Chapter 4

LOCALITIES AND THEIR
SPATIAL STRUCTURE

The term spatial structure refers to the arrangement of population in a given physical space. Since a physical space is not universally uniform in regard to its various attributes or characteristics, the spatial structure located in such space is also not always uniform. Instead, the spatial structure in a specific physical space may be loosely organised; yet it is always distinctive from that of another space in regard to various attributes. There is, in fact, spatial segregation of population due to one or more social factors in the given spatial structure. A population may be segregated in a given physical space in terms of economic, religious, linguistic or any other socio-cultural considerations found there. This also deepens the social divisions of population because the existence of physical barriers, in a way, prohibits interaction between its various socio-cultural segments. We shall

briefly discuss, in this chapter, the spatial structure of the three localities covered in the present study. But before doing that it is necessary to briefly mention about the given growth of the city over all these decades and present a synoptic view of its spatial structure which we have already elucidated in details in the previous chapter.

Growth of the City

It is pertinent to have a brief look at the patterns of growth of a city before mentioning about that in the case of Delhi city. The process of urbanisation not only involves an increase in concentration of population at a given point, it also facilitates the multiplication of points of such concentration called the urban settlements. ² These concentration points are primarily of consumption, and processing and service functions with different levels of economic, social and technological characteristics which are interrelated. The degree of concentration, specialization or diversification of population however tends to differ and the extent of inter-relationship among the characteristics of

urbanisation depends on the different types of urban centres. In other words, the Metro-politanization\(^3\) which refers to the growth of metropolitan centres is rooted in industrial and tertiary economic base. A metropolis is, thus, a settlement which spreads its built-up area and includes its nearby villages and towns.

Urban centres grow partly by natural growth of population and partly by inter-town or inter-city migration of the people. It is also contributed significantly by the rural migrants. The growth of an urban centre has all along been analysed through a number of approaches. For instance, the ecological approach\(^4\) to analyse the growth of Chicago city was systematically formulated by American sociologist Robert E. Park, Ernst W. Burgess and Roderich D. Mekenzie as mentioned in chapter 1. They had studied urban characteristics like land use, social composition of inhabitants, etc. with the help of variables such as age, occupation, ethnic and religious background, and changes in population composition. A precise statement about the external organisation of the city in space was made by Ernst W.

\(^3\) Ibid. p. 13.

Burgess who developed the hypothesis of concentric zones for the city as stated in chapter 1.

The city in course of its historical development becomes differentiated into a number of sub-communities which are spatially segregated into various zones or sectors with varied types of residents practising particular kinds of culture as mentioned by Rex and Moore. They have referred to three groups of population with varying amount of property and distinct styles of life. These are: The upper middle class owning large houses located near the cultural and business centres and away from factories; the lower middle class renting in houses; and the working class renting in small terraced cottages. The most central to this theory are the issues that if desirable housing is in short supply, the means whereby it is allocated to the different sections of population becomes crucial. Secondly, the pattern of distribution of housing constitutes the basis for potential conflict between different groups demanding access to the same resource.

5 Ibid, p. 22.
Pahl\textsuperscript{7} also states that the city is a source of new inequalities. His argument is that individuals' life chances are affected by their relative access to sources of indirect as well as direct income. Those who have to travel long distances to work in the central places suffer more than those who can choose to live near their work place. Similarly, those who live near the public-resources such as shops, markets, parks and so on are better-off than those who live near to gas works or motor-parts factory.

Thus, space remains an important factor in the analysis of not only growth of an urban centre but also nature of concentration of population. The unequal distribution of urban resources is a function of those individuals who occupy strategic allocative locations in the social system. Consequently, conflict over the distribution of these resources is inevitable in any urban society because such resources are crucial in the determination of individual life chances.

