting subsidised government housing by the employees at near market rates, has become a well established form of augmenting the supply of housing. To the extent that the employees would purposely enroll themselves for allotment by turn, and rent them out for a profit, they themselves stayed on in their previously rented apartments or self owned accommodations, as the case might be<sup>10</sup>.

Both the developments in illegal supply of land and housing (subletting government housing and illegal sales of plots in resettlement colonies), evolved out of the DDA imposed land freeze, and the resultant increase in polarisation of the land market as described earlier. Though these forms of illegal land supply helped to fill the gap in the land and property market, they definitely did not come anywhere near being an effective alternative, simply because of its limited scale of operations. This form of illegal land and property supply did not reach the large numbers of the city's population, that were not catered to by the formal and legal market.

The other option, and probably the most important one, in the area of illegal land supply are the unauthorised colonies. These colonies developed out of the two year delay between the announcement of The Land Acquisition Policy, and the actual serving of legal notice to the landowners. The land was to be acquired at rates fixed by the government for agricultural land (in one case Rs.2.79/sq.yd.). The developed land in surrounding areas were however already several times higher (Rs.100/sq.yd)

at the time of acquisition by DDA. (Bose 1973)

The farmers and the landowners, whose land would have been acquired, decided to take advantage of the time gap and subdivide and sell their land as residential plots. This way they made greater profits, in comparison to selling the land at fixed rates to the DDA. The provision in the Land Acquisition Policy, which did not require existing developed land to be acquired, led the farmers to sell most of their land rapidly. They even constructed buildings overnight that were made to look old, as a proof of their previous existence.

As mentioned before this method of selling land by the farmers, resulting in unauthorised colonies, already had a precedence set up by the illegal colonisers from the DIT days. These same illegal colonisers and estate agents, formed partnerships with the farmers, to sell their agricultural land. The plots were sold with minimal or no development (in many cases, even the roads were not levelled) at approximately Rs.4/sq.yd. to Rs.12/sq.yd. depending on location of the property in the city, and level of development provided<sup>11</sup>. (Bose 1973)

The land could no longer be sold through The Transfer of Property Act of 1882, therefore the rights to the use of the land was transferred through a Power of Attorney. Unauthorised colonies came up all around Delhi, the majority being in East and West of New Delhi, which were the least monitored areas by the authorities. People invested in these colonies, speedily turning the empty agricultural fields into dense residential colonies, engulfing the original villages that had owned the land.

The illegal land and housing market, was made up of the unauthorised colonies, resale of resettlement plots and subletting of government housing. The illegal market had

developed because of the sequence of events and situations that have been described so far in this chapter. The scarcity of land that existed before the DDA period was aggravated by the "land freeze" and the drying up of all commercialised mode of land supply. While the gap between demand and supply remained due to the inadequate amount of land released through DDA's inefficient delivery system.

Inefficiency was a result of the exclusive high development standards maintained from the Imperial New Delhi period. Combined with it were the practical difficulties experienced by DDA in its organisational capabilities, of acquiring, developing and releasing such large quantities of developed land quickly and efficiently. (Misra1986)

Of the different modes of illegal land and housing supply, the unauthorised colonies are the most effective in meeting the unrealised demands of the city's population. Mostly because of its large scale operations, these colonies have set up a land market which till today functions parallel to the DDA controlled formal market.

Unauthorised colonies are often thought of as a separate entity separated from the rest of the city, by the DDA, the city administrators, architects, planners, and bureaucrats alike. This notion is mostly due to its questionable legal status, but also due to its so called "substandard environment". "Substandard" in relation to the exclusive standards specified by the masterplan and the building codes and byelaws. However they are very much part of the overall city, and the city does not function separately from these unauthorised colonies. The

colonies function as an essential and important component of the city's structure at various levels, economic, social, political or physical. This aspect of unauthorised colonies as an integral part of the existing city system is what would be discussed in the following chapters.

#### ENDNOTES:

1. One of the many carryovers from the British bureaucratic system.

2. DIT is an acronym for The Delhi Improvement Trust a public body created during the British period to guide Delhi's development.

3. City infrastructure meaning sewage lines, water supply, telephone and electric lines, roads etc. provided by the municipality, to cater to the expansion of the government housing colonies.

4. MCD is an acronym for The Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

5. The exceedingly high development standards and low density layout of New Delhi was one of the reasons for such high prices.

6. This condition of borrowed models for dealing with urbanisation problems from industrialised countries, could be seen as typical of many developing countries, especially the ones emerging from colonial rule.

7. the period between 1957 and 1962.

8. The concept of "reserved plots" was used by most colonisers/developers to capitalise on the appreciated value of the land in the colonies after a few years of consolidation, according to the market conditions and the discretion of the coloniser/developer.

9.The "sites and services" projects were initially planned with utility cores on 80 sq.yd. plots, but later reduced to 25 sq.yd. plots to cut down costs.

10.The process in both cases (resettlement colony plots and Govt. Housing) has become so well established, that the apartments or plots could be located through full time or part time real estate agents and brokers.

11.This was still about 20 times cheaper than land values in the formal market at that time. (Bose 73)



### 3. EVOLUTION TO DEMOLITION

"Unauthorised colonies" usually begin as an alternative to the overall housing problem, however with time they evolve to house functions that are not necessarily residential in nature. In their functioning they are much more complex than their "planned" counterpart, the typical formal or "authorised" residential colony. The unauthorised colonies also double as areas of production and commerce, with small shops and workshops being operated within the colony.

Transformation of use in this manner, is however not achieved easily in the case of an average "authorised" residential colony. The reasons for this can be attributed to the close monitoring of these areas by the city authorities. The authorities, through their monitoring hope to enforce rules and maintain a strictly homogenous residential landuse in these colonies. However these colonies do show some amount of illegal activities of an economic and commercial nature. The neighbourhood store being an example of one such activity. These illegal ventures usually develop to the level of small workshops and business firms, before the regulations and byelaws restrict them from expanding any further. Therefore they never grow to the achieve the complexities or dimensions of enterprises located in "unauthorised" colonies.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the way in which unauthorised colonies evolve, from being an area of residential uses, to include other economic uses of production and commerce. To also understand the process that links the colonies with the city, making them an integral part of the metropolis. The other related aspect of unauthorised colonies to be examined in this chapter, is the issue of survival. The way these colonies manage to survive the constant threat of demolition from the authorities.

The exploration of these issues would be based on a specific case study as well as more general examples gathered from various other unauthorised colonies of Delhi.

### East and West Delhi

Unauthorised colonies, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, evolved mostly in East and West Delhi.

East Delhi having the greatest concentration of such colonies. The reason behind this was, that East Delhi across the river was in the 1960s the least monitored of the other three sections<sup>1</sup> of Delhi.

Most of the official development had been already organised to the South of New Delhi. Therefore the villages of East Delhi could carry on subdividing and selling their land without too much official intervention.

West Delhi came second in the concentration of unauthorised colonies, and had a majority of the refugee

resettlement camps as well. Since a large number of the refugees had not been accommodated in the camps (Ch 2), the unauthorised colonies worked as extremely viable alternatives for them to own land and settle down<sup>2</sup>. Many of the refugee families, bought plots or rented accommodation in these colonies. The authorities aware of the situation usually turned a blind eye to these colonies. The reason behind adopting this attitude was the political pressure that had built up in favour of the refugees. What also helped to maintain the status quo, was the practice of bribing the junior officials and inspectors. Initially this was done by the illegal colonisers, and later on continued by the residents themselves.

The case studies undertaken to understand the workings of unauthorised colonies in greater detail, are two such typical colonies in West Delhi.

### **Shyam Nagar and Vishnu Gardens**

The area examined consists of the dual colonies of Shyam Nagar and Vishnu Gardens, that had already developed by 1965. The colonies were created out of land that was originally the property of the rich landlords and farmers of the Village Khyala.

The village at that time was on the outskirts of the city proper, with the nearest developed area being Rajouri Gardens, created during the DIT period by the private developers DLF. The two colonies developed on either sides of what used to be a dirt road (now named Khyala

Road), leading from the Najafgarh-Delhi highway to the village of Khyala. The landlords and farmers of the village in collaboration with the illegal colonisers decided to subdivide and sell the land as residential plots before the actual acquisition by DDA<sup>3</sup>. Their decision, like every other coloniser was based on the fact that they could make a substantial profit by selling it as residential land by themselves rather than settling for the low prices fixed by the DDA as compensation<sup>4</sup> for acquiring the land.

#### The Sales and Attempts at Securing Tenure Rights

The method adopted for selling the land in these colonies was simple, it was almost a caricature of the sale procedure adopted in the formal colonies.

A broker usually sat at a desk, either under a tree or in a tent, next to the main Najafgarh-Delhi highway, with a sign board advertising the sales.

A generic advertisement would read.....

"\_\_\_\_\_ Colony : Buy freehold land at throw away prices, Rs.2 to Rs.18 per sq.yd. Residential colony within five minutes walk from main road. Visit the site. Free transport provided." (Bose1973)

This method of selling land, is still a more or less standard operating procedure, adopted by most illegal colonisers of Delhi. Plots were sold by means of a basic site plan that the broker would display on his desk. Sometimes as a real plan to sell land from (Vishnu Gardens) and at times more as part of a kit" that would

lend authenticity to the sales (Shyam Nagar). On the site the plot boundaries would be indicated by pieces of stone or bricks. There would be no provisions for electricity, water or sewage connections. Very often even the roads would be left unlevelled.

People still bought the land inspite of these conditions. They ranged from school teachers and clerks, to small businessmen and skilled workers, like carpenters and plumbers. Their desire to buy undeveloped land with an ambiguous legal title reflects the extreme conditions that the formal or legal land market had reached. There was no other way that this section of society could afford to buy land and property in Delhi. For them it was a means by which they could establish a foothold in the city, and thereby also escape from the spiraling rents in the formal housing market.

