CHAPTER 6
CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1. Observations

6.1.1. The study observes the contents of the Master Plans of Delhi and their contribution in tackling the issues of the city. It tends to observe what similarity is observed hitherto in plan implementation or is just that they have ‘adjusted’ by becoming instruments to serve some interests. The broader aspects are studied with regards to the spectrum of planning in the spatial dimension. The basic observation that comes to the front is that the First Plan initiated with the immediate concerns of the city. This was carried further in the modifications followed by the next plans for 2001 and 2021 respectively.

6.1.2. On the whole, the Plans have been revolving around similar issues and the issues for which planning was initiated, have acquired varied dimensions which basically cannot be dubbed as making the city higher on livability standards. The caution that operates is that plan making and execution are totally different concepts. Hence, in the present study, plan evaluation is attempted to get a view of what is envisioned for the city at various points of time with the orientation of space and processes. In all, evaluation of the Plan document is an independent task of examining the city.

6.1.3. These observations can be extended to the analysis of the Plan contents and are also studied with regards to the available literature along with supplements from current happenings below. The geographical study of the plans is concerned with the investigation of significance of specific results that the Plans put forth. Plan analysis includes the evaluation of the physical conditions and also the relevant economic and social development study.

6.1.4. The comparison also allows for the study of economic and social development and the changes in the intensity of forms in distinct periods. Observing the passage of the city of Delhi through the Plans involves a time span of more than half a century. In this context the pertinent issue is that is the city being planned as advocated through the Plans or is it that some other parallel strategy is operating or even further no strategy is in operation?
6.1.5. Plan evaluation is done for various purposes that aim at testing the theory underlying the programme and understanding and improving it. The observations here are forwarded in two categories. In the first one, the conclusions are drawn on the basis of basic observations with an aim to answer the research questions. In the second attempt, conclusions are drawn with regards to the contents of the Plans and the contents in urban geography literature and interface policies as mentioned in Chapter 3 and 4. These are supplemented with citizen’s perceptions as outlined in Chapter 5.

6.1.6. General Observations: Following broad observations can be highlighted with regards to the Master Plans of Delhi in the practice of planning.

i. The concept of planning is unclear for the city. Planning strategies to a large extent exist in the formulation stage but it is directly observable that at the implementation stage the foresight is completely lost.

ii. Other factors dominate implementation.

iii. Practicality is missing.

iv. The city appears to be thrown open to processes with no direction in sight. These are supplemented below.

6.1.7. To form the bulwark of city development and in this case the capital city, urban planning has to have a vision and concern for the city. In this regard, plan preparation exercise is a long drawn process for the city and is also the premier process in the context. What is mentioned in the Plans holds a practical significance in terms of determining the direction as well as being affected by the processes in return. The scope of such studies holds practical significance since plan evaluation can be seen to be carried out only in terms of comparison of meeting the targets set in the previous plan particularly for infrastructure.

6.1.8. However, the concept in itself is vast and can be taken for examination of the planning methodology, actors involved, planning philosophy as reflected, stakeholders participation and the aim and outline of direction in which the city is anticipated to move. For the city of Delhi, such a study is required since it is the capital of the country and pioneer in terms of adopting the master planning approach.
6.1.9. Research Questions and the Plans: Plan making is a step wise process and Plans are carriers of this planning. But the aims of this planning are not clear although the current Plan is the clearest in mentioning vision for the city. The earlier two Plans aim at maintaining the status quo with improvements suggested for select sectors. Since the First Master Plan of Delhi, the issues have remained the same and have rather multiplied without any control or even indication of any intention of control of issues. The city appears to be thrown open to processes as is observed in Chapter 3, particularly the unauthorised ones.

6.1.10. This is directly indicative of lack of vision and even if any vision is envisaged, it seems just a mention for the city that is the capital of the country. The net result has only caused expansion with an increase in city woes as is put forth from 3.8.2.-3.8.8. The question that arises here is that is the city targeted to be the centre of growth as these processes and their impacts remain untamed? Further, no practical solution is given for the same in the current Master Plan and only expansion is highlighted even in this Plan as observed in table 3.7. and points 3.8.2.-3.8.8. The question is that why a paradox exists in planning? Is it aimed at certain groups and a play in the hands of the seat in power with limited or missing concern for the city? The observations indicate similarity of aspects as all the Plans mention similar issues with the only difference being that of their being expanded as is visible in Chapter 3.

