



Land & Development Management

- Delhi Development Authority
- Department of Irrigation & Flood Control



Developing Urban Delhi From Vikas Sadan to Vikas Bhawan

Rapid economic development and consequent unregulated migration have resulted in a drastic increase in Delhi's population. What is needed in such a scenario is sustainable development and expansion of urban areas to equitably meet the demand for housing, transport as well as judicious use of non-renewable resources. There are multiple agencies in Delhi¹ responsible for handling land. While land development is handled by the Land and Development Office, Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD), Government of India, land acquisition is the responsibility of the Delhi Government's Department of Land and Building. The Deputy Commissioner (Revenues), Delhi Government looks after agricultural/ rural lands. Accordingly, the responsibility of the Delhi Development Authority is solely to deal with the Delhi Master Plan and housing and estate development.²

DDA was set up in 1955 under the Delhi (Control of Building Operations) Ordinance. Section 6 of the Delhi Development Act, 1957 outlines the purposes of DDA: promoting and securing planned development of Delhi, acquiring, holding, managing and disposing of land for requisite purposes, carrying out mining, building, engineering and other related activities as well as providing services and amenities like water, electricity incidental to the above activities.

DDA has a Governing Council consisting of 15 members. It is headed by the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi who is the Chairman, followed by a Vice-Chairman, a whole-time finance member and two engineering members, three MLAs, two Municipal Corporation of Delhi members (non-official members) and five nominees of the Central Government. In November 2004, a report in Hindustan Times put the average age of a DDA employee at that time as 48 years. There is no available record of number of sanctioned posts in the DDA, with the Personnel Department also not being able to provide with the information. According to Annual Report 2003-2004, this figure stands at 21,396.

Functions and Performances: The Real Picture

The main objective of constituting DDA was to undertake the development and disposal of land for various purposes. In 1967, however, DDA found that residential plot allottees took a long time to raise construction, hesitating to move into new areas due to lack of requisite infrastructure. Its activities were therefore expanded to include construction of houses and also to generate funds for development activities.³ Post-1968, construction and development of residential plots and housing schemes has remained DDA's core activity. DDA constructs four categories of housing units, namely, High Income Group (HIG) and Self Financing Schemes (SFS), the Middle Income Group (MIG), the Lower Income Group (LIG) and the Janta Housing or housing units for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).

As of March 2003, out of the 67,355 acres of land under the supervision of DDA, 30,713.95 acres has been used in residential schemes. In all, 39 schemes have been floated till March 2004, out of which only five schemes are active. A few schemes have a backlog in allotment. There remains a backlog of allotment of 20,476 housing units. Table 1 details DDA's physical targets.

Table 1: Physical Targets of Housing

	2000-2001				2001-2002				2003-2003			
	SFS/ HIG	MIG	LIG	Janta	SFS/ HIG	MIG	LIG	Janta	SFS/ HIG	MIG	LIG	Janta
Targeted projects	8,021	3,212	1,262	1,207	5,633	3,826	13,095	482	3895	3,375	8,456	3,240
Initiated	132	1008	448	496	3971	1982	11,159	64	-	830	1,540	-
Target to be completed	1,566	368	526	5,600	209	1390	542	5,200	878	1,761	1,408	2,576
Completed	888	288	526	5,600	1,715	390	590	5,164	790	1,627	1,072	2,032

Source: Delhi Development Authority. Data abstracted from the Annual Reports for the years of 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03.

In recent years, the focus of the DDA has shifted from construction of houses in LIG/ Janta and EWS sections to the HIG/ Self Finance and MIG group. One scheme was taken up in 2002 for the resettlement of jhuggi-jhonpri dwellers (JJ dwellers) with construction of around 10,000 tenements. As per the 2003-04 Annual Report, the scheme has been closed with 1,288 allotments. Also, these allotments are at far-flung places where slum-dwellers are hesitant to go due to little or no employment opportunities. An independent survey conducted by the

Hazards Centre found that while the planned housing targets set for the rich were achieved more than three times over, only 40 percent of the Janata flats were occupied by the poor. Further, 81 percent of LIG housing is owned by middle-income and rich groups. Despite 23,000 applicants waiting for allotments, DDA announced that it would take up schemes only for high-income group (HIG) flats and that Janata flats would not be constructed any more.

