

# Delimiting the Boundary of Delhi for Effective Urban Political Ecology Investigations

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**Abstract:** Delhi, capital of the world's largest democracy, is witnessing large-scale increase in population since the beginning of the twentieth century. Two prominent factors that have contributed to this include the shifting of capital of the British Raj from Calcutta (now Kolkata) to Delhi in 1911 and the partition of India that accompanied its independence in 1947. Delhi continued to witness high rate of migration in post-independent India due to uneven implementation of development policies. Rising population led to spatial expansion and the largest connotation of Delhi today (National Capital Region) is an area 36 times its size in 1947. Rising population has also had an adverse impact on Delhi's natural resources. Consequently, clean air, water and land availability have become limited and Delhi today is undergoing a severe sustainability crisis. The latter requires urgent intervention for restoring Delhi's urban ecosystem. Since urban areas are highly contested ecological spaces, urban ecological interventions are incomplete without political overtones. Thus, the success of urban ecological interventions lies in identifying politically correct boundaries which encompasses true 'urban Delhi' despite the political boundaries. This research contribution attempts to identify the geographical expanse of 'urban Delhi' amidst the various political terminologies that define Delhi. An understanding of various divisions and definitions of Delhi is also presented from the perspective of appreciating the challenges in urban planning. We conclude that urban ecology investigations in Delhi should be embedded within the 'Delhi conurbation', which represents a geographical area greater than the Delhi city-state but much smaller than Delhi NCR.

**Keywords:** Delhi conurbation, Delhi NCR, urban ecosystem, urban political ecology.

## 1. Introduction

The National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi is one of the three most populated urban agglomerations (UA) in India and is witnessing urban population growth at a rate and scale unprecedented in recorded history (UN, 2015). The NCT of Delhi records a total population of 16.7 million (11,297 persons per sq. km) in the most recent Census (Census of India, 2011) making it one of the top ten most populated cities in the world. In 1997, the NCT of Delhi was divided into 9 administrative districts and each district was headed by a Deputy Commissioner for attending its administrative matters. In 2012, the NCT of Delhi was re-divided into 11 districts and the boundaries of existing districts were also modified (DoR-GNCTD, 2012). Since this re-division took place after the 2011 Census, the most reliable population data at present pertains to the former 9 districts (Fig.1). As per this data, all 9 administrative districts in the NCT have very high density of population. 5 out of these feature in the list of top ten most densely populated districts in India. In fact, the North-east district of the NCT is the most densely populated (37,346 persons per sq. km.) among all districts in India. The total area of North-east district of Delhi has been reduced in the 2012 re-division and has been added to the newly carved out Shahdara district.

This high density of population is exerting an increasing pressure on Delhi's natural resources and simultaneously, on its municipalities. A large part of Delhi was initially managed by one municipal agency (Municipal Corporation of Delhi, MCD). In addition, New Delhi or Lutyens' Delhi was managed by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) while a part of Delhi where the Indian

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Army resides was managed by the Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB). In 2012, the MCD was trifurcated into North Delhi MCD, South Delhi MCD and East Delhi MCD as a response to the ever growing population and needs of Delhi (DLJLA-GNCTD, 2011). The NDMC and DCB continue to operate within the same geographical areas as earlier.



**Figure 1.** Map of Delhi showing the former 9 administrative districts.

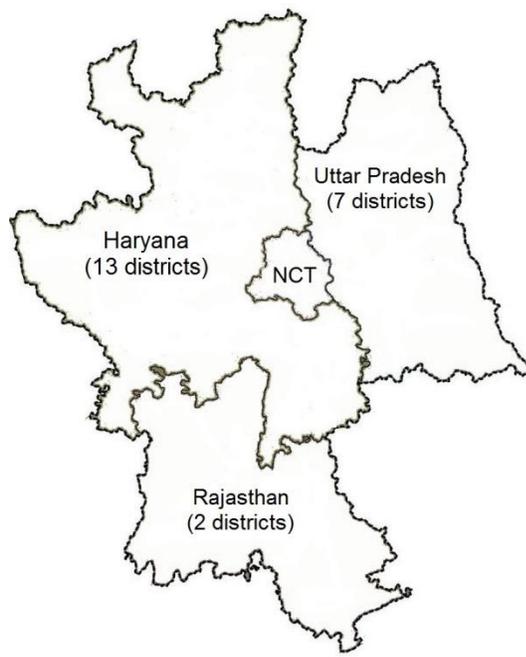
Rapid urban development of NCT of Delhi has also led to a consequent increase in population of neighbouring urban centres. Rapid growth in neighbouring Ghaziabad, Gurugram (Gurgaon), Gautambudh Nagar (NOIDA) and Faridabad is apparent and cannot be overlooked. The first wave of urban population growth in these Class I cities (defined by Indian Ministry of Urban Development as an urban agglomeration or town with a population figure of 1,00,000 and above) took place as satellite towns of the capital city. These cities are therefore well connected to the national capital through suitably designed public transport system (e.g. bus, Delhi Metro Rail) which facilitates unregulated flow of individuals from one city centre to another. In fact it is commonplace to find individuals residing in cities neighbouring to Delhi who have their workplace in Delhi and vice versa. Despite this, the Delhi UA (identified by the Census of India, 2011 and defined by it as “a continuous urban spread comprising one or more towns and their adjoining out growths”) does not include the above-mentioned neighbouring cities. It needs to be noted here that the NCT of Delhi and

its neighbouring cities form a continuously urbanized land-use constituent with an aggregate population of 26.4 million (Census of India, 2011). In addition, even though NCT of Delhi has the largest proportion of urban population (97.50%), there are parts of NCT (e.g. in North-west Delhi and South-west Delhi districts) which are included in the UA that show peri-urban to rural characteristics.