6.1.11. The content can also be examined for its compliance with the policies from which it can derive a forward outlook as is mentioned in Chapter 4. A city as a concrete expression of forces and ideas does not reflect any clear ideology in the planning concepts. Land as the prime resource is left to the mercy of processes with control of one agency yet unlawful occupations of it are visible throughout time and space for the city. Paradoxically, slums and squatters are the settlement patterns which found pertinent mention in the First Plan and carried in all the Plans as a major focus with regards to containment and improvement. Yet, the issue has only magnified and increased in dimension as is mentioned in Chapter 3.
6.1.12. Some principles for twenty first century planning, as discussed in Chapter I, being advocated in literature are: Sustainability, Accessibility, Diversity, Open Space, Compatibility, Incentives, Adaptability, Density and Identity. Sustainability for what and how is non observant in the current contexts; accessibility is visible in all kinds of flexibilities and freedom given to external processes; diversity needs to be defined more precisely; open spaces find significant mention; Plans are constantly made compatible with the externalities and processes to which incentives are given making them adaptable to these; the issue of density is discussed but needs more elaboration particularly in the context of ongoing discussions of expanding the city vertically. In this regard, the density factor commands a particular attention as the background studies that precede the Third Master Plan already indicate that the city has reached its ‘saturation point’ and no further expansion should follow as expressed in Table 3.7.

6.1.13. The current vision is to become globally compliant. Again, in the process, the method to achieve this identity is required to be clearly identified and described. While the city appears to cater to its ever growing infrastructure needs as given in the Master Plans and more emphatically in the CDP for Delhi, how will the improved identity be achieved, by when and how is to be drawn? Other focus areas are that of heritage conservation that has been projected as since the First Plan, pollution control and improving the quality of life as detailed (refer Chapter 3). Contradictory to these seem the growth processes operating in the city in the form of an increase in the number of vehicles, pollution, uncontrolled informal sector and increasing slums and unauthorized residential areas. With regards to the most important component in this category put in the last is that of identity which needs the clearest explanation. The Plans lack emphatically on these issues as is observed in the detailed comparison of the Plans with interface policies in Chapter 4.

6.1.14. The social processes are ill defined and the economic dominance of the city is reflected in the regional context repetitively. The contexts are unaccounted and in the meanwhile, the city has attained the dubious reputation of being the second most polluted in the world; the fact which speaks for itself. The Master Plans of Delhi are the prime documents for the planning of the capital city of the country.
6.1.15. Since the inception of planning and the publication of the First Plan, no change has been observed in the basic structure, nature, direction and issues in planning as is shown in Table 3.10. In this regard the most important observation is that the existing issues have become diverse and have multiplied as is extensively proved in Table 3.10. (for details refer Chapter 3).

6.1.16. Besides, there is no indication of concerned planning in the light of these. A vision is only forwarded in the current Master Plan (refer tables 3.4., 3.6. and 3.8.). The analysis that comes to the forefront is in direct relation to the nature of planning as advocated and as required; both of which are opposite in nature as the nature and dimensions of issues remains inexplicably the same. It is from here that the dichotomy is observed to be appearing.

6.1.17. Plan provisions and concepts in urban literature: The aim for all kinds of planning norms is to make the city liveable. The analysis of planning for Delhi as manifested by the three Master Plans reflects aspects of approaches in urban geography literature in the following manner. With regards to the approaches advocated (for details refer Chapter 1), environmental approach can be observed to be the backdrop for selected aspects. This is reflected in planning forwarded for green spaces such as the Delhi Ridge. Practical suggestions can be taken from recent developments as observed even in the satellite towns of Delhi. As Das observes, the development of an Environmental Master Plan for Greater Noida with provisions for ‘sustainable development’ (The Times of India, 12th July, 2012). However, contradiction also prevails in contexts of pollution management as there are no effective control regulations with the problem diversifying every passing day. Yet the Plans emphatically aim at improving the environmental parameters of the city but no results exist. This is described in detail in Chapter 3.