A discernible trend can also be seen with respect to increased involvement in commercial activities, with the percentage of commercial plots, land and estate being dealt with by DDA on the rise in the past five years.⁴ Further, there seems to be an inclination towards disposal of plots and land as a whole rather than undertaking of construction activity by the DDA. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) 2004 Audit Report on Autonomous Bodies⁵ observed that DDA failed to enforce the terms of allotment of institutional land, consequent to which the primary objective of the allotments was not achieved.⁶ According to the Report, allotment of land was made to three ineligible institutions, which deprived DDA of revenue of Rs 38.5 crore. 23 out of 27 hospitals had not started functioning as of July 2003 even after a lapse of 4-30 years from the date of allotment of land.

During 1990-2004, DDA allotted land to 381 registered societies for constructing buildings to establish schools. According to the Annual Audit Report 2005, in 70 cases the stipulated period of two years, after taking possession of land by allottees had elapsed. 27 societies could not meet the cost of land and 46 out of 90 schools were yet to be functional. DDA had outstanding dues of Rs 1.8 crore from 89 societies.

Vigilance and Corruption Issues

Another important issue is corruption. Despite the known fact of rampant corruption in DDA, there is no available record of complaints of bribery and corruption reported by the public. The public probably does not even register complaints. Many echo the sentiment that anything is better than an interaction with DDA officials. Even on Mondays and Thursdays, the public meeting days, there is hardly anybody in DDA offices to meet officials.⁷

Even the former Housing Commissioner at DDA, Mr K J Alphons, has been quoted in the World Development Report by the

World Bank that DDA is the "most corrupt organisation in the world." According to him, no activity, whether legal or illegal, can be undertaken without payment of a bribe. In the 2004-05 Report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee has observed that property dealers operate hand-in-glove with field staff and DDA officers in areas where allotments are due. The report cited proliferation of hoardings and boards in Mayur Vihar put up by property dealers, advertising sale and transfer of upcoming DDA properties at higher prices.

Financial Allocations and Performance

DDA is a statutory authority, and therefore no part of its funding comes from the Delhi Government or the Central Government. The Budget and Accounts Rules, 1982 read with the Act mention only presenting of the budget estimates for a particular year to the Central Government after they have been approved by DDA itself.⁹ The only source of income is disposal of land, houses, shops, commercial and institutional plots. Table 2 details the receipts and expenditure in these three accounts.

Table 2: Receipts and Expenditure in the Three Accounts
(Rs in crore)

	2000-2001		2001-2002		2002-2003		2003-2004	
	Receipt	Exp.	Receipt	Exp.	Receipt	Exp.	Receipt	Exp.
NAZUL I ¹⁰	1.62	15.21	2.73	14.18	9.16	17.22	2.86	12.38
Actual						(14.76)		
Revised								
Estimate	4.93	17.49	5.16	17.90	3.03	21.02	18	16.61
NAZUL I	350.02	450.80	440.65	731.11	632.98	919.20	2,466.83	675.61
Actual			(478.53)	(739.48)	(705.92)	(940.94)		
Revised								
Estimate	325.91	592.97	446.98	871.59	50376	1,065.54	2,824.81	1,077.97
General								
Development								
Account								
Actual	630.69	353.81	532.35	428.65	541.71	447.46	522.09	572.83
			(486.38)	(436.08)	(487.99)	(487.21)		
Revised								
Estimate	639.45	352.89	647.89	427.50	657.00	511.62	727.80	723.88

Source: Delhi Development Authority. Data abstracted from the Annual Reports of DDA for the years of 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04.

While going through the Annual Reports, we came across an anomaly. While the 2001-02 and 2002-03 Annual Revenue and Expenditure (actual) mention similar figures for revenue and expenditure of the three

Accounts, different figures are mentioned in the 2003-04 Annual Report. The figures mentioned in bold in brackets indicate the same. With respect to expenditure heads, land development remains the area in which maximum expenditure has been done. Although there is a decrease in DDA's housing construction activity, increase in the expenditure on construction of houses may be due to the increase in cost of construction. Table 3 gives the particulars of income earned by DDA in the past four years by disposing of various kinds of plots and buildings.

Table 3: Income earned (Rs in crore)

<i>Units & Income</i>	<i>2000-2001</i>		<i>2001-2002</i>		<i>2002-2003</i>		<i>2003-2004</i>	
	House & Shops	Income	House & Shops	Income	House & Shops	Income	House & Shops	Income
Income on Disposal of Houses and Shops	248	84		219			510	36
Commercial Plots/ Built up units	1,661	168	1,192	205	94	450	98	2,073
Institutional Use	142	70	339	120	-	-	-	-
Residential Plots	-	-	290	1,344	-	-	-	-
Commercial Land and Estate	-	-	-	-	-	462	-	2,109

Source: Delhi Development Authority. Data abstracted from the Annual Reports of DDA for the years of 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04.

