

# Planned Delegitimisation of the Urban Poor in Delhi, at Work and at Home

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Urban poverty is related to the manner in which people get work in the city and how much they can earn from it. Delhi was known as a manufacturing city at one time and Table 1 gives the projected and actual occupational breakup of the population according to the 1982 Master Plan and Delhi's Economic Survey report of 1998. While the total population has exceeded the planned projection by about 5%, the total workforce has shrunk by about 29%. At the same time the number of workers in manufacturing is very much in accordance with what was projected. Clearly, a significant amount of work (41%) is still available in the industrial sector. Hence, it is important to understand how much space has been officially provided for industrial purposes in the city.

**Table 1: Distribution of Work Force**

(in lakhs)	<b>Projected</b> Master Plan 2001	<b>Actual</b> Economic Survey 1998
Total population	128.00	135.00
Total workforce	49.08	35.01
Manufacturing	14.58	14.40
% manufacturing	29.7%	41.1%

Source: Delhi Master Plan, 1990 and Delhi Economic Survey 1998

Table 2 shows how many industrial estates and areas were supposed to be set up during the two Master Plans for the city of Delhi and how many were actually put up. Over a period of forty years, none of the extensive industrial areas – which were supposed to cater to the large industries – have been constructed. Only half the light industrial areas have been set up, while 4% of the flatted factories and 20% of the district centers (which were also supposed to house small and service industries) have actually materialized. Thus, of the entire infrastructure planned for the growth of industry, very little has actually been put in place.

**Table 2: Provisions for Industrialisation**

<b>Plan period</b>	<b>Authorised Areas</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Constructed</b>
1962-1981	District Centres	15	3
	Flatted Factories	23	1
1982-2001	Light Industrial	16	8
	Extensive Industrial	2	0

Source: Delhi Master Plans, 1962 and 1990

These figures reveal the structure of what one may call "delegitimisation", because it means that the State plans for something to happen but doesn't actually provide for it. Now all the "entrepreneurs", who were encouraged by plan to come into the city, want to put up factories, productive enterprises and have to do it somewhere. What happens if there are no regular industrial areas? Where would an entrepreneur put up an industrial unit? It will be either in the basement of the house or next door or wherever there is an empty space. Consequently, when after 30 years a lawyer wakes up and files a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in court claiming that the industries are responsible for pollution

in the city, the Supreme Court takes over the prerogative of the Executive and closes down all the polluting industries (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Industrial Closures**

Phase	District	Inspected	Sealed
I	Overall	18,972	2,773
	South	539	56
	South-West	708	97
II	Overall	15,607	707
	South	447	31
	South-West	434	37

Source: Hindustan Times, 14.03.2001

But the Court also makes a very interesting jump: from pollution it goes over to illegality. The PIL was on polluting units, but the Court begins looking at illegal units on its own. All the home-based industries are viewed as “non-conforming units” because they are not located on regular industrial estates (which, incidentally, were never constructed). So they all come under fire and are seen as a “law and order” problem. According to the Master Plan of 1982, the F category is the polluting category, and only 77 units were identified according to this category in the Master Plan. But the court uses a particular argument for the case of “polluting” units and then extends it to all the “non-conforming” ones.

Table 4 gives the total number of industries in Delhi according to the Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation (DSIDC), of which roughly half have been issued notices for re-location. So, from only 77 polluting industries the number suddenly jumps to 51,000 industries that have to be re-located. Out of this 51,000, how many are selected for allotment? – about 22,000. These selected units will be given plots in 7 new industrial areas, which are still to be constructed. Of these units, only a little over half have actually been short-listed by the DSIDC for plots which are not yet available. Thus, out of the total number of industries, only half are deemed to be illegitimate. But, of these, only one-fourth will actually be given alternative plots, so the remaining three-fourth are going to remain illegitimate, because there is no official space for them. Thus the process of “delegitimation” continues!