6.1.18. The contents of the Master Plans and master planning revolve around similar issues and the background studies seem more realistic to the realities of the city. Vision is missing and the one present cannot be executed any effectively in the above mentioned contexts. Henceforth, implementation cannot be guaranteed. An emphasis on the importance of observation’ as given in positivism in 1.3. is observed significantly in the First Master Plan. This was the initial phase of
planning and observation was dominant in this stage. The approaches of ‘verification and falsification’, as mentioned in positivism, are dominantly visible in the Plans in the form of regulations generated for building controls, Floor Area Ratio controls and restriction on activities. The Master Plans of Delhi exhibit Humanistic approach is observed in its basics as observed in the aspects of housing for poor, city transport, environment and street layouts. The analysis of structuralism for the Plans indicates that the ‘production of space’ is not visible as the visible approach in all the Plans is that of improvising on the existing space and no control over processes that create these spaces. Contrastingly, the ‘legal’ spaces are ‘controlled’ by legislations and building controls. The strangest contrast is observed in the visions outlined in the current Plan in which the aim is to develop the city keeping into consideration the global concerns.

6.1.19. Structuralism as observed in ‘principles and procedures that attempt to explain the underlying causes of revealed patterns’ is dominantly observed as the processes such as post independence conditions, increasing population and migration and the subsequent alterations observed in space find mention in explaining and justifying the Plan contents. However, noteworthy is the fact that these processes overwhelm all aspects of formulation. Plans as a representation of space making sense needs clarification in two aspects. The aspect of representation of space is visible in the aspects of issues arising out of multiple causes and not otherwise except in the case of heritage conservation.

6.1.20. The concept of spaces of representation as perceived by people has gained existence only in the Third Plan wherein participatory planning is visible in suggestions given for housing of urban poor and in decentralized participatory planning proposal. The Plans do not appear to ‘represent the space’ but rather tend to ‘define and describe the space’ sans concern for processes. Rather, it appears to be a play in the hands of processes and is drawn time again for managing these processes. Direct mention in this regard is that of the issue of population pressure, slums and unauthorized settlements and ultimately the emergent infrastructure issues.
6.1.21. With regards to Post Structuralism, the ‘rethinking of spatial relationships and concepts of power’ is not observed in any of the Plans which tend to advocate the development and expansion of whatever is existing on the basis of a continuous building of demand by population (for details refer 1.3.37.). A ‘destabilisation of foundationalism’ is observed in the introduction of participatory planning and preparation of Action Plans given in the Third Plan given in Chapter3. The Plans do not appear to give emphasis to human differences per se but the focus on housing for the poor does lend some similarity with the concept for Post Modernism as given in 1.3.37. The observations in ‘nature and society’ do not indicate that the ‘events follow each other’ but there is direct evidence of the fact that the issues are repetitive.

6.1.22. The concept that these events follow indicates that the controls are missing as paradoxically these are the ones that are aimed to be controlled and are dominantly similar and visible in all the Plans. The current Plan suggests solutions for these issues but again these turn out to be mere expansionist provisions as against any concrete solution. Thus, there is no ‘production of space’ rather a revolution of development around the existing space and its emergent problems. The manifestation of managerialism is sought to be visible in exclusionary zoning. However, the Master Plans do not exhibit this approach directly.

6.1.23. This analysis also stands important in the light of practical issues. Although the Plan contents are dependent of the processes, the process of implementation of other provisions indicates only an expansionist tendency. Plan implementation stands flouted in all respects as the provisions that suit interests are incorporated and promoted. The demands far exceed the supply and the only solution and result is that of expanding and creating newer and newer infrastructure. Since the city is left open to processes, the Plans evolve around them. In the absence of coherence in Plan preparation, evaluation seems to be irrelevant. The implementation aspect is visible only for the creation of infrastructure. Otherwise, there appears to be no implementation of a planning strategy.
6.1.24. Plans are reflective of these dichotomies and even prove that the magnitude of negative externalities has multiplied in multifarious contexts. But prior to this the question is that in which direction the city is going? Which processes dominate and what is the intention of city planning? This becomes more pertinent as planning is being done for the capital city. For Delhi, the context cannot be seen to be evolving rather expanding as is also seen in the planning provisions as advocated even by the CDP.

6.1.25. Analysis of evolving concepts- ‘World Class City’, Local Area Plans, Action Plans- The current Plan aim to make Delhi a world class city. In this regard, it is observant that the city is far from acquiring world class infrastructure. The analysis can also be carried on with regards to the literature on the concept wherein it is put forward that the concept is an evolving one and requires dimensions. For Delhi, the aspects need to be defined and conceptualized. Another evolving concept is of LAP which is aimed at empowering people.