The illegal colonisers, attempted to make the sales bonafide (to whatever extent they could) in an effort to make the risks seem lower to the buyers. The method employed by them was to document the sale on court paper, and in some cases even recording the transfer of property at the Land Registry. This was possible because the Land Registry Office (in a bureaucratic fashion) functioned seperately from the DDA. Therefore it was difficult for them to verify, if the transfer had actually taken place in a legally recognised residential colony. (Bose 1973)

The 1894 Land Transfer Act that was used earlier on by the colonisers, could no longer be valid in changing property rights<sup>5</sup>. The illegal colonisers were forced to resort to other means of ensuring tenure security for the buyer. This was done through issuing a "Power of Attorney" by the original landowner, in favour of the

buyer. The "Power of Attorney" would grant the buyer rights to use the land, in any way the person would choose fit, thereby automatically including the authorisation to build a house.

This method of selling land and property, has also been used in the case of resettlement colonies, described in the previous chapter and other public housing projects that DDA had begun building by this time to provide affordable housing.

Like in any other unauthorised colonies, both Shyam Nagar and Vishnu Gardens attracted a lot of buyers. The difference between the two colonies was basically the price of land. In 1965, while land sold at Rs.3-4 per sq.yd. in Shyam Nagar, Vishnu Gardens on the other side of the Khyala Road sold at Rs.20 per sq.yd. instead. The difference was due to the fact that the site of Shyam Nagar was originally that of a brick kiln, and the land was sold without any attempts at filling in the excavations. The plots in Shyam Nagar were sold in an ad-hoc fashion directly on the site, without too much consultation of the siteplan. The plot boundaries were determined by pieces of brick and stone, placed on the ground. The chief intention on the part of the owner was to make any profit he could while getting rid of worthless land, which would be too expensive to sell with even the rudimentary efforts at levelling.

Vishnu Gardens on the other hand was flat agricultural land, that was subdivided, (with the help of a hired draughtsman) in a gridiron fashion, into plots and roads on a site plan. Vishnu Gardens therefore had plots that were more or less standardised into three or more plot sizes. Shyam Nagar instead had a constant depth for

all plots on the same street, but was undetermined in terms of street frontage widths. The buyer being free to choose any width according to the amount of land he was interested in buying. The price difference in the two colonies automatically created some differences between the two resident populations, in terms of income categories and occupation. Shyam Nagar attracted the poorer population, mostly skilled workers, like carpenters, plumbers, taxi drivers, as well as peons and lower level clerks in offices. Vishnu Gardens attracted the lower middle class families, that ranged from small time businessmen, and lower level government officials unsuccessful in obtaining subsidised government housing<sup>6</sup>.

### **The Speculation Factor and Risks Involved**

The unauthorised colonies too had its share of speculators, that included the illegal colonisers and the original landowners of the villages. They held back "reserve land" in the interiors of the colonies, same as the colonisers of the DIT period. This land was to be realised and sold in the future at higher prices, after the colony had established itself.

In some instances, as in the case of Shyam Nagar and Vishnu Gardens, portions of the "reserved land" benefitted the residents more than the illegal colonisers and original landowners. This happened when the colony started gaining recognition from the city authorities. The land was then acquired by the authorities for the provision of public facilities, like municipal schools and health care centres.

Speculation also occurred at a smaller scale, with individuals buying more than one plot to capitalise on the initial low prices. The reasoning behind these moves had the following logic. Based on the trend of steadily worsening market conditions of the city, the speculators deduced that, it would in turn directly affect land values in the unauthorised colonies. As the demand for plots in these colonies would rise, it would bring back much higher returns on the initial low investments they had made on the withheld land.

The willingness to take the risk in investing, both on the part of the residents and especially on the part of the speculators, show an underlying belief held by them, that these colonies had a sufficiently high tenure security. This notion could be seen as generated from an implicit belief, or understanding, that tenure security could be achieved through pressures and using influence on the city authorities. The hope was that the city authorities would have to give in, and grant authorisation. Especially since there seemed to be no solution coming from the authorities for the worsening land and housing crisis.

Taking the argument a step further, the origins of such an understanding or belief, could be seen as a part of an existing larger system. A system that is probably used as often as the official or legal system that is prescribed to achieve a particular end result. This "unofficial" or "parallel" system acts in many cases as a short cut, and in some cases could well be the only way to achieve a specific end within the existing institutional or legal framework.



The mechanisms that make this system work are based on pressures and influences, that could be financial<sup>7</sup> as well as through political and or personal connections. These mechanisms act to achieve a great many diverse ends, that could range from obtaining driving licences (without giving a test), to liquor store permits<sup>8</sup> and important jobs or contracts. Getting an unauthorised colony authorised or regularised, is derived out of this same basic system that is used by all levels of society throughout the country. However the ease with which this system can be used is determined by the social and economic level the individual operates from. Lower the level, more limited the access becomes for the person to use the networks that operate the system.

### **Construction, Growth and the Question of Standards**

Houses started to be constructed, as the buyers took possession of their plots. In their own interests they had to build quickly, and establish a residential colony before the land was actually acquired by the DDA. Once the colonies took physical shape, it would further enable them to press for legalisation and resist the demolition orders of the authorities.

One of the first steps taken by the residents in this process, was to construct the minimum of a single room to begin with. The construction method employed in these colonies in the early days (1965), could be categorised as either temporary (walls in brick and mud mortar), or permanent (walls in brick and cement mortar).

The categories depended on the investment capabilities of the families, as well as their level of tenure security at that point in time. In the case of roofing, the most temporary construction would be thatch. Even in its permanent status, the roofs would be constructed out of red sandstone slabs resting between steel T-sections. This technique was preferred over RCC construction, the reason being that this was a system<sup>9</sup>, that was well known as a conventional construction method, to the small contractors and builders, who built in these colonies.

The other reason for using this system was the speed of construction, in comparison to using reinforced concrete. This form of roofing would have practically no wastage, if the roof, at some point in time had to be dismantled. In which case both the steel sections and the stone slabs could be retrieved intact and reused or simply sold as building materials.

The construction method, as well as the way the houses evolve in unauthorised colonies, is reminiscent of the way Shajahanabad grew in the Mughal period. The transformation of a collection of "wretched mud-and-thatch houses" that was Shajahanabad in 1803 to the "largest city in India" by 1844<sup>10</sup>, is the pattern that the unauthorised colonies follow today. The houses improve from a temporary, one room thatched status, to a permanent multi-storey construction. The construction methods described, are derived from the Mughal period. The lime mortar being replaced by cement, and the timber rafters transforming to steel sections. The basic system remains the same, including the building process. The construction is still managed by small builders, who are often master masons working with a few labourers, carpenters and painters.

What is seen is a continuation of the conventional methods of building, that undergoes gradual modernisation, transforming to suit the present times. However this nature of development is in complete contrast to that of the formal or authorised parts of the city. The efforts of the city authorities in the authorised colonies, right from Imperial New Delhi, to the DDA developed Delhi, has been development by means of codes and byelaws and later a masterplan. Imperial Delhi had worked extremely well for the purposes it was built for. The formulation and enforcement of high development standards in an extremely low density city was an effective and yet indirect method of social control. As a comparison, Lal Quila the fortified palace of Shajahanabad had equally high, if not higher standards, and low densities as compared to the rest of the city. Imperial New Delhi, fulfilled the same position after the removal of the Mughals. However it no longer needed the fortified walls like Lal Quila did. Instead the byelaws and standards worked to keep New Delhi exclusively for the British, their employees<sup>11</sup>, and the rich Indian elites<sup>12</sup>.

Drawing on the discussions of Chapter 1, the same standards were continued after Independence by the elites who now played an important part in the government and politics. The high standards had to be maintained, especially in the case of Delhi, the capital city. Delhi had to be the "model" city of independent India, keeping pace with the "modern industrialised world", that the country's new ideologies and political framework had been based on.

Therefore, apart from the land crisis (described in Chapter 2) that kept a majority of the city's population

out of the authorised land market, the standards and procedures to build also worked in an exclusionary fashion.

The authorised colonies are geared towards, what could be termed as "development in stages". The buildings, whether they are houses, offices or factories, are usually planned and built as complete structures, that do not grow gradually but in stages. Each stage functions as a complete unit, corresponding to plans that are worked upon to the last detail, by architects and engineers. All immediate future expansions have to be decided in the designing stage, as the building has to be built according to the plans approved by the DDA or MCD. Any changes, or additions made in the future or during construction would mean going through the entire approval process with the authorities. That would mean an additional loss of time and money, the latter being usually spent as bribes.

The same principle is followed in the case of construction methods. All buildings have to be built following the same specifications, which would ensure a uniform quality for all structures. Whatever is built, has to be constructed to achieve a common excellence as specified by the codes. There is no scope in the rules and regulations for a gradual growth and consolidation of a dwelling. The emphasis is on standardisation and in the process creating a new class that is labelled as either standard or sub-standard.

This form of classification, automatically condemns the existing construction methods and notions of development, by pushing them into the sub-standard category. Incremental growth with straw roofs and mud mortar, or

sandstone slabs and steel sections are therefore classified substandard, and can exist unhindered only in the unauthorised colonies.

The efforts at standardisation can be seen as part of the borrowed "scientific and rational" organisational techniques of the "modern industrial society" that India was supposed to transform into. Enforcing the rules and regulations was but a step towards achieving that ideal. However the actual situation was not as simplistic. The classification standard/sub-standard or planned/unplanned does create differences between authorised and unauthorised parts of the city. In reality however the differences are not clearly "black" and "white" as they might appear to be, but instead consists of a lot of grey areas, that become visible on closer examination.