Public Interface and Processes

There are different procedures prescribed for mutation, conversion, additions and alterations to be followed by the general public.¹¹ Some of the most vexing problems faced by public while approaching the DDA include¹² delays in conversion of property from leasehold to freehold, in refunding excess payments which should be paid within 28 days from application, in allotment of possession letters to be disposed off within 60 days of completion of all formalities and in transfer of property.

Builders and construction firms are a hassled lot when it comes to the DDA. A FICCI study on Delhi Building Bye-laws indicated the extremely long process that has to be followed by builders in order to obtain a building permit from the DDA.¹³ It can take a builder anywhere between six months to two years, besides a set of 20 documents (minimum) to get a building permit. Then, after the project is complete,

he has to repeat the process to obtain a completion-cum-occupancy certificate from the DDA/ Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) again, which can take another eight months to two years. When sanctioning the building plan, the DDA asks for some 25 documents to which another 15 can be added in case the project comes under group housing, institutional, commercial or industrial scheme. Ordinarily, the plan gets sanctioned in 60 days, but it may get delayed if there are objections raised. The FICCI study further indicates that any kind of delay in obtaining permission and approval can increase project costs by almost 30 to 50 percent.¹⁴

About the transfer of DDA to Delhi Government, it was told that it has not taken place may be because the provision of the Bill was not acceptable to all and therefore it was left out! However, a more plausible explanation to the same is that the Delhi Statehood Bill 2003 which initially included the provision for transfer of DDA to Delhi Government was BJP led NDA government, while the actual Act was passed under a Congress led government. Maybe, the provision of transfer of DDA was not included in the next Bill considering the anxiety of Union Government to transfer control of land, law and order to the state government, bearing in mind the National Capital Region (NCR) status of Delhi.

Land Acquisition and Land Management:

Department of Land and Building, Delhi Government

Land acquisition for DDA and other government agencies for various development projects is done by the Department of Land and Building. The Department has 4 main branches:

- The Land Acquisition branch acquires land for DDA and other government agencies for development projects. A select committee fixes the cost of land acquisition and the cost in its entirety is borne by the DDA or the concerned government authority for which the acquisition has been made. The Delhi Government provides no cash emoluments or assistance in land acquisition.
- The Evacuee Property branch manages and looks after the disposal of evacuee urban and rural properties and lands that were transferred to Delhi Administration
- The Alternative Plot branch makes recommendations to the DDA

for allotment of alternative residential built up plots to those people whose land has been compulsorily acquired. Residential plots are allotted only when land acquired measures over one *bigha*.¹⁵

- The Housing Loan branch used to give housing loans for construction of houses; the scheme has been discontinued from 1983. Even though the officials gave illogical reasons for its closure, one justification can be that recovery of the loans extended is still being processed.

A Principal Secretary heads the Department, where he is assisted by Deputy Directors/ Secretaries of various branches, their assistants and other sub-ordinate staff. Queries about the total number of working staff in the Department brought the response that such figures were never recorded. The total number of employees working in the Department is 153, out of a sanctioned staff strength of 208.¹⁶ The Department gets grants from the Delhi Government for its maintenance and other activities. Besides, it has various branches like Land Management, Revenue Cell (Land Acquisition) and a Planning Branch. The officials were reluctant to even divulge details about the functions of these branches.

The Department spends a large proportion on administration of the Department. Table 4 gives allocations on salaries, OTA, domestic travel, office expenses, professional expenses and other administrative expenses of the Department, all of which are substantial.

Table 4: Expenditure on Administration of the Department (Rs in lac)

Year	Budget Estimates		Actual	
	Plan	Non-Plan	Plan	Non-Plan
2000-01	15	364	8	261
2001-02	11	303	5	288
2002-03	16	294	8	295
2003-04	30	350	9	314
2004-05	20	344	N/A	N/A
2005-06				

Source: Government Of NCT Delhi. Data abstracted from Detailed Demand for Grants for the years of 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06

The Department of Land and Building spent Rs 3.24 crore in 2003-04 only on office salaries and other administrative expenses. Considering the total workforce and the overlapping nature of the functions of the

Department including the non-working Housing Loan branch, this spending is nothing but wasteful expenditure. Gross irregularities came to light during the CAG audit of 2002 included incorrect determination of compensation and interest resulting in excess payments aggregating to Rs 263 lac, made by Land Acquisition Collectors. Besides this, slow progress in completion of land acquisition proceedings led to retention of substantial amounts outside government account. Problems also arise because there is a similar branch in DDA as well.

