PREFACE

In 1957, by constituting the Delhi Development Authority to prepare a 'Master Plan', Delhi initiated the process of planning in the realm of urban land development. The State took the responsibility to develop urban land in a planned way rather than leaving it to develop in a haphazard way through free market forces. The intention of the State, perhaps, was to optimize scarce land in the anticipated sprawling growth of the metropolis. But what, in reality, was the urban land development in Delhi within the framework of time and space?

The present study is an endeavour in this direction to help comprehend a vital component of planned urban land development - the land acquisition process. Such large-scale land acquisition process is not merely an administrative act. It has economic and social dynamics which have to be taken into account in any purposeful urban land planning and development.

The main emphasis of the present study has been on what the land acquisition process was in Delhi in the past four decades rather than on why it was so and what it should have been. The purpose is to help the State undertake development of urban land in a more efficient, rational and equitable way. In this context, the insight gained by me during my tenure as Land Acquisition Collector was also helpful in understanding the dynamics of land acquisition and development process.

The analysis of land acquisition process assumes greater social relevance with more cities of India opting for State-controlled urbanisation on the lines of Delhi-model.

The census data pertaining to the land acquisition in Delhi over a period from 1948 to 1989, for the first time in this study, were collected from the original land acquisition records and compiled and processed for analytical research. The data-base developed for this study, it is hoped, shall be of some use to future researchers as well. I am grateful to the Office of Deputy Commissioner, Delhi for permitting me to collect and use this data for the present study.

I am grateful to my supervisor for guiding me especially in the analytical part of the study. I am also grateful to all persons who helped me in undertaking this study and to those who endured my anxieties during the time I was working on this thesis.

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