The existing traditional society did not change evenly or instantly into a modern industrial society<sup>13</sup>. Nor did the conventional methods of construction and notions of development get replaced entirely by the new science of planning or modern systems of construction. As was seen earlier in this chapter, the unauthorised colonies are the most visible areas of the city where the conventional ideas of construction and growth are still continued. However the authorised part of the city also features examples of the continuation of the same conventions. The methods used in unauthorised colonies are visible in the illegal extension of covered areas and addition of rooms on to the authorised buildings. Very often these illegal constructions are built by the same small builders and contractors that operate within the unauthorised colonies.

The authorities and civic bodies view such additions and alterations as a violation of the rules and therefore illegal, making them part of the same realm as the unauthorised colonies. The degree of violation vary depending on the social and economic level of the individuals and the neighbourhoods they belong to. An elite and rich neighbourhood would have fewer illegal constructions as compared to the lower income neighbourhoods of the city. The residents of such upper class neighbourhoods are the minority<sup>14</sup> population of the city, who could afford to maintain the exclusive standards for their own interests. At the same time they have greater power (political and economic) to bend the codes to suit their purpose.

The violations increase as the social and economic level declines, to reach the position of the DDA built "Low Income Housing" (LIG) projects and refugee housing. Here the illegal additions acquire a greater importance than the original authorised portion of the buildings, transforming it entirely. The violations in this case too, are protected from demolition by using the same "unofficial" or "parallel" system of bribes and political or personal pressures, that is used by the unauthorised colony dwellers.

The continual violations of the byelaws and codes that exist throughout the city, goes to show that unauthorised colonies are not isolated phenomenas in the city. A city that is assumed to be planned and well ordered according to rules and regulations, that are supposedly strictly adhered to by the citizens. Instead what is seen is an extension of the same sphere of activities and methods that operate within the unauthorised colonies.

The existence of the "parallel" or "unofficial" system that works in addition to or besides the framework of rules, is the reality of how the city functions. What is created is therefore the "grey" areas in an otherwise simplistic "black" and "white" construct of the city's structure.

### The Growth of Industries

The link between the activities of the unauthorised colonies and the rest of the city can be seen most clearly in the growth of industries that develop within these colonies. After satisfying the first requirement of providing a shelter, the unauthorised colonies start transforming from a purely residential colony to one mixed with commercial and industrial uses.

In the case of Shyam Nagar and Vishnu Gardens, the main Khyala Road developed into a commercial spine. The initial development had shops that could be divided into two basic types. One of the types was that of a "general store", selling daily domestic requirements. The other type was the "building materials' store", which till today are the most prominent shops on Khyala Road. The "general stores" have been replaced by shops that have evolved over time since the 1960s towards specialised sales. So much so that today the Khyala Road has developed into a regular market road<sup>15</sup> that features restaurants, with shops selling cloth, ready-made clothes, electronic goods and household appliances.

The building materials' stores, continue to sell materials that are specific to the construction techniques of the unauthorised colonies. Along with cement and steel reinforcement bars that are sold today, the shops still sell pre-cut sandstone slabs, and steel T-sections. These are also the shops that sell locally made non-porcelain, cement and stone-chip kitchen sinks and wash basins.

The shops in these colonies sell substitute products that are locally made and are cheaper than their brand-name counterparts that are made by the large national and multi-national industry houses. The products produced and sold as substitutes in these colonies are not restricted to only building materials. Goods that range from cast-cement sinks to transistorised radios are all manufactured within these colonies. Some of the products are manufactured independently by each colony (like kitchen sinks). More sophisticated products (like machinery or cloth) could be manufactured in specific unauthorised colonies, where the infrastructure has developed for such products that need more complex production processes.

The finished product is then sold in retail at each of the unauthorised colonies as well as the larger and more formal markets of the city. Small workshops manufacturing various products grew in the unauthorised colonies, as the residents started to use their houses as production areas for economic gains. Developing an indigenous production process, as they went along. The production methods in this case also depend, to some extent, on the way the residents bought plots or rented rooms in the colony. At the time of the initial sales, the plots were sold more by "word of mouth" than any form of formal



advertisement. The families and individuals that bought plots in one area of the colony, persuaded their relatives and friends to buy or rent in the same locality. Throughout the colony there developed a number of pockets, that had concentrations of specific groupings of families and individuals. The groupings were not based on simply family ties, but also developed according to a common profession or trade, as well as common religious and ethnic backgrounds. The way the workshops grew, and their method of production can be understood through the example of a furniture workshop, located in Shyam Nagar.

#### **The Carpenter's Family Business**

The case of "Surinder's Furniture Workshop" in Shyam Nagar is an example of one such grouping formed through family links, as well as professional links, that helped to start a business enterprise.

At the time of the initial plot sales, Surinder and his uncle Mohinder bought adjoining plots, and Surinder's aunt stayed on half of his plot. Sohan Lal (Surinder's other uncle) also a carpenter, bought a plot in the next street. Another uncle owned a plot on the main Khyala Road, and rented the front portion out as a shop,

Initially both Surinder and his uncle did small jobs for the furniture contractors of Delhi. Within a few years they got small sub-contracts, that enabled the entire extended family to work together. They started by converting half of Mohinder's house into a workshop. Their business grew within a couple of years as they

started getting job contracts directly from the large furniture showrooms and interior designers. To cope with expanding operations, they hired a few carpenters and rented a vacant plot in front of Mohinder's house. The plot had been lying unutilised by its non-resident owner since the inception of the colony. The workshop functioned in two separate locations, under the supervision of Surinder and his uncle.

The enlarging operations now attracted allied trades. The first to set up shop, was a fret and lathe operator, who was brought over by Mohinder. He rented a room from the family in the corner house, and installed his machinery in it. This room doubled as his workspace as well as his living space. He stayed alone, his family residing in a nearby village in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Surinder sub-contracted all his fret work and lathe jobs to this person, which he had to otherwise give to the operators in Sadar Bazar or Mayapuri<sup>16</sup>. Surinder avoided all past coordination problems by having the fretworker next door. He also gained a greater control over his production process without investing in machinery or hiring more workers.

This process that aims at attaining a self contained production system, continued with the appearance of the Painter. The Painter was an acquaintance of Surinder's and stayed in another part of Shyam Nagar. He came over on Surinder's invitation at the prospects of obtaining steady work. The Painter set up a stall on the front wall of Surinder's new workshop. The stall was more like a large cupboard, which served as a space to store his paint and varnish cans. As a workspace he used either the workshop, or part of the road in front of his stall, which he appropriated with an awning.

Surinder's workshop grew from half a converted house to an additional full workshop space. In addition what evolved was a network of ancillary production areas. The network provided the inputs, that had been missing on site in the past, to complete a larger production process. Shyam Nagar and other unauthorised colonies have many more examples of similar production processes, that develop as inter-related networks. In Surinder's neighbourhood too, there had grown a variety of other enterprises. One of them being an Embroidery Factory, that employed the women in and around the neighbourhood. There was also a small printing press, and a foundry that made iron castings.

These small production units produced goods that could be sold directly, and at the same time these individual products could be as parts and combined to produce a more complex product. Surinder's Furniture Workshop is an example of one such production process. In a similar fashion, a garment manufacturer, can put together dresses by first choosing a site or a workspace. Then installing sewing machines and hiring tailors to work for him. The ancillary inputs would come in from the Embroidery Factory closeby, and a cloth dyer a few blocks away.

This manner of production is in complete contrast to what is envisaged according to the DDA Masterplan. In the "planned city", keeping to the rationalist/functionalist doctrines, the place of work is removed from the residence. Therefore to manufacture any goods, the entrepreneur has to rent or buy space in the "industrial zones" and "industrial estates", of the city. Such areas are all planned to work for self contained production processes. This form of highly "systematised" and "organised" production, requires heavy investments,

that might work profitably for large scale production of complex and sophisticated products.

When it comes to relatively smaller scale manufacturing, the DDA and DSIDC<sup>17</sup> option is that of "flatted factories". Which is in reality nothing more than a scaled down version of the larger factories of the "industrial estates". They have to still function as self contained units, independent of each other's production process. There is no link or relation between the various factories operating on the same floor. This also means that the manufacturer, has to invest further in producing some of the ancillary inputs. Which could have been avoided in the case of unauthorised colonies, by working within the interrelated network of factories. Options for setting up industries as provided according to DDA's plans, are not attractive to the small entrepreneurs who are about to start their business with a limited capital. To them, the unauthorised colonies provide a cheaper and better alternative, when examined even from the renting or buying point of view. Besides that the manufacturers in these colonies have the freedom to grow and expand their operations in a manner that is more compatible to their requirements and means.

These advantages over the formal industrial areas can be seen as an explanation for the increasing popularity of unauthorised colonies. Their popularity is no longer as just residential colonies, but also as industrial production areas. The resulting proliferation of industry in these colonies are therefore not promoted purely by the residents themselves, but also attracts investors dwelling in the authorised parts of the city.

One of the most important factors, on which the growth of industries in unauthorised colonies, and consequently the growth of the colonies themselves depend, is electricity. This one valuable input comes from the government owned Delhi Electric Supply Unit (DESU). Unauthorised colonies, get electric connections and even telephone connections fairly earlier on in the process of evolution. In effect electric and telephone connections exist even before the water supply and sewerage is provided by the MCD. According to its policies, DESU provides electricity to all inhabited areas. Unauthorised colonies are recognised as inhabited areas, as they have a postal address as well as the residents are issued ration cards on those addresses. Besides all the residents are willing to pay the charges to DESU for providing the services. The other factor that helps in such cases is the provision made by the DDA that allows DESU to provide 3-phase electric supply apart from domestic lines to the original villages that these colonies grew around. This was allowed as a compensation to the farmers for losing their land and would help them to shift from an agricultural mode of production to an industrial one. Once the village receives the 3-phase connections, it becomes relatively simple for the surrounding unauthorised colony dwellers to acquire connections to their houses. The 3-phase supply is a valuable infrastructure for the industries to develop, enabling the owners to install electrically operated machinery.