The perception of the physical boundary of Delhi is perhaps as ambiguous as the origin of the toponym ‘Delhi’ (Cohen, 1989). The NCT of Delhi, Delhi, the NCR of Delhi, the Delhi UA, the ‘Delhi region’ all have different actual and assumed connotations. However, there is no territorial nomenclature for the capital city together with its neighbouring cities. The closest term which delimits ‘urban Delhi’ can be found in the NCR Plan 2021 in the definition of the Central National Capital Region (CNCR) (formerly, Delhi Metropolitan Area) (NCRPB, 2005). However, the purpose of defining the CNCR is not to delimit ‘urban Delhi’ but to identify those regions which have greater prospects for urban growth. Simultaneously, the various divisions (and re-divisions) of Delhi (districts, zones, blocks, etc.) contribute further to this ambiguity. There is thus a need to place Delhi in an urban context for carrying out more meaningful urban studies. This research paper makes such an attempt and this research work is part of the Ph.D. thesis of the first author (Singh, 2012).

## 2. Delhi: Location and Administrative Divisions

The NCT of Delhi is part of the Indo-Gangetic alluvial plain in Northern India and lies between latitude 28°24’17’’ to 28°53’00’’ N and longitude 76°50’24’’ to 77°20’37’’ E. It is spread in an area of 1,483 sq. km. with a maximum length of 51.9 km and its greatest width is 48.5 km (Fig.1). The NCT of Delhi has an elevation ranging from 198 to 220 m above mean sea level. It shares its border with the state of Haryana in the northern, western and southern side and with the state of Uttar Pradesh in the east. The NCT of Delhi is also nested within the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi (Fig 2). The Yamuna River and terminal part of the Aravalli hill range (Delhi Ridge) are two most prominent physiographic features of NCT of Delhi. River Yamuna enters NCT of Delhi from North and divides the city into two unequal halves. The Delhi Ridge enters the NCT of Delhi from South and South-west districts, forking into two and expanding into a wide tableland. One part of this fork stems from Mehrauli to north of the city until the bank of the Yamuna, while the other passes by the historic Tughlaqabad fort and culminates in South district.



**Figure 2.** Map showing the NCT of Delhi nested within the NCR of Delhi.

The location of NCT of Delhi is of strategic significance and has contributed to the success of Delhi as a state capital since over two millennia, at the least. This is largely because River Yamuna and Delhi Ridge together form three sides of what is known as the ‘Delhi triangle’ (Mann and Sehrawat, 2009). The geopolitical location of the ‘Delhi triangle’, enclosing a region of over 90 sq. km. (Fig.3), gave Delhi logistic and economic prominence. It is because of this strategic location that Delhi is one of the oldest and most densely populated places in India. Historians have found evidence that Delhi was a popular choice of habitation even during Palaeolithic era, perhaps due to this strategic location (Sharma, 2006). Present day Delhi has grown beyond and above the topographic features that made Delhi the choice of capital. However, River Yamuna and Delhi Ridge continue to provide critical ecosystem services to the region and its people. At the same time, NCT of Delhi continues to remain a destination of choice for millions who migrate to it for different purposes. The location of Delhi has indeed given it a splendid history that flows into the present. Consequently, Delhi is a symbol of India’s ancient values, cultural heritage and its merger with modernization.

It must be mentioned here that right from the time when the British governed Delhi to the present date, Delhi has undergone several administrative changes. This is largely due to the special character of Delhi as the Empire/ National Capital. These changes have been more

prominent in the last 70 years of India’s independence. To carry out any environmental study in NCT of Delhi today, it is important to understand the nature and implications of these changes. This is especially because the most prominent of these changes, the restructuring of NCT of Delhi from one administrative district to nine (and later 11), took place as late as 1996. Before this, NCT was divided into five (and later, six) administrative blocks, viz. Alipur, Kanjhawala, Najafgarh, Shahdara, Mehrauli and later, City block (Singh, 1999). Consequently, studies carried out by researchers and policies drafted for urban management of natural resources 25 years back were planned according to these blocks and related divisions. Any reference to data and information older than 25 years corresponds to these blocks and other administrative entities some of which may no longer exist in the present day. Simultaneously, with the redrawing of the districts of NCT of Delhi in 2012, district-level studies made 5 years back are no longer fully valid.