\textsuperscript{7} Pahl, R.E. \textit{Whose City?}, 1975, p.117
Spatial structure of Delhi

The growth of cities\(^8\) can also be described in terms of extensions of territory and increase in number of population. The growth of new regions, the multiplication of professions and occupations, and the incidental increase in land values lead to the complex growth of an urban centre. The highest land value exists at the place which is the busiest one in the course of twenty four hours.

Excepting the unauthorized colonies, land prices in Delhi have gone up due to interplay of demand and supply factors. In other words, there was demand for more land during the 1950's when there was a large influx of refugees from Pakistan. The un-occupied areas were given to them at a nominal rate of Rs 10-20 per sq yard and that too in installments.\(^9\) However, in the subsequent decades the land prices shot at the unprecedented rates at the places where the proper infrastructure and civic amenities were provided with. With the people deciding in

---

\(^8\) Burgess, E., "The Urban Community as a Spatial Pattern and Moral Order", in Ceri Peach, (ed.), urban social segregation, 1975, p. 21.

favour of permanently settling down in Delhi, the city went on expanding towards its fringe areas to supplement the needs of the ever-increasing population.

Also, of the two private residential localities of Safdarjung Enclave and Mehrauli under the present study the land value has ever remained more almost running in thousand rupees per Sq Yard in case of the former than in the latter which is an unplanned area with many irregularities like lack of proper tap water supply, sewage, electricity, broad-cemented roads, etc. as stated in the previous chapter.

The spatial distribution of urban settlements determines their spatial relationships and interaction. The settlements that are remotely located are likely to be less connected with other settlements and will also be least affected by the economic development of the region. Contrary to this, the settlements that are in close proximity are more liable to be affected from development of the neighbouring settlements and will also affect development in the region. More specifically,

---

the transportation system both affects and reflects the spatial pattern of economic development and distribution of urban settlements. In a way, these settlements are responsible for the growth of the regions in which they exist as they determine the intra and inter-regional flow of goods and services.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, people living in the three localities under study commute to places like Gurgoan, Faridabad, Gaziabad, Noida etc. to work which is possible through a good transport system. Though each of the three areas or localities has shopping complex where all daily use items are easily available at the reasonable prices, the residents do their general shopping from both the nearby markets like those in Sarojini Nagar, Munirka, Lajpat Nagar market and also from the far off markets like Cannaught Place, Karol Bagh, Chandni Chowk, etc. Both Safdarjung Enclave and R.K. Puram located on the main roads have a good transportation network to move in and out. In the interiors of Safdarjung Enclave which are well connected with link roads but the buses do not enter the residents have their own conveyance. With a bus Terminal and being a tourist spot, Mehrauli is well provided with manual rickshaws, autos, taxis, etc.
Thus, Delhi has a well inter-connected transportation system which integrates all the areas as mentioned in the previous chapter. People can easily move from one area to the other. As stated earlier, the city is also linked with other parts of the country. People can easily move in and out of the city through the well-developed transportation systems of rail, road and air.

Today, a different pattern of growth of urban centre has emerged in which there is a shift in the location of power and privileges from the core or main part of a city to the fringe or periphery. In Delhi this is due to the decentralization policy of the over-expanding growth of city in terms of population and economic activities. Added with these are many problems like congestion, pollution, housing problem and lack of basic amenities. To cater to these needs, more and more fringe regions like Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Noida, Gurgaon, etc. are being developed. This has facilitated more and more people working and even settling outside Delhi as mentioned above. In fact, today commuting distance is not much difficult for the people through a wide network of the transportation system as stated above.

Housing and the spatial structure

It has been stated that a large majority (93 percent) of the urban poor in Delhi come from the villages. Not only are they engaged in the informal sectors of employment but are also settled in the open spaces available in the city. Their community life in the city largely resembles the life of the village community since they bring with them a network of relations and corporate institutions like family, caste, etc. These make the entire spatial and social structures in the city a complex one. Their settlements in the city show a relative homogeneity in terms of region, caste or ethnicity community and occupation. This is well demonstrated in the locality of Mehrauli where houses of the rickshaw pullers are concentrated together on the vacant lands.