Among the various services that the city administration supplies, electricity is the only one that the residents of unauthorised colonies cannot provide by themselves. Water and sewage are basic needs that are dealt with by the residents themselves at the inception of the colony. The water requirement is met by the residents installing

hand-pumps in their houses, or buying water from water-carriers<sup>18</sup>. Sewage is allowed to flow down street drains into surrounding wastelands (in the case of Shyam Nagar into the "green belt" that hides the colony from the Najafgarh Road). In cases like Vishnu Gardens, a more middle-class colony, the situation changed when some of the residents started installing septic tanks in their plots.

### Resisting Demolition and Gaining Authorisation

Over time the colonies are provided with municipal water as well as city sewerage. For the colony residents it is a constant effort to get the city to provide those services. Acquiring city services is part of the campaign to gain legitimacy from the city authorities.

Legitimacy is achieved when the colony is finally selected for regularisation, which is the first step towards authorisation. Till regularisation the colony residents have to continue campaigning for their demands, and simultaneously work out strategies to ward off the demolition orders of DDA.

Resisting demolition is a strategy that has to be practised by the residents from the very beginning of the colony's formation. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the physical solidity of the buildings in unauthorised colonies, help to protect it from being bulldozed too easily. This "bulldozer-proof" quality of the unauthorised colonies is seen here in comparison to the squatter settlements. Squatter settlements in Delhi being

mostly temporary in construction, using cardboard and plastic sheets, are much easier to demolish. Therefore demolition of squatter settlements are carried out much more frequently by the DDA, than in the case of the more solidly constructed unauthorised colonies. A speedy physical consolidation of unauthorised colonies is therefore of some importance in its endurance factor.

The initial days of the colony's formation usually go by unnoticed by the DDA, mostly because the colonies come up in "out of sight" locations. They are either far away from any of the current DDA development projects, and/or they are tucked away, like Shyam Nagar, behind the "Green Belt". However a game of "hide and seek" is by no means a long term solution, the colony dwellers realising this, aim to solidify their position through other means.

The path they choose is one which functions through acquiring political support. Their bargaining power is primarily their strength in numbers, since they represent the majority population of the city. Their numbers are translated into votes, a commodity that no politician can do without in a democratic political framework.

To achieve "authorisation" they use their voting power to gain support from the influential local politicians and their political parties. Political bargaining and manipulations is the mode chosen by the residents, to work the "unofficial" or "parallel" system and arrive at the final stages of authorisation.

There is a reason for the residents to choose the political mode. The process through which a colony is selected for authorisation, does not exist as an explicit policy in the books of the DDA. Only after a colony has already been selected for regularisation, does there

exists a beauracratic procedure to deal with the full authorisation process. The residents therefore, have to depend on political support to push their case to the selection stage.

The growth of industry in the colonies is another factor that strengthens the political and personal connections of the colony dwellers. The manufacturing activity causes the unauthorised colonies to link directly with the formal or authorised city system, becoming part of it. This in turn allows them to link with the persons, who have influence over the governing bodies of the city.

An illustration of this linkage can be seen in Surinder's case. The furniture that Surinder manufactures, is on contract from a highly priced "designer's" furniture outlet by the name of "Rupayan". The shop is located in Connaught Place the most exclusive central business district in the heart of New Delhi. It is to the interest of the owners of the owners of "Rupayan" to ensure that they keep recieving a steady supply of items to sell at a relatively low buying cost. Their profit margins would decrease, if they had to manufacture the furniture by themselves. This would happen with increasing overheads, workshop space would have to be rented in an industrial area, and carpenters have to be hired to do the work. Their management problems would also multiply having to administer the entire manufacturing proccess by themselves.

"Rupayan's" owners belong to the elite and influential set of the city's population. They would, on Surinder's request and their own interests, use their influence to help in the protection and also push for authorisation of the colony. There are many such linkages that are



established with the growth of such small industries in the colonies. The products that are manufactured in these colonies by being sold in the formal markets, link the economy and commerce of the city back to the unauthorised colonies. In turn they are further linked to the surrounding region as well as the overall country, through the large wholesale markets of Delhi. Disruption of the source of production, through DDA's eradication of the colonies, would definitely affect this chain.

A disruption can even have effects on the international trade, an illustration of which can be seen in the case of the "Export Garment Manufacturers". Unauthorised colonies are very popular as the manufacturing areas for the plush offices of export houses located in expensive commercial areas of the city. Demolition orders on the colonies means affecting the exporter's supply and can also mean losing valuable foreign contracts.

These examples illustrate not only the growing linkages that help the residents to continue inhabiting their colonies, but also how much part of the overall city they actually are. The unauthorised colonies, and their contributions play an equally important part in building up the city, as their authorised counterpart. It would not be too incorrect to say that the two (authorised and unauthorised) depend on each other in their development and growth, building the city to what it is today.

The use of pressures and connections, manipulating the political system shows that the unauthorised colony dwellers have gone through a "learning process". Unlike the fresh migrants from the villages, the colony dwellers show their growing understanding of the new political order. They have found a way of using the

political system, to establish some amount of representation at the level of the state or the government. The unauthorised colonies are an area where the gradually occurring changes in the social structure, can be observed. The changes occur with the older existing social order being modified and adapted to the new political order.

The adaptations in the social structure, also bring about modifications in the operation of unauthorised colonies. The leverage gained by the residents because of the links generated through the starting of industry, and their learning to use the political and institutional system is an example of one such modification. A simpler example is visible in the changes in construction techniques. The houses in unauthorised colonies today, are built using RCC frame structures. However the RCC construction is not done according to the specifications or codes. Instead it is internalised by those same small builders who built in sandstone slabs and steel sections. They build in RCC using their own codes which are more "rules of thumb" that are derived from the actual codes. The end product is a house, which echoes the houses in the authorised colonies.

The equation between the unauthorised colony dwellers, and the politicians (based on pressures and influence), that protects the colony from demolitions, and ultimately enables the colony to become authorised, works only when the democratic political order exists in its full form. Once the basic framework of democracy and socialist constructs are removed, the "unofficial" or "alternative" system also ceases to function. At that point the power or representation of the unauthorised colony dwellers are reduced drastically. Such a situation might even reverse

any favourable conditions, that may have been patiently built up over the years by the residents, towards achieving authorisation for the colony. In other words, with the suspension of democratic rights of the public, even if an unauthorised colony has been on an established path to achieve authorisation, as long as it has not been officially authorised it may still be demolished.

This is what happened in 1976, when the late Mrs. Gandhi, then Prime Minister, declared a state of Internal Emergency, throughout the country. All representation of public opinion through normal channels were suspended. India had transformed from a democratic to an authoritarian state. The implications of such a situation on the fate of unauthorised colonies is what would be examined in the following section.

#### ENDNOTES:

1.The other three sections for the purposes of this thesis being defined as North, South and West Delhi. This is also the way the inhabitants of Delhi divide the city, for matters of convenience.

2.The refugees had left almost everything behind in what was now Pakistan. Therefore for them to settle down and start a new life all over again, they looked for the security of owning a piece of land that they could call their own.

3.DDA had to serve notice to the landowner stating their intention to acquire the land, before actually taking possession. Usually there were long delays between the serving of notice (known as article 4 of the Land

Acquisition Act) and the actual acquisition (article 6). The farmers took advantage of this delay (often 3 to 4 years) and sold the land in this period.

4.The rates were fixed by the government according to the prevalent agricultural land prices prevalent in the market at the time of the serving of notice.

5.As it used to be in the Pre-Masterplan days, enabling the illegal colonisers to sell land without any development. (Refer Chapter 2).

6.Eventually when they are allotted the apartment, they might continue living in the colony and sublet the apartment for profit, as explained in Chapter 2)

7.Financial here means money given to various people as bribes or "presents" to push a job through, which might be irregular in the normal course of operations. However bribery has reached a state, when money has to be given simply to speed up even a regular process of transaction.

8.Owning a liquor store is a very lucrative business in Delhi. Since they cannot be operated without a permit issued by the Delhi Administration, there is usually a premium, in terms of bribes, in obtaining such a permit.

9.The system here is defined as a combination of load bearing brick walls and stone slab roofing on steel T-section purlins.

10.1804 description is from the French traveller Bernier's description of Shajahanabad in its formative years. The 1844 description is from the observations of a young English soldier travelling up from Calcutta.

11.The employees had to be subsidised by means of Government Housing, otherwise they could not have afforded to live within New Delhi and work for the Imperial Government.

12.The rich elites being the Indian princes and businessmen.

13.The modern industrial society based on democracy and socialist ideals, as opposed to the traditional one of caste structured feudalism, and an agrarian economy. (This is a continuation of the concepts elaborated in Chapter 1.)

14. Minority in terms of numbers, total percentage of the people living in the authorised parts of the city being 40% of the total population of the city.

15. This formation of a market road is a "natural" feature common to nearly all unauthorised colonies.

16. Both Sadar Bazar and Maya Puri are large, already established carpentry and workshop areas in Delhi. Giving out work in these areas from Shyam Nagar means slowing down the production process by creating coordination problems, as well as having to deal with uncertainties.

17. DSIDC is an acronym for Delhi Small-scale Industries Development Corporation.

18. A water carrier is a person who sells water from door to door, in empty kerosene cans. He can carry two cans attached to a pole on his shoulders. This is a modern day version of a traditional water carrier known as a "Bhisti", who carried water in a goat skin.

## 4. DEMOLITION AND AFTER

The form of government that existed for a brief period in India, with the declaration of Internal Emergency may not qualify as "pure" authoritarianism. Then again, hardly any real life situation can be classified as "pure" from a "copy book" point of view<sup>1</sup>. Similarly India's brand of government, under normal conditions, cannot be labelled as purely "socialist" or "democratic" either.