Problems

- ***Overlap of functions and activities***

Several functions performed by the DDA, especially construction of flyovers, development and maintenance of horticulture services overlap with the Public Works Department as well as the Delhi Government's Development Department.

- ***Faulty land acquisition approach***

Delhi Development Act, 1957 gives DDA the authority to acquire any land it deems fit for acquisition and further development. However, it is suggested that this approach to land acquisition is incorrect. It devolves upon DDA high autonomy to acquire land wherever it wants and leave it vacant for long periods of time.

- ***Ineffective decentralisation***

Although DDA is divided into six different zones for effective functioning and has offices at various locations, the majority of the offices are situated at the Vikas Sadan, INA Colony. The DDA office in Vikas Minar houses branches like Planning, Master Plan, Offices of Architects and Quality Control Cell.

- ***Redressal of public grievances***

There is no allotted time period for disposal of grievances. No record is available for the number and type of any public grievances filed, and it is doubtful that they are addressed in a timely fashion.

- ***Closed organisation***

DDA is very "closed" organisation. Corruption, bureaucratic atti-

tudes have seeped down to its roots, visitors are viewed with suspicion, details of various issues and problems are hard to come by. This is obviously the result of extreme concentration of power and authority.

- ***Lack of knowledge***

People working under both the authorities (DDA as well as Department of Land and Building) are ill-informed about the policy decisions taken by their own bodies, for example the Housing Loan policy of the Department of Land and Building.

- ***Lack of association with RWAs***

DDA was instrumental in setting up the procedures and rules for Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs). However DDA is hardly involved with RWAs, and is unaware of the civic problems affecting built habitat for which it is responsible till a particular period of time.

Recommendations

The mammoth tasks of restructuring DDA and reforming its role in land management demand extreme measures -- some short-term, some long-term. A discussion on both would be relevant here. In the short term, it is most important to separate the overlapping jurisdiction of the functions performed by DDA and other departments. This merely leads to wasteful expenditure due to duplication of efforts and processes. The Delhi Development Act, 1957 that empowers DDA in matters of acquisition of land should be amended.

The grievance redressal mechanism should be made more speedy and a statutory time frame should be provided for disposal of disputes and grievances. A one-window approach should be adopted and grievances should be addressed through the Public Grievances Branch. They should not be asked to go to the concerned branch and directly seek a reply. There should be external monitoring mechanisms to observe internal issues like vigilance, finances, quality of building materials. Currently, the procedures are such that DDA sits in judgement on its own controversies and issues. This leads to further red-tapism and corruption. Institutional land is available at highly subsidised rates to institu-

tional societies and one way of avoiding flagrant violations of allotment agreement would be to increase the cost of land to such institutional societies. Unfinished projects should be auctioned off to private developers with extensive flexibility regarding area specifications. However certain minimum standards have to be adhered to. Another step could be Transfer of Development Rights model as practised in United States of America, wherein development rights are separated from ownership of land and are tradable in the market. However, it is the duty of the owner of the land to clear encumbrances on the land and make it free from all liabilities.

These are suggestions for the short term. Long-term reform would involve removal of DDA from having a role in issue of land. Land use plans should not be a matter of legislative processes. DDA is heavily influenced by Ministry of Urban Development and Home Ministry, both of which are far removed from people's participatory processes and subject to political vagaries. Land agencies should stop further acquisition of land and reallocate existing undeveloped land to the original title-holders at the original price, since it is unfair for the agency to even auction and benefit from what was not theirs in the first place. Most government agencies own land far in excess of their requirements and for reasons that do not hold much weight. Such excess land could be surveyed and sold to private parties for development. These private parties should not have any restrictions on land assembly.