The squatter settlements of a large number of rural migrants mostly form the micro-environment for the

---


major part of their living in the city. Kundu has highlighted that 17 percent of the urban poor live in Katcha houses and only one in six of them has independent house. One in five lives in chawls and bustees. He further argues that the housing problem at all India level is related not to the average quality of houses but to the unequal distribution of floor area, ownership pattern of houses and access to the services.

The spatial structure and organisation of space in the settlements of the urban poor thus reproduces the physical form of the villages which have been termed urban villages or semi-rural pocket located in Indian cities. It is a known fact that these settlements are spontaneous and independent of the public authorities. The squatter settlements or slums are an inherent part of an urban centre. For instance, most of the slums in Kanpur city, are old fashioned constructions built with bricks, cement and with minimum civic amenities. The

15 Majumdar, T.M. op.cit, pp. 35-36.
construction costs of the houses in these settlements are at the minimum and these are usually located nearer to the places of employment due to nature of job and steady income. In his study of the settlements of Azadpur-Shadinagar in north Delhi, Ram\textsuperscript{18} concluded that the urban poor did not move to the resettlement colony but remained in their initial settlement to save money and time in daily commuting to their industrial work place. They attached little importance to the housing amenities. However, despite various shortcomings these urban settlements are self-improving communities. The additions of improved housing structures brick - paved roads, schools, electricity or hand pumps, etc. are available now which had not existed before.

In the present study people in general and the respondents in particular in Mehrauli have a distinct life style and ethos from those in the other two studied areas. Though Mehrauli cannot be regarded a slum in the conventional sense of the term, it can utmost be treated a slum like settlement of a developed form. There are many families consisting of 6-10 members residing just in one room built with mud and bricks. None of the basic civic amenities are readily available inside the houses

and people go out to avail them of.

This is true in the case of such settlements in other Indian cities also. For instance, the social life in a slum settlement of Chennagar in Madras (now Chennai) is such where a family is forced to get along with as little as a bucket of water a day.\textsuperscript{19} The residents are engaged as casual workers and in household industries like selling fruits, vegetables, cloth pieces, beedi making, etc. Their educational level is very low, and they are willing to take up the jobs of watchmen, rickshaw pullers, etc. Around 80 percent of them are below the absolute poverty level.

The slums or squatter settlements are secluded in terms of caste and community background of the residents. Lynch's\textsuperscript{20} in his study of the three groups of the Potters, Plotters and Prodders concludes by saying that they all reside in the different spaces in the Gandhi-Bridge of Shantinagar slum of Bombay. Drainage is poor and during the monsoons many houses and paths are filled


with water, mud and waste material as also seen in our study of Mehrauli. In Mehrauli area the Potters and Balmikis have separate wards where the condition is deplorable from the rest of the wards in terms of space and availability of civic amenities. The Potters use both in and out space of their homes for making pottery defecating and so on.

Thus, various units of the spatial social system or systems are integrated with one another accommodating different families. The space is very efficiently made use of the spatial form of urban regions and expresses a functional relationship between the social need and the environmental form. For example, Manuel Castelles\textsuperscript{21} speaks of the formation of metropolitan regions in an industrial capitalist society. He argues that a metropolis is diffused in space of activities, functions, groups and their interdependence resulting from their geographical interconnection. The formation of a metropolis is bound up with the emergence of an integrated society which is facilitated by the technological progress.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{21} Castells, M., \textit{The Urban Question}, 1977, pp.20-23.
Spatial structure of the localities

The spatial segregation as stated earlier is found in the present study also though it is not distinctively visible in the locality of R.K. Puram due to the fact that its spatial structure is planned and orderly. Also, there has been a policy of the government residential areas to accommodate the population in government colonies irrespective of their caste and religious backgrounds. However, such segregation is clearly visible along the socio-economic position of the residents. In other words, the different types of houses accommodating different groups of government employees are clear indicators of their differential spatial structures and also spatial segregation of the people living there. This is also true in the case of Safdarjung Enclave where the middle class people have constructed well planned multi-storied houses against the unplanned houses of the encircled villages. The approach roads and lanes in these settlements are narrow and congested. As against these two, the differential spatial structure and spatial segregation are much clearly visible in Mehrauli which is entirely an unplanned area. As stated earlier, the ward 7 is totally inhabited by the Balmikis. While the Christian colony situated next to the bus Terminal is
inhabited by the Christians, a large Muslim population reside in the locality next to the Durgah.