However a form of "authoritarianism" did exist in the late seventies for a period of 20 months and this chapter investigates the condition of unauthorised colonies in those days. The chapter also traces the change that occurred in the operation of unauthorised colonies with the return of a "democratic, socialist" framework of government. The discussion starts with an examination of the "authoritarian" conditions.

1975-1977 was the duration over which the "Internal Emergency" conditions lasted in India. By 1974, Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, had begun to fear the loss of her party's power over the country. Student unrests, general strikes and demonstrations against her government had started to take place all over the country. The old "Gandhian" Jay Prakash Narayan and his "total revolution" movement had also begun to pose a serious threat to Mrs. Gandhi's leadership. "Congress government at the center and in the states had squandered

their electoral mandates. The country was in crisis" (Rudolph & Rudolph 1987). The imposition of "Internal Emergency" was a decision taken by Mrs. Gandhi to get a grip on the deteriorating political as well as law and order situation within the country. The ruling elite were convinced that to salvage the situation, they had to resort to authoratarian methods.

"The 20 month emergency regime accelerated state as well as party deinstitutionalization by substituting fiat for a government of laws, and fear for consent." (Rudolph & Rudolph 1987).

By declaring a state of emergency the government could temporarily assume "extra constitutional" powers. Describing the situation simplistically, the special powers enabled the government to dispense with the regular time consuming procedures involving public opinion or approval. The government was free to take decisions based on its own judgement for the good of the country in a crisis situation. The powers that the government had assumed to deal with the situation were soon to be misused politically against a faceless people. The "suspended" public liberties, including freedom of press and normal judiciary procedures, created conditions that caused misuse of power to continue unchecked.

"So myopic was the vision of the ruling elite, that all manner of brutalities, including compulsory vasectomy, were indulged in during the emergency, supposedly to re-assert discipline. No examples were set by the ruling elite. Only naked power was projected." (Thapar 1987) Among the various excesses that took place during the

Emergency period, DDA's "slum clearance" projects also figured quite prominently. Systematic demolition of squatter settlements and unauthorised colonies were carried out at a scale that had never before been attempted. DDA could carry on with the demolitions unquestioned, mainly because of the suspension of all channels (media, political, legal) through which public opinions and demands, had taken effect in the past. The press were restricted from reporting the facts as they were under strict government censorship. Normal judiciary procedures were also suspended, and all legal disputes had to be settled through special courts that were set up during the period. Most of the opposition politicians were placed under arrest, through the use of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA). Even the lower ranking Congress politicians were powerless to influence the decision makers. The power was concentrated chiefly in the hands of a chosen few in the ruling party.

The demolitions by DDA were carried out under the excuse of restoring order back to the city. The Emergency, according to the DDA, was an opportunity to rectify the various violations of the masterplan and the building codes that had occurred in the past. This way they could undo the "harm" caused by unplanned growth and bring the city back to the road to the ideals of masterplan development. The lack of control in the past, was explained by DDA as a result of having been unable to take any action against the violators because of public protests and political interference.

During the 20 month period that the Emergency lasted, DDA went about knocking down illegal extensions to buildings and razing squatter settlements and unauthorised colonies to the ground. The demolition victims were transferred by



trucks to resettlement camps that were located on the outskirts of the city. In this fashion, DDA could free the land for development as originally proposed by the 1962 masterplan.

Residential colonies that had grown over the years consisting of permanently constructed houses of cement and brick were torn down because they came under DDA's categorisation of being unauthorised, substandard or unhygienic. The socio-economic networks that the inhabitants of these colonies had evolved were completely disregarded during the demolitions. The colonies existed in the official files as simply statistics, removed from the reality.

The most infamous demolitions in Delhi at the time was the highly controversial incident of the Turkman Gate slum clearance. Turkman Gate and areas around Juma Masjid were the poor muslim quarters forming a part of the old city. The area was to be cleared under Sanjay Gandhi's<sup>2</sup> orders for the implementation of his Delhi beautification scheme. The situation became worse as many of the poor muslims rioted in protest against the slum clearance and the compulsory vasectomy camps that were being operated simultaneously. Many of the residents died in the incident when the police resorted to firing in an effort to control the mobs<sup>3</sup>.

DDA also sought to justify the demolitions on "humanitarian" grounds. The generic classification of all squatters and unauthorised colonies as substandard and inhuman slums by the DDA, gave them the excuse to pull them down. According to DDA the solution was to rehabilitate the inhabitants of such colonies, into resettlement camps. These camps were meant to be an

improvement on the inhabitants quality of life. They could now be given legal titles to plots of 34 sq.m. and provided with "hygenic" community toilets, parks, according to the municipal standards, and access to public facilities like schools and work-education centres. DDA not only justified slum clearance as a means of providing improved living conditions for the underprivileged population of the city, but also projected it as having the additional benefits of beautifying the city. All the filth and dirt that these slums represented could be swept away, leaving Delhi clean and beautiful as the showpiece of the country, to be admired by the rest of the world.

DDA further explained its attack on unauthorised colonies as a means of checking speculation and exploitation of the public by a few unscrupulous persons, namely the illegal colonisers, and the villagers. The existence and growth of unauthorised colonies had been due to the continuation of the land and housing crisis in Delhi since 1962. What had further aggravated the situation was DDA's own speculative motives in controlling this land. DDA's technically owning all the land in Delhi, gave it the position of a very powerful real estate company, DDA exploited this situation to its own advantage.

One of the masterplan objectives was to cross-subsidise the poor by auctioning commercial and residential land to the rich<sup>4</sup>. DDA skillfully used this provision to boost its own revenues. Large amounts of the plots were sold specifically to the rich by purposely fixing a high ceiling on the plot sizes (731.5 as.m.). This automatically caused all the residential plots in a colony to be sold to the high income categories through auctioning. The DDA, besides profiting from the

auctioning, also released the plots specuatively. "Plots meant for auctioning were released in stages -- even on the same site -- to boost the land prices for maximum gains" (Mishra 1985). This practice of auctioning land also caused the land and property values to rise in the surrounding areas, leading to a greater perpetuation of the artificial price rise. By March 1982 DDA had disposed off 47.1% of the total plotted residential area through auction. "DDA instead of helping a steady supply of land onto the market had succeeded in creating an even greater land squeeze, causing land prices to soar"(Mishra 1986). The profit earning motivation of DDA could be seen even in the case of its public housing projects. The housing projects were meant to cater to the demands of the middle and lower income groups of the city's population. Though the number of units constructed were well below the actual demand, when it came to selling them, DDA gave first preference to those who would be able to pay the entire cost "cash down". This policy of DDA excluded large numbers of people who could afford to own a flat only through paying by installments. The speculative motives of DDA can also be seen behind the rhetorics of "slum clearance". DDA through the demolitions actually succeeded in freeing valuable land that it had been unable to capitalise on in the past.

The colonies that had occupied the land, had so far succesfully managed to resist the previous demolition orders of DDA through the use of political influence and personal connections as was described in the previous chapter. With the extraordinary political conditions of the Emergency those connections were broken. The "unofficial system" that had developed under a basically democratic climate, could no longer be used by the colony residents to protect themselves against the DDA

bulldozers. Most of the politicians and officials who had supported the residents in the past, were powerless to use their influence in the Emergency conditions.

The "slum clearance" program also worked as a punishment mechanism in the hands of the powerful politicians of the ruling party. Unauthorised colonies and squatter settlements that had supported the opposition politicians instead of the Congress in past, were the ones that were selected for demolition first. This was to be a lesson for the erring inhabitants of such colonies. The colonies that escaped their fate (like Shyam Nagar), either had direct links with the top politicians in power, or they bribed the DDA demolition crew to stop the destruction. There were instances in which, the DDA crew carried out a minor "token" demolition, and reported the colony as completely demolished. All the instances in which demolitions were avoided were a result of very specific conditions, and could not be formulated to form a standard operating procedure relevant for the new situation.

Resettling the squatters and unauthorised colony residents also enabled the authorities and the ruling party to gain social and political control over them. The largest section of the city's population<sup>5</sup> had been living in squatter settlements and unauthorised colonies scattered around the city that had been difficult to identify or control. The DDA resettlement camps, contained this dispersed population into few, regularly organised areas in which all the residents could be easily identified and hence also controlled.

## The End of an Emergency

The Emergency was lifted in March 1977, with the decision taken by Mrs. Gandhi to hold general elections. The Congress party as a whole suffered a massive defeat in the hands of the opposition coalition under the "Janta" banner. This was the first direct opportunity that the public had had, to express their long seething anger against Mrs. Gandhi and her government's authoritarian rule. Had she known of the public's real feelings, she might not have decided to hold the elections. "She had been shielded--by loyalists anxious not to displease her and by the absence of public criticism-- from knowledge of the greivances, political alienation and resistance that the emergency rule, particularly the forced vasectomies had created".(Rudolph & Rudolph 1987)

During their stay in power, the Janta politicians took some popular decisions in trying to strengthen their party's position through attempting to undo the harm caused by the Congress government during the Emergency. A number of "fact finding" and "enquiry comissions" were set up to take action against the congress politicians and the bureaucrats responsible for the Emergency atrocities. Among the bureaucrats charged, was also the DDA chief Jagmohan, who eventually had to be let off on lack of conclusive evidence by the court.

Regarding DDA's demolition activities, one of the first moves by the Janta government was to bring back the victims of the "Turkman Gate" slum clearance, and rehouse them in their original site. A low income housing project was constructed by DDA on the original site that they had cleared during the Emergency, and the previous

inhabitants were brought back to reside in them. The Janta government also changed DDA's policy regarding the sale of its MIG and LIG housing units. The first preference given to "cash down" payments, were modified to a 25% reservation quota for the installment buyers.