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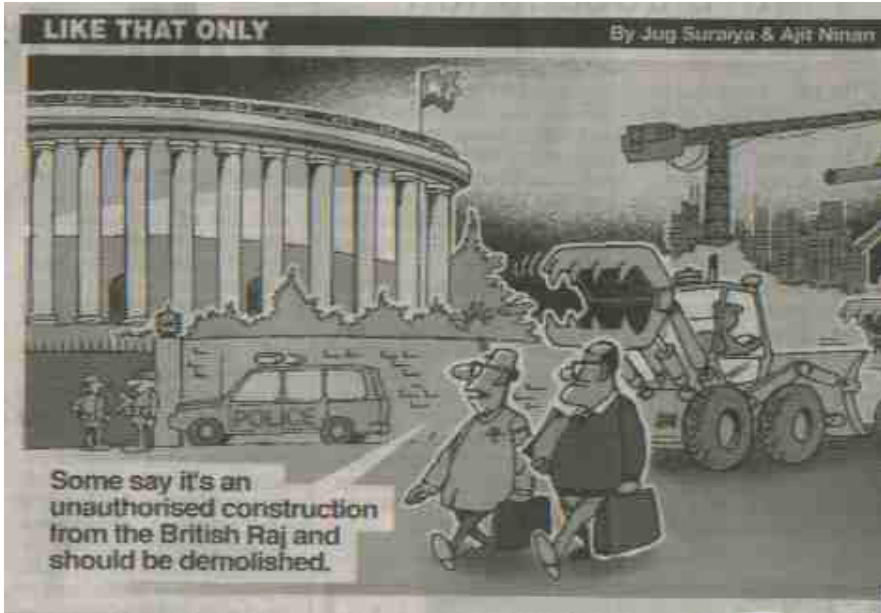
Notes

- ¹ Delhi became a State in 2003 vide the Delhi Statehood Act 2003.
- ² Land Housing and Estate available online at <http://delhigovt.nic.in/land.asp>. Accessed on 22 October 2005.
- ³ Gill Harbans Singh. *Policies and Projects for Land and Shelter Development for Delhi: Implementation Mechanisms*. Available online at http://naredco.org/11_policiesandprojectsforlandandshelterdevelopmentfordelhi-implementationmechanisms_hhgill.doc. Accessed on 22 October 2005.
- ⁴ For example, while in 2000-2001, housing activities undertaken were to the tune of 33 per cent of total activities undertaken, commercial activities stood at 41 per cent. See DDA Annual Report 2000-2001.

- ⁵ Report No. 4 of 2004 (Civil) Autonomous Bodies available online at http://cag.nic.in/html/audit_reports_say5.htm, Last visited 26 October 2005.
- ⁶ These lands are allotted to institutions at concessional rates on the condition that free services (health, education etc.) will be provided to the members of economically and socially weaker sections of the society.
- ⁷ Joshi Sandhya, DDA corrupt, says Vice- Chairman, 28 November 2000. Available online at <http://www.newsinsight.net/archivespecialreports/nat2.asp?recno=5&ctg=Community>, Accessed on 24 October 2005.
- ⁸ See World Bank takes Housing Commissioner Alphons's word on corruption in DDA. Available online at http://mahendra-agarwalonline.20m.com/PR_DDA_MostCorruptInIndia.htm, Accessed on 24 October 2005.
- ⁹ See DDA Annual Report 2003-2004 available online at http://www.ddadelhi.com/about_us/pop_ups/ENGLISH_DDA_AR.pdf, Last visited 26 October 2005.
- ¹⁰ DDA has three accounts, Nazul I Account dealing with all the land handed over in 1957, Nazul II Account dealing with large scale acquisition development & disposal of land and General Development Account that pays for all the developmental expenditure incurred by DDA.
- ¹¹ For the Guidelines to various Housing Procedures, see <http://www.ddadelhi.com/assistance/housing.htm#>, Last visited 25 October 2005.
- ¹² Joshi, Sandhya. *DDA's corrupt, says Vice- Chairman*. Available online at <http://www.newsinsight.net/archivespecialreports/nat2.asp?recno=6&ctg=Community>, Last visited 24 October 2005.
- ¹³ FICCI Study on Delhi's Building Bye-laws, available online at http://www.ficci.com/ficciimage/88888888_518/press.doc, Last visited 22 October 2005.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Present norms for recommendation of the size of plots*. Available online at <http://land.delhigovt.nic.in/>, Last visited 26 October 2005.
- ¹⁶ Government of NCT Delhi. 2004. *Census on employees working in Delhi Government and Autonomous Bodies*. Directorate of Economics and Statistics

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CBI probe into DDA scam ordered

DDA's draw under Rohini scheme today

Over 25,000 applicants would still have to wait for their plots