With the greater degree of urbanisation, the problem of space for the poor becomes more acute since the former tends to increase inequality in the distribution of land. Looking at the housing pattern in the present study, it was found that in the area of Safdarjung Enclave, 88.4 percent of the respondents had own houses while 11.6 percent resided in the rented accommodation. The latter had neither possessed any plot nor were member of any housing society. Though they wished to own a house at the reasonable price in or around Delhi through the housing scheme whenever it re-opened. Anyway, all the houses in this area have Pucca constructions, with the required facilities of proper light ventilation, tap water and flush system. Thus, the area is fully equipped with the basic civic amenities and the residents are fully satisfied with these.

Similarly, the area of Sector III and IV of R.K. Puram has a well developed spatial structure and land use. Since the entire area is government colony and the residents have to vocate the houses after their retirement from the jobs, 76.7 percent respondents from
this area have purchased own plots in Delhi and in nearby areas and 20 percent are members of some housing societies. In all, 40 percent of the total respondents from this area have their own houses in Delhi while 60 percent have planned to have a house of their own in Delhi in future.

Another significant aspects of the spatial structure are utilisation of land and the space for the purpose of housing. We have found nearly half of the respondents from the area of Safdarjung Enclave fully satisfied with the proper use of land the space available for the housing purpose but the rest 50 percent are of the view that there should be proper playgrounds for children and sports grounds for the adult. In all, 72.1 percent respondents from this locality either watch TV at home or go for movies, picnics, clubs, theatres and parties in absence of the proper places for recreation.

Both the areas of Safdarjung Enclave and R.K. Puram have problems of water-logging during the monsoons. There is a great problem of insects but it is done away with the help of the M.C.D. and also by using mosquito repellant mats, sprays, etc. We have already mentioned that both the areas are provided with proper medical facilities and schools of many kinds like government,
convent, central, Delhi administration, etc with manageable reach.

Unlike Safdarjung Enclave and R.K Puram, 79.1 percent respondents from Mehrauli had their own houses, while 20.9 percent were living in the rented houses as stated earlier. Out of the total respondents from this area 86 percent had purchased plot in Delhi or in the nearby localities and none of the respondents was member of any Housing Society. A large majority of the respondents from this area too were in favour of residing permanently in Delhi as already discussed in Chapter 3. Another aspect of differential spatial structure observed in all the three localities under study is the nature or type of accommodation existing in Safdarjung Enclave and R.K. Puram. Out of the total respondents 58.1 percent lived in Pucca, 20.9 percent in kutcha and 18.6 percent in houses with mixed pucca and kutcha constructions. Regarding the basic amenities available in these houses, both the areas of R.K. Puram and Safdarjung Enclave are fully electrified and thereby houses are electrified, ventilated and have tap-water and tube-well facilities. But 25.6 percent respondents from Mehrauli did not have the tap-water facility inside the houses. On the question of type of latrine, 4.7 percent respondents from this
area had pit type and 58.1 percent had dry type latrines inside the houses. Interestingly, 37.2 percent of the respondents went outside the houses to ease in the open spaces.