### Return of the Congress Party

The Janta government did not last for very long and by the 1980 elections the Congress had come back to power. The Janta coalition had lost its opportunity to prove its worth. "The promise of a major political economic corrections dissolved. There was no group which could rise above the parochial factions" (Thapar 1987). The Janta period was marked by constant infighting and rivalry between the high ranking political leaders. "Even the enemies of yesterday became political allies in the battle for political advantage". (Thapar 1987)

The Congress has remained in power in the central government since its return with defeating the Janta in 1980. This has been the case due to the continual lack of a national level alternative to the Congress party. The Congress winning the next (1985) elections, was partly due to the same fact, an absence of a serious challenge from any opposition party as well as the public's huge "sympathy vote" generated for Rajiv Gandhi. Mrs. Gandhi's assassination had caused Rajiv Gandhi to win the elections for the Congress as her son and heir to the prime ministership of India. Even after the 40 years of a professed "democratic" and "socialistic" existence, there

still continues a dynastic and feudal undercurrent in the social structure and politics of the country and its people. This undercurrent is more apparent in the rural than urban areas of the country, where the majority of the population or voters live.

The emergency period served as an important chapter in the learning process of the residents of unauthorised colonies and squatter settlements alike. What they faced during the Emergency was a condition which probably the residents had never contemplated. They learnt, how with the replacement of a democratic framework by an authoritarian one, they were suddenly left defenseless. All the networks that they had built over the past years, through political bargaining, by the use of pressure and personal connections, could no longer function as their means of protection. By taking an authoritarian stand, the government no longer needed a validation from the public for their actions. The extra-constitutional powers allowed the government and the authorities to take decisions without the approval of the public.

Therefore the right to vote was no longer a power that the unauthorised colony dwellers and squatters could use, to protect their rights or press for their demands. The level of manipulation of the political system that the colony residents and the squatters had practised in the past had worked then because of the acceptance or recognition of a basic democratic condition by the politicians and bureaucrats alike. Such forms of manipulation could no longer be possible with the suspension of that democratic framework.

## The New Strategies

The Emergency had had sufficient impact for the unauthorised colony dwellers and the squatters alike, to reconsider their position and strategies to survive future demolition threats.

With the return to "normalcy", some of the residents from the resettlement camps moved out after selling their plots illegally, to locations closer to their employment sources. Some moved nearer to the city centre to squat in new locations, while some went back to their original sites that were still vacant. With the support of the Janta government, squatting had renewed again, but this time the squatters adopted a different approach. The squatters usually stayed away from valuable land in the city centre and formed settlements along the periphery of the city, or on vacant land within the resettlement camps. These new squatters also took an active part in party politics to ensure their tenure security. Many of the community leaders became party members and worked for the party. They had realised that it was not enough to depend on just their voting power as a means of protecting themselves.

The operations of unauthorised colonies changed too. There was a growth of regular organisations among the unauthorised colony dwellers. "Resident associations" began to be formed by various unauthorised colonies, run by representatives elected to the posts of president, secretary, treasurer etc. The associations were also registered under the "Registration of Societies Act".



The individual "associations" in turn then formed "federations" representing unauthorised colonies in different districts of the city<sup>6</sup>.

The "federations" were formed to consolidate the powers of unauthorised colonies from the individual colony level to the district level and in turn to the overall city level. The main objective behind these organisations were similar to the concept of trade unions. The federations like the unions would be able to protect its members' (in this case unauthorised colonies) interests better. They would be better organised to resist authoritarian moves of the government in the future, as well as operate with greater strength within the political network.

The federations and associations today, have become a recognised force taking political advantages from the ruling party. They have also the power to mobilise the opposition parties to raise questions either in the local municipality meetings or even in the parliament depending on the seriousness of the problems faced, or the demands raised by the colonies. The other way through which the unauthorised colonies managed to secure their position, was linked to the rapid growth of small industries in these colonies after the Emergency.

### **Post Emergency Manufacturing Activities**

The flourishing of industries signify a growth of economic power in the colonies. Therefore the survival of the colony also becomes essential to the survival of the industries. The manufacturers have to ensure the well

being of the colony. With the growth of economic power, the manufacturers are able to make contributions to the ruling party in the form of donations. Since the politicians and political parties need donations to run their campaigns (especially at the time of elections), this relationship between the manufacturers and the politicians suits the interests of both parties well. In fact the system of donating to the party funds is followed by almost all private sector enterprises in the country. The donations are proportional to the size of the company and the importance of their interests. For the larger private companies, donations work towards the company's growth and progress. Because of the donations the company easily obtains the required licences and loans from the government as well as be able to control things in a state controlled market.

The donations are not restricted to just political parties, but also includes key government officials and bureaucrats, except it is no longer called donations. The system just described is the same "unofficial system" discussed in the previous chapter, in one of its innumerable variations.

The stakes of the enterprises in unauthorised colonies are much smaller when compared to the large private corporations. The principle however remains the same, the aim is to get a better control over the system in order to protect and better their individual interests. The new proliferation of industries in the colonies have increased with many small investors belonging to the authorised parts of the city using the unauthorised colonies as their place of manufacturing. This has happened with their coming to realise the advantages of operating within these colonies. They derive higher

profits from the low rents and land prices and are able to use the efficient production networks and systems that have developed within these areas.

The networks and systems of operation described in the previous chapter are being continuously refined, forming a recognisable sequence of steps to guide the investors in starting their operations. The growing attraction of these colonies for the small investors is also due to the fact that colony dwellers themselves becoming more aware of their own capabilities. This awareness results in the expansion of manufacturing activities and can be attributed to the activities of the second generation dwellers.

The first generation had been mostly people who had entered Delhi for the first time. They had spent most of their energies in settling down, protecting their homes and preparing a stable base. The second generation on the other hand, has had a more secure foundation to start from and have grown up within the city. They have also had a better education than the first generation, having studied in the schools and colleges of the city. Being more familiar with the political and institutional framework, they have grown up much aware of the possibilities of improving their businesses and careers. Many of these people are trained as professionals holding degrees and diplomas in Accountancy, Engineering, Medicine, Law and other such fields. For this new generation with their new skills, it was relatively easier to enhance the production base of the colonies. Surinder's son in Shyam Nagar, increased his family business, by securing "turn key" contracts and expanding the workshop on to another plot. "Turn key" here means the design as well as the complete execution of a project

(in this case usually interiors). Having graduated with a diploma in Architecture from the New Delhi Polytechnic, Surinder's son was able to progress from simply furniture manufacturing to designing and execution.

The higher education level of the second generation colony dwellers in the schools and colleges, also help them to better relate with their contemporaries living in the authorised parts of the city. This enables them later to form partnerships with these people and start joint ventures in the unauthorised colonies. The joint ventures cause the dwellers of the authorised colonies (through their investments) to have equal stakes in the future of unauthorised colonies. Therefore the survival of unauthorised colonies remain no longer the concerns of just the residents within these colonies, but also begin to directly affect the people residing in the overall city. These interests act to consolidate further the position of these colonies in the city. In this fashion the unauthorised colonies become even more directly interlinked with the city system, becoming indispensable to the citizens and the overall city.

### **New Trends in The Development Patterns of Unauthorised Colonies**

Unauthorised colonies as a production base have become a well established choice in the city of Delhi. Anyone wishing to set up a small scale manufacturing unit, with a tight budget, automatically considers the unauthorised colonies as the appropriate venue instead of the formal options of DSIDC or the DDA.

The colonies have also undergone changes in their structure to cater to this demand. In the older colonies the parcels of land held back by the colonisers for further expansion of the colonies are now being utilised to cater to this demand of workshop space.

The colonisers now rent rooms along the roads, that can cater to either shops or small manufacturing units like printing presses, silk screening shops, garment manufacturers, or bottle-cap manufacturers. The land behind these rooms are available for manufacturers who require larger areas. This land is sub-divided into smaller workshop space leaving a large courtyard in the middle for truck handling. Grouped around these courtyards, are worksheds in small clusters, with their own smaller courtyards that connect to the main courtyard.

The sheds are not all constructed in one stage but incrementally, according to the demands, as was the case previously with the houses. The worksheds may also be rented from the farmer or coloniser, in which case the rent is higher. Or it could be erected by the manufacturer/tenant himself on vacant land, in which case the coloniser would charge reduced rents. Later when the manufacturer leaves, the coloniser becomes the owner of the workshed.

This new phenomenon in the development of unauthorised colonies can be observed in all parts of Delhi, in the older existing colonies as well as in the more recent unauthorised colonies that are being currently (1987) built on outskirts of the city<sup>7</sup>. The unauthorised colonies still sell land for housing, but the colonisers are now in a more lucrative position, for they have a

longer time frame to earn dividends from the land through renting workspace, as opposed to outright sales of residential plots.

The flourishing industrial activities, increases the landvalues of the residential plots, causing the residents to sell their property to the manufacturers, and move into the cheaper areas within the same or other unauthorised colonies. In many cases they move out of unauthorised colonies altogether, and buy DDA built MIG or LIG flats, thereby acquiring a formal and more recognised middle class status.

The growing strength of unauthorised colonies, has naturally caused DDA concern, and they have reacted by undertaking periodic "token" demolitions to reaffirm their power. They have at the same time also authorised some of the colonies because of political pressures. The process here is not a simple one of reinforcing rules and regulations. For the politicians, there has to be a way of controlling the colonies, which they do through the DDA. The DDA also needs political support for it to continue its existence with 60,000 employees. Through political support DDA seeks legitimacy to carry on its speculative activities with land, in order to increase revenue earnings to feed its teeming employee population. Therefore it could be said that there exists an unwritten equation between the ruling party and the mammoth DDA, which need each other for their mutual interests.