6.1.26. It aims at micro level redevelopment of colonies in lines with the Master Plan but with the involvement of people. This is a newer addition in concept. Practically, plan formation through this method is in its initial stage as per this process. Hence, the aim of planning and its resultant nature of effects stand glaring. For Delhi, the observation is that the nature of issues has remained more or less the same and these have amplified. Similarly, the provisions that were made for the purpose have been fulfilled to a large extent in terms of infrastructure creation. But again, since the demands are immense and unending, meeting them is a near impossibility at the current rates.

6.1.27. Proceeding with the above analysis, it becomes obvious that the planning content will also be thrown open to the uncontrolled processes operating for the city. This is vividly evident in the Plans. With its inherent contradictions as analysed above, the content evolves in a varied manner for different parts of the city. This is observed particularly with regards to the authorized and unauthorized constructions. The content of planning is, on one hand, concentrated on steering the city towards global level with an emphasis on modernization. What indication is received from this regarding city planning?
6.1.28. The analysis of the content presented in the chapters clearly indicates that master planning for the city is put the prime method of planning since independence. As observed in Chapter 1, the initiation of city’s planning after independence aimed at addressing the emerging issues. The drawing of the First Plan was on the basis of existing issues of the city and the strength of it lied in the detailed analysis of them. It recognised the immediate concerns of the city which were to be dealt in immediacy and also suggested the spatial location of activities. The strength of this Plan lay in the recognition of immediate issues and concerns and also presented immense opportunities for the location of activities. The weakness, however, can be observed as more related to implementation rather than the content as proposed by them which was the main threat.

6.1.29. With regards to the next two Plans, it can be established as per the observations in Chapter 3 that the threats overtook the planning process and opportunities got shadowed in the uncontrolled growth of the city due to migration and population increase. This has threatened the infrastructure and environment of the city to grave extents. Since the Plans have been catering to these issues repetitively, their focus remains on maintaining them and the focus remains on creating infrastructure time and again for the increasing numbers.

6.1.30. Thus, the contents of the Plans revolve around these issues. These turn out to be the weaknesses and make them non compliant with regards to interface policies as observed in Chapter 3 and 4. Further, the perception analysis also indicates the vulnerability the city is exposed to as is seen in Chapter 5. The current Plan also focuses on similar issues but also incorporates public participation and Action Plan concepts as additions. These are the strengths of the current plan and can be strengthened further.

6.1.31. Carrying these observations to the CDP of Delhi, which is a newer initiative, indicates again that the aim is on constructing and creating infrastructure for the expanding city. People’s perceptions range from optimism to pessimism and their immediate concerns stand prioritised in contrast to developing a vision for the city. However, the aim of achieving a world class status by the city through this kind of expansionist planning is hard to go by.
6.1.32. It, thus, stands rejected that the Plans forward the city to best possible and it can be concluded that planning in general and master planning in particular are only tools in the hands of uncontrolled processes to which the city is thrown open to. It becomes clear that the content is evolving depending upon the uncontrolled processes operating for the city which is the country’s capital. Now if this is the planning strategy for the capital, what can be expected of other urban centres and of the whole urbanization process for the country? In the light of above observations it can only be cited that the city is at the mercy of circumstances and the Master Plan is a preparation exercise either to be flouted or to be manipulated in the required context. The only suggestion that can be forwarded is that of thinking about the city.

6.2. Concluding Remarks and Suggestions

6.2.1. The word planning is not observant from any significant dimension for the city. The processes are uncontrolled and the master plans appear to be only exhibitory in nature and implication. The issues for which planning was initiated have been left way behind. They have amplified to vast extent with each successive master plan aiming at their solution. Hence, the whole issue revolves around not just about the utility of master plans but also for the nature of planning as is followed for the national capital.

6.2.2. In this regard, no concrete planning in its even sense of the word is observed as being followed for the city. Uncontrolled processes dominate the city although their impact is being outlined by the background studies. But this seems to be paid no heed to and neither the expansion is checked nor is it determined to be checked. Instead, all development is aimed at meeting the needs of this expansion. In such a scenario, suggestion is only one and that is to make ‘sense’ of planning which seems to have been lost.