On the whole, the respondents from Safdarjung Enclave and R.K Puram localities were fully satisfied with the accommodation and civic amenities available therein as these are provided with street lights, proper open space and parking facilities. The residents including respondents in the locality of Mehrauli had made efforts to get the basic amenities improved but with no results. They were, however, fully satisfied with the recreation facilities as this area is a historical resort with places like Qutab Minar, tomb of Ill-tutmush, a Buddhist Vihara and many parks. Since the whole area lacks play grounds for children, they usually play on the approach roads in front of the houses or go to adjacent Qutab Minar and play in the open space available there. Unlike in the localities of Safdarjung Enclave and R.K. Puram where the garbage is thrown in the public garbage places, 58.1 percent of the respondents from Mehrauli threw the garbage in the open space in front of their houses. We have stated earlier that most of the places in this locality are full of water-logging due to the low
quality drainage system. Also, most of the places in the
area have numerous uncovered pipe-lines which quite often
overflow making the whole environment stinking. Since
number of steps undertaken for improving it have yielded
no results due to callous attitudes of the concerned
authorities, people in the area have got used to live
with the existing conditions.

Further, there has been a spurt in the services of
the Private medical practitioners and number of schools
in all the three localities over the last ten years or
so. These in turn have contributed significantly to the
changing nature of the spatial structures of all the
three localities or areas under study. There is close
relation between urbanisation and spatial structure of a
locality. In other words, if the spatial structure of a
locality is planned, the level of urbanisation in it
would be of different type from that in an unplanned
locality.
Table 4.1: Localities and satisfaction from the civic-amenities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Whether satisfied with facility</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (percentage)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.K. Puram</td>
<td>86 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safdarjung Enclave</td>
<td>86 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehrauli</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>86 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in paranthesis are percentages.

We have mentioned above that the nature of accommodation is also an indicator of spatial structure of an area or locality. This also indicates the nature of social structure of a population living in there which we shall see in the next chapter. Here, we shall briefly look at the nature or type of accommodation in the houses occupied by the respondents from all the three localities under study.
Table 4.2: Differential space patterns of houses in the localities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>No of rooms in the house</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>one room</td>
<td>two rooms</td>
<td>three rooms</td>
<td>four rooms</td>
<td>four &amp; more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.K. Puram</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(37.2)</td>
<td>(62.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safdarjung Enclave</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16.3)</td>
<td>(23.3)</td>
<td>(34.8)</td>
<td>(25.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehrauli</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6 (7.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(26.9)</td>
<td>(44.2)</td>
<td>(27.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in paranthesis are percentages.

We have stated earlier that in the unplanned locality of Mehrauli a sizeable number of people live in rented houses of one or two rooms accommodation. It is also clear from the above table that over 70 percent respondents from this locality live in one or two rooms set houses. Unlike that, a large majority of the respondents from Safdarjung Enclave live in houses having three and more rooms. The situation in R.K. Puram locality is different where the different types of houses with specific number of rooms have been constructed to accommodate the different groups of employees as stated earlier. Consequently, majority of the respondents from
this locality live in the three rooms set houses. There is no respondent from this locality living either in one room or four and more rooms set houses. Thus, the locality of Safdarjung Enclave has much better housing structure where most of the houses are luxury types and the whole locality is a posh one.

Conclusion

It may, thus, be said that the city of Delhi in its historical growth and development became differentiated in large number of areas and regions though the central area has remained in much demand till recently due to the availability of power, prestige, and employment opportunities. With the growing population, the space has become scarce and valuable commodity over all these years. As a result, to disperse the growing population and various activities, the fringe areas have been developed resulting into transfer of power and prestige to the fringes or peripheries of the city. Not only that but the different spatial regions are now well-connected through a wide network of transport and communication.

The three areas or localities of South Delhi selected for the present study represent differential
patterns of the spatial structure and also different levels of urbanisation. It may be said here that if a locality has satisfactory accommodation, civic amenities and spacious land use, its spatial structure will be planned and the degree of urbanisation will also be higher as is evident from the data presented in this chapter. It is also true that the differentiation in housing or residential pattern is due to one's status or position in the social hierarchy of power, wealth and prestige which we shall analyse in details in the following chapter.