## Authorisation and Control

The unauthorised colonies are periodically selected for authorisation by the DDA, the last such occasion being in 1982. A board reviews the conditions of the colonies and approves them to be authorised on the basis of humanitarian grounds. As was stated before, there is no explicit procedure to create the board, it manifests in time according to the demands of the circumstances chiefly through political pressures<sup>8</sup>.

Simultaneously with the last decision taken in 1982 for further authorisation, a "bill" was passed in the parliament, which authorises DDA to demolish any "unauthorised construction/encroachments on public land". With the new bill the encroachments or constructions can be treated as a criminal offence, the "offender" cannot appeal to a regular law court, but only to a special one-man "appellate tribunal"<sup>9</sup>. The new law gives the authorities more power to deal directly with the colonies without any interference caused by the residents obtaining a "stay order" from the high court. The law can be seen as a way to deal with the increasing power of the unauthorised colonies in achieving regularisation and on the whole enjoying a "defacto" tenure security.

The law also gives politicians an indirect control over the colonies by using a "carrot and stick" strategy. An illustration of such a strategy is seen in the fact that the same evening that the "bill" was passed in the parliament, DDA decided to formally announce the authorisation of a total of 507 out of the 602 unauthorised colonies recorded in 1982. The politicians

hold out the "carrot" in the form of promises to regularise the colony, protection against demolitions, and provision of municipal services.

The "carrot" is handed out in return for political support, especially votes, as well as the donations to the party funds. DDA serves as the "stick" carrying out the "ritual" demolitions from time to time. That is one of the reasons why only 507 out of the selected 602 colonies were regularised by DDA. The remaining 95 colonies, would remain uncertain of their status, the possibility of demolition being present at all times. In fact DDA would often start demolitions to be stopped by the local politicians, in the guise of a "guardian angel" of the colony. The demolitions by DDA and the timely intervention by the politician forms part of the system that is understood and followed by all three actors, the DDA, the politicians, and the colony residents themselves<sup>10</sup>.

To date there is no explicit official policy to deal with the authorisation of unauthorised colonies. The colonies grow, consolidate, and finally arrive at the stage of authorisation by following the process described in this chapter and the previous one. This process is understood by all the actors, based on which all the moves are made while the process remains implicit. The whole process is followed through out with a tacit understanding between all actors, till the end when the colony is finally selected for authorisation after which the explicit procedures of regularisation are begun.

What exists throughout the evolution of an unauthorised colony is a delicately balanced dynamic situation, that can be easily by any non-conductive or "corrective"



action, like the emergency was supposed to be. The last chapter attempts to consolidate the various aspects of unauthorised colonies and its relationship to the city that have been discussed in this and the previous chapters. The intention is to abstract the various issues and ideas that have arisen through the actual incidents recorded in various portions of the text and then attempt to present the larger picture that these issues fit together to form.

ENDNOTES:

1.The reasons for the non-existence of "pure" democratic conditions in India have been explained in Chapter 1.

2.The late Sanjay Gandhi was the younger son of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi, and was one of the prime figures in the Emergency excesses.

3.The report was published in the "Statesman, April 13,1980, after the Emergency had been called off.

4.This policy of the masterplan has been explained in more detail in Chapter 2.

5.Approximately 66% of the city's population reside in squatter settlements and unauthorised colonies.

6.From Documentation by Benjamin S.J. "The Evolution of Federations Towards Increasing Security of Tenure Against Demolition Attempts".

7.Areas studied for this purpose was the extensions of Shyam Nagar itself, Khan Pur in South Delhi, and Chajju Fields a new colony, which is further down the Najafgarh Highway, further West of Shyam Nagar. The same phenomenon can be seen in East Delhi that has been studied by Benjamin S.J. (1987) in a forthcoming Lincoln Land Institute publication. (Refer Bibliography)

8. The evidence of the approval procedure based on humanitarian grounds can be seen in the contents of the letter to the Lt. Governor of Delhi, from the committee appointed to consider the regularisation of unauthorised colonies existing on government land in 1982.

"it appears, in view of the substantial amount of construction that has taken place that the need for the provision of basic amenities in some of the colonies on Government land has become urgent."

9. Based on the report of "Times of India" March 25 1987.

10. The operation procedures of this system has been recorded by Bhavdeep Kang in his article "Unauthorised Colonies: Response and Responsibility" published in "Times of India" January 17 1987.

"For the residents of Delhi's 902 unauthorised colonies, it is a familiar story. An endless cycle of demolition and rebuilding, until around election time the colony is finally declared a slum."

## 5. TYING THE THREADS TOGETHER

The purpose of this last chapter is to summarise the issues that were raised in the previous chapters and present a picture of the current condition of unauthorised colonies in relation to the city of Delhi. The chapter begins with a brief chronological listing of the events that created Delhi's polarised land market. After which it presents two main interpretations of the reasons that have created the current state of unauthorised colonies and its relationship to the city.

The first interpretation views the unauthorised colonies as the informal training grounds for a section of the poorer urban population. The colony provides its residents with the opportunity to adapt to the political economic framework of the city, which further enables them to give rise to a form of indigenous development that serves as an alternative to the notion of masterplan development.

The second interpretation deals with the issue of control over the colonies by the various dominant interest groups of the city and an analysis of the relationship that exists between the unauthorised colonies and the city as controlled by those interest groups.

The chapter ends inconclusively since the actual process of evolution of the unauthorised colonies of Delhi has not ended either.

Unauthorised colonies still exist, basically due to the continuing polarised land market conditions of Delhi. The events that have caused the polarisation to continue have been explained in the previous chapters. However for purposes of recapitulation, they have been summarised below in the form of a brief chronological list.

1. Polarisation of the land and housing market in Delhi continued with the acceptance of the standards of British New Delhi as the development model for "modern" India. The standards were used despite the fact that they effectively priced the poor out of the city.
2. Therefore even in the post-independence period, the exclusive standards and low densities continued to keep the urban poor out of the formal land market. Added to these conditions was the sudden increase in the city's population, caused by the refugee influx and internal migration from within the country.
3. The population increase caused the already high land prices to soar, which was further aggravated by the implementation of the masterplan.
4. The masterplan, meant to correct the polarised land market conditions with its egalitarian ideologies, actually ended up (under DDA's implementation) creating an "artificial land squeeze"<sup>1</sup>. The "squeeze" further worsened the land market conditions, leaving 60% of the city's population with no option other than to reside in squatter settlements or unauthorised colonies.

This basic scenario shows how till today the urban poor has continued to be left out of the formal land market of Delhi. The situation that had existed in colonial New Delhi has remained unchanged even under the conditions of a "democratic" and "socialistic" political-economic framework, that has existed since India's independence in

1947. As pointed out in Chapter 1, the "democracy" is in reality a "quasi-democracy" that exists in its most effective form in the urban areas of the country, especially in Delhi. Barring the twenty month Emergency period of an authoritarian government, it is of importance to note, that it is the same "quasi-democratic" framework or conditions that has sustained the growth and existence of the unauthorised colonies of Delhi till today.

The importance of unauthorised colonies does not end simply as a land and housing option for a section of the urban poor. Unauthorised colonies also represent the transformation and development of a section of the urban society that resides in them. They are a section of the city's poorer population that has been underprivileged as compared to the urban elites residing in the authorised parts of the city.

#### **Forms of Development, "Masterplanned" Vs. "Unplanned"**

The evolution of unauthorised colonies have to be understood in relation to the intentions behind the proposed "authorised development" of the city; the development of Delhi that was to be guided by the DDA masterplan.

The masterplan sought to organise the city's development in a "rational" and "scientific" manner, according to the doctrines of an "ideal" industrial city. This form of development proved to be an alien imposition on a

majority of the population that was not as yet socially or economically organised on the lines of an industrialised society. The situation was especially true in case of the underprivileged poorer urban population. The poor unlike the dominant elites, were in the beginning unfamiliar with the new political and economic concepts of the industrialised society<sup>2</sup>. The existence of unauthorised colonies within the "masterplanned" Delhi represents the reality of what actually happened and is still happening in terms of the real development of the city. That is why the significance of unauthorised colonies do not end as purely an answer to the polarised land market conditions.

The evolution of unauthorised colonies also represents the "learning process", that a section of the urban population residing in these colonies have gone through over time. The "learning process" has caused the residents of unauthorised colonies to adapt to, and also in turn influence and manipulate the socio-economic and political framework of the city to their advantage. The manipulation of the political framework can be seen in the fact, that the unauthorised colonies are eventually accepted for authorisation.

The results of the "learning process" of the residents can be seen in the changes in their construction techniques and the growth of industries within the colonies. Unlike the assumptions of the "development models" these changes have not taken place by completely discarding the existing methods or the collective knowledge of the older society<sup>3</sup>. To repeat the analogy used in the first chapter, the existing society has behaved in a manner similar to that of a "sponge" that has been selective in its permeability, its base

absorbing the new ideas and slowly modifying to the external influences. The gradual modifications to this base has been caused by the influence of external factors, like the introduction of industrialised modes of production and a democratic and socialistic framework of government. The new ideas and concepts are internalised by society, to evolve in turn its own indigenous system that is better suited to its existing structure of functioning.

The changes in construction technique from the Shajahanabad period, of sandstone on timber rafters, to sandstone on steel purlins, gave way to RCC frame construction. However the construction management has remained the same as in the past, organised under the small contractors and master masons, operating within the unauthorised colonies. The small scale manufacturing activities in the unauthorised colonies show the same patterns of adaption. The tools and machines used for manufacturing and the products manufactured are all part of the industrialised production processes. The organisational aspects of the actual manufacturing or the production management methods followed, are what is derived out of the patterns of "home industries" during the Shajahanabad period. The networks that grow, interlinking different manufacturing processes that operate within these colonies, is derived from the implicit and collective knowledge of the population which was part of the traditional society.