**Table 4: Industrial Relocation**

Total Industries	101,000
Notified for Relocation	51,214
Selected for Allotment	22,329
Finally Short-listed	11,728

Source: Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation

What happens to the work force? There are supposed to be about 35,00,000 workers in the city out of a total population of 135,00,000 (see Table 1). Where do they go and what do they do? Are there any financial packages for their rehabilitation? For instance, each of the notified 51,000 units has been given a notice that they have to pay for relocation to the new industrial area. About Rs 11,00,000 is reported to have been collected from the each of the selected 22,000 units. That gives the DSIDC a capital bonanza of over Rs 2400 crores! Out of these selected units only about 7,000 have so far been allotted

land at the Bawana industrial area where the plots are not yet ready, there is no power or infrastructure, and there is no housing for labour.

At the moment there is no labour force available at Bawana, but the labour will have to come in at some stage. An indication of this is that, for the Bawana industrial estate, the planners have this lovely little drawing that shows a green path that goes all around the estate. This is an “eco-friendly cycle path” – for workers obviously. How do these workers get on to these cycle-paths and travel from where they live to where they work? There are the officially recognised 1,34,000 workers, based on an “estimate” that each of the proposed 16,000 units will have 9 workers. Hence, there is no provision for the workforce that will come to construct the Estate and stay on as part of the informal sector. The worker then has to somehow go from the original locations in the west and south-west, all the way to north Delhi, in order to cycle on the eco-friendly cycle paths. It’s a hilarious plan that reveals the mind-set of the planners!

**Table 5: Industry distribution**

Units	Number	Workers
Total Industries	1,26,175	14,21,870
Owner enterprises	33,566	68,930
1-5 workers (small)	33,313	1,11,525
6-10 workers (small)	29,176	12,41,415
>10 workers (medium & large)	30,120	

Source: Delhi Economic Survey

What is happening is that the manufacturing sector is being hit very hard from all directions. Small-scale manufacturing is in the doldrums today (see Table 5), which is why if you go to any market in Delhi you will see imports from South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia and Europe. Today you will not get gas-lighters manufactured in India, you will not get utensils or pens or tools or even toys, you will not get all the small domestic gadgets made in India because the foreign competition is so stiff and the imports are much cheaper. Consequently, here is a process whereby all these workers will get displaced too and they will have to come and build more illegal slums near the new industrial estates, because no housing is provided for them. This whole process of delegitimisation keeps increasing and it’s not small, it’s really huge.

**Table 6: Distribution of “illegal” housing**

Settlement	Number	Families (lakh)
Jhuggi Jhonpri Cluster	1160	6.4
Unauthorised Colonies	1500	7.0
Resettlement Colonies	52	4.0
Urban Villages	216	1.5
Shelterless		0.5

Source: Municipal Corporation and Delhi Development Authority

Apart from the slums, there are 1,500 “unauthorised colonies” in the city of Delhi, in which approximately 35 lakh working people live (see Tables 6 and 7). They live a harassed life because these unauthorised colonies are not entitled to any of the civic services, to water, electricity, transportation, or sanitation - none of the municipal facilities. As a curious consequence, another PIL is filed by a “public-spirited” citizen saying that these colonies should not be regularised for the purpose of providing

facilities to them, because then the “infrastructure of Delhi will collapse”. Therefore, My Lordship, please take these 35 lakh people and relocate them outside the city of Delhi into the National Capital Region in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, but they should be assured of public transport so that they can daily commute to Delhi!

**Table 7: Socio-economic profile of sub-standard settlements**

(in percentages)	<b>Resettlement Colonies</b>	<b>Jhuggi Jhopris</b>	<b>Unauthorised Colonies</b>
< 30 years age	71.0	76.2	73.4
Educated	72.8	56.8	67.3
Factory work	22.7	3.2	37.1
Daily wager	26.3	35.1	20.1
Permanent worker	67.4	16.2	46.7

Source: Survey of 3000 households by Sajha Manch

What is the “public interest” on which these petitions in court are based? Whose public interest do they serve? Are 35 lakh people in the unauthorised colonies not part of the “public”? Don’t the 35 lakh workers have legitimate interests? When they and their unions have tried to file their interventions in the court, the court has said we will not listen to you since you are not a party. So, even rights of citizens under the law are being denied. So I hope that the structure of illegality and illegitimacy engineered by our social system is becoming clear, as is the fact that this is “planned”. These are deliberate acts because the State wants the labouring poor and their services but it does not want to provide them with any of the facilities for a better quality of life for them and their families.

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