What has been described before and again over here, is the transformation of an underprivileged section of the older society, influenced by a growing awareness of the new political and economic order. In other words a process of "modernisation" of the unauthorised colonies

and the section of society that the colony dwellers represent. The modernisation has not occurred following the rules of the masterplan, nor has it matched the "proposed" development of the city. However the functioning of the city depends on the patterns of "indigenous development" like the industrial patterns, that are generated by the unauthorised colonies. Similarly the unauthorised colonies depend on the authorised city for providing them with services like electricity, sewerage, telephone lines, and a larger market for its products. What has grown is a relationship of interdependence, between the unauthorised colonies and the authorised city, that together creates the city as a whole.

The unauthorised colonies today, through their development of indigenous industries, have managed to establish themselves as an important component of the overall city system. The position of the colonies within the city is further reinforced by the investments made in the industries by the formal entrepreneurs operating from the authorised parts of the city. The industries within the unauthorised colonies have proved to be far more effective for small scale manufacturing and are a better option, both in economy and efficiency of operation, than the masterplan proposed industrial estates and flatted factories.

The Delhi masterplan is too rigid in its framework and in its definition of "development". Therefore the masterplan is by-passed by the more effective and appropriate development pattern that is indigenously generated by the unauthorised colonies.



## "Masterplanned" and "Unplanned" as a Means of Control

The DDA has time and again tried to limit the physical growth and development of the city to the constraints of the proposed masterplan. The Emergency demolitions may be considered as the most obvious instance of the agency's efforts in correcting the masterplan "violations". In other words, forcibly altering the physical landuse patterns that had developed over time, to match the neat and colourful patterns of the "proposed" masterplan landuse map.

In view of the general performance of the unauthorised colonies the DDA demolitions of these colonies may appear to be illogical. There may be more than one explanations for this situation to exist. What is being put forward are three hypotheses. The first hypothesis is constructed from the bureaucratic point of view. The fact that unauthorised colonies are officially considered as violations of the DDA masterplan and byelaws, automatically condemn them as non-development from DDA's point of view.

The second hypothesis may be constructed out of a possible "threat factor", that these unauthorised colonies pose to the very authority of DDA. By ignoring the masterplan regulations and zoning, the unauthorised colonies are also challenging the effectiveness or relevance of DDA's notion of development. The demolitions by DDA may therefore be interpreted as its efforts in establishing its power over the unauthorised colonies and gaining control over them.

The third hypothesis is linked to the previous two hypotheses, and it is in combination with all three hypotheses, that the existing dichotomy of the situation may be given a complete picture. The hypothesis examines the situation from the point of view of the various interest groups that are concerned with the development of unauthorised colonies as related to the city of Delhi. In a broad categorisation, the interest groups may be seen as made up of the DDA itself, the politicians, the rich elites and the rising middle class population or the bourgeoisie (who with the elites form the dominant class of the city). For purposes of their own, each of these interest groups need to keep the unauthorised colonies under their control. The masterplan in the hands of the DDA therefore becomes the most effective tool for achieving that control.

For the elites and the bourgeoisie, the uncontrolled growth of the unauthorised colonies<sup>4</sup> poses a threat to the very existence of the "garden city" condition of Delhi. In other words, the expansion of unauthorised colonies lower the land and property values in the authorised portions of the city; which is where the interests and assets of the elites and the rising middle class lie.

On the issue of controlling the growth of unauthorised colonies, the DDA shares the same view point as the elites and the bourgeoisie. This elitist and middle class bias of the DDA is not surprising, since the clients in its land speculation activities have been the dominant rich and the upper middle class population of the city. This condition is seen in the fact that nearly half<sup>5</sup> of the proposed residential land has been auctioned by the DDA under the higher income categories. Auctioning off

land and large shopping complexes and business centres are done under the excuse of earning subsidies for the poor. In actuality they help to increase DDA's revenue earnings to enable it to maintain its existence as a giant and powerful corporation with 60,000 employees.

Uncontrolled growth of unauthorised colonies therefore deprives DDA off valuable land that it could otherwise capitalise on. The Emergency period demolitions had provided DDA with the opportunity to free parcels of high value land in the city. Land that had been occupied by squatter settlements and unauthorised colonies, which DDA in past had been unable to acquire because of political pressures.

Along with DDA and the elite/bourgeoise coalition, the politicians as the third interest group also have vested interests in controlling the unauthorised colonies. For the politicians it is a matter of achieving political control over a portion of the urban population residing in the unauthorised colonies. The colony residents depend on the politicians to protect them against the DDA demolitions and at the same time help them achieve authorisation. This dependence caused by the vulnerable position of the colonies, has been exploited by the politicians to gain control over this section of the urban population. The procedures that lead to the stage of authorisation for these colonies is through a process of political bargaining.

The bargaining power of the residents is their voting rights as citizens of the country, which they use to protect their interests. The votes therefore become a commodity that the politicians need. The colony dwellers

trade the votes for the politicians protection and eventual authorisation of the colony. Over the years the colony residents have gained a better bargaining position as a result of their "learning process" and their growing economic power. The "modernisation" of the colony residents through the "learning processes" also includes an understanding of the political system the city. The growing familiarity of this section of the urban poor with the political system, is seen in the change in their voting patterns. Initially based on caste and communal biases, their voting patterns today have been increasingly guided by the past performances of the candidates and the relevance of their political agendas to the overall community (Mayer 1970).

The formation of joint "Federations" by the unauthorised colony residents' associations after the Emergency demolitions, is a further instance of the residents' growing awareness in dealing with the political system. The "Federations" may be seen as an adoption of the formal systems of organisation (like trade and workers unions) by the colony residents, that would be recognised on terms that are equal to the government's own political and institutional framework. The united strength of the Federations have proved to be more effective for the residents of unauthorised colonies, in pressing for their demands and getting them accepted than they have been in the past.

The gathering economic and political strength of the colony residents, is what is sought to be controlled by the politicians and the other interest groups. The enforcement of the masterplan through DDA is therefore used by the politicians, as a means of exercising political control over the 40% of the city's population

that the unauthorised colonies house. DDA once again becomes the mechanism through which control is exercised on the unauthorised colonies.

Both the politicians and the DDA have reached an understanding that recognises their mutual needs. DDA needs the political support to validate its operational irregularities caused by its profit earning activities. The politicians in turn require DDA to do the actual "dirty work" and to be the "villain of the piece" in the "carrot and stick" method of controlling the colonies. The "carrot and stick" strategy consisting of demolition by DDA, and simultaneous "protection" (or punishment<sup>6</sup>) by the popular politician, has today developed into an obvious yet implicit system. A system that is understood and followed by all the participants connected with the authorisation of unauthorised colonies.

Throughout this research the attempt has been to present the complexities that underly the existence of the unauthorised colonies. Unauthorised colonies from the very outset of their existence have been disadvantaged in a city that functions with a middle class basis. The control till today has existed in favour of the elites and the middle class, which is not surprising given the current condition where the overall development in India having taken on "a kind of middle class orientation" (Thapar 1987).

The current situation in Delhi concerning the urban poor, does not seem to have changed from the times of Imperial New Delhi. Delhi needs the services of the poor, but creates conditions that would not allow them to reside within the authorised portion of the city. Unauthorised

colonies are therefore a convenient way to keep the urban poor out of the authorised city of the bourgeoisie and the rich.

While the issues raised in the last portion of this chapter show the continuing exploitation of the dwellers of unauthorised colonies, there is another side to the picture. The story of unauthorised colonies is at the same time also that of the learning process of a part of the "disadvantaged" or "underprivileged" section of the urban population. The unauthorised colonies today, have achieved a better bargaining position in the decision making levels of the city, and have consequently established themselves firmly in the framework of the city. The colonies also represent an alternative form of development which is seen in the growth of the indigenous industrial systems within the colonies. A development that does not conform to the masterplan ideals of growth, but is in reality a much more popular, efficient and economical alternative.

What has resulted is a natural "balance" within the current social, economic and political conditions of the city. The unauthorised colonies at the beginning of their evolution provide land and housing for a section of the urban poor. As long as the colonies remain unauthorised, they continue to provide cheap land and housing. The residents, through their "learning" of the political economic system of the city, take the colonies to the stage of authorisation thereby reaching the threshold of the formal land market. In other words the colony residents through their efforts become the new middle class. The granting of "authorisation" may be seen as the acceptance of these once poorer population as the emerging middle class by a city dominated by the middle

class. Till the colonies achieve the middle class status they have to remain unauthorised.

The poor can no longer afford to live in the newly regularised or authorised colonies, instead they have to move to other more newly evolved unauthorised colonies. The process then begins all over again to reach the final stage of authorisation. In this way a natural "balance" is maintained by the unauthorised colonies providing cheap land within the city. The "balance" that therefore exists in the current socio-economic and political conditions of the city, is probably the best alternative for the time.

Suggesting any alternatives to the existing conditions, in terms of concrete policies or proposals is beyond the scope of this research. There can be also no conclusion to an analysis of an on going process of evolution, that the unauthorised colonies represent. Therefore this chapter is being left open ended, with a special emphasis on the state of "balance". If current political, social, and economic conditions are to remain unchanged, then the existing natural "balance" should also be left untouched. Any steps taken to rectify the situation, without understanding this state of "balance" would be quite ineffective in bringing about any real change for the good. Instead such a move may very easily upset the existing equilibrium making matters worse for the colony dwellers.

**ENDNOTES:**

1.The concept of an "artificial land squeeze" has been explained in detail in Chapter 2.

2.This situation has been explained in greater detail in the Background section in Chapter 1.

4.From the point of view of the elites the unauthorised colonies are in the category of slums, especially when compared to the expensive residential areas of the authorised portions of the city.

5.The actual percentage of higher income plots auctioned in 1982 was 47.1% of all proposed residential plots.

6.Punishment meaning, not stopping the DDA from demolishing the colony, in case the colony residents have been unfaithful to the politician in the past.



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