In addition to the aforementioned, while Delhi has a democratically elected ‘state’ Government which takes care of its political administration, power for certain areas of political administration is vested with the Central Government as well. Therefore, it becomes very important to understand the chronological evolution of administration and governance of the NCT of Delhi at least during the course of the last century, to facilitate meaningful urban ecological investigations.



**Figure 3.** Map showing the ‘Delhi triangle’, with River Yamuna on one side and the Delhi Ridge on the two other sides.

### 3. Evolution of 'Delhi'

Urban centers are not static entities and evolve over time periods which are proportional to the geo-spatial, economic and political significance of the individual urban center in question. The strategic location of Delhi and the consequent economic and political significance has already been discussed. Due to this, the evolution of administrative divisions of Delhi and its growth and development has been dynamic in recorded history and has been even more rapid in the recent past. A hand drawn 'sketch of the environs of Delhi' in the year 1807 indicates that Delhi during that time thrived in and around the previously discussed 'Delhi triangle'. In the last 200 years, there has been an expansion and growth in area of 'Delhi', from 90 sq. km (Delhi triangle) to 1,483 sq. km (NCT of Delhi). The various stages during this urban land expansion over two centuries has had significant impacts on the conservation and management of natural resources (air, water and land) in the region. At the same time, the perception of what is 'urban Delhi' has been ambiguous largely due to this dynamicity. The ambiguity gets compounded in urban academic research with respect to 'Delhi' resulting in confounding conclusions, especially with respect to addressing urban sustainability. This makes it important to spell out this ambiguity and investigate and eliminate it before effective urban ecological studies can be carried out in the NCT of Delhi.

Delhi became one of the five administrative divisions of the Punjab Province under the British administration towards the later part of the nineteenth century. It then consisted of six districts, viz. Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Ambala and Shimla. On 12th December 1911, Delhi was proclaimed as the capital of India in place of Calcutta (now Kolkata) and the districts were remodelled. A year later in 1912, Delhi was placed under a separate local Government and was declared to be a new Province (NDMC, 2017). The Delhi Province was enlarged by adding parts of Meerut district and its boundaries remained unchanged all through the Indian freedom struggle. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) began as the Imperial Delhi Committee on 25th March, 1913 to facilitate the construction of the new capital. Its name was changed to "New Delhi Municipal Committee" on 16th March, 1927. The Delhi Cantonment Board was established in 1914 with a total area of approx. 42.50 sq. km under it (DCB, 2016). After India attained her independence in 1947, Delhi was given the status of a 'Part C' state with a separate Vidhan Sabha. In 1956, on the recommendations of the State Reorganization Commission, Delhi became a Union Territory (UT) administered by the President of India. After the creation of the UT of Delhi, a strong need was felt for effective

governance and management of the UT's rapid urban growth. Consequently, on 7th April 1958, a Delhi Municipal Corporation Act came into being and all existing urban local bodies, excluding the DCB and the NDMC, were merged into a newly created Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD, 2017). As a result, the entire UT of Delhi, excluding DCB and NDMC areas, came under the jurisdiction of the MCD. This also included rural areas and villages that are characteristic of the city's landscape even today. The MCD took over the functions previously entrusted to ten local bodies and three statutory Boards. The UT of Delhi continued to function as a single administrative unit and the power for municipal governance of the NCT of Delhi rested with the following three agencies: i) Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD); ii) New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC); and iii) Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB). Of these, the MCD was known to be the largest and most prominent municipal body occupying 1,397 sq. km or 94% of the total geographical area of the NCT of Delhi. The municipal control of the NDMC and the DCB spread over an area of 42.74 sq. km and 42.97 sq. km respectively. The MCD included both rural and urban areas of the NCT of Delhi and consequently was known to be one of the largest municipal bodies in the world. It had the unique distinction of providing civic services to rural and urban villages, resettlement colonies, regularized-unauthorised colonies, JJ squatter settlements, slum '*basties*', private '*katras*' etc. This exerted tremendous pressure on the MCD and due to this reason an initial proposal to split the MCD into at least eight municipalities was floated (MoEF and PD, 2001).

In 2011, after considerable deliberations, the MCD was re-divided into three municipalities, viz. 1) North Delhi Municipal Corporation, 2) East Delhi Municipal Corporation and 3) South Delhi Municipal Corporation. The New Delhi Municipal Committee was superseded in February 1980 and an Administrator headed it till the introduction of new Act in May 1994. In May 1994, the NDMC Act 1994 (duly passed by the Parliament of India) replaced the Punjab Municipal Act 1911 and the Committee was renamed as present day New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC, 2017). Delhi Cantonment Board today is a local municipal body under the aegis of Ministry of Defense and is governed by the Cantonment Act, 2006. Delhi Cantonment is a Class 1 Cantonment. The administration of Cantonment is a Central subject as per the Constitution of India (DCB, 2016). During the Census period of 1961, Delhi constituted one district and one tehsil. The fair proportion of rural, agrarian territory and population ensured that the tehsil continued to be of administrative importance in the UT of Delhi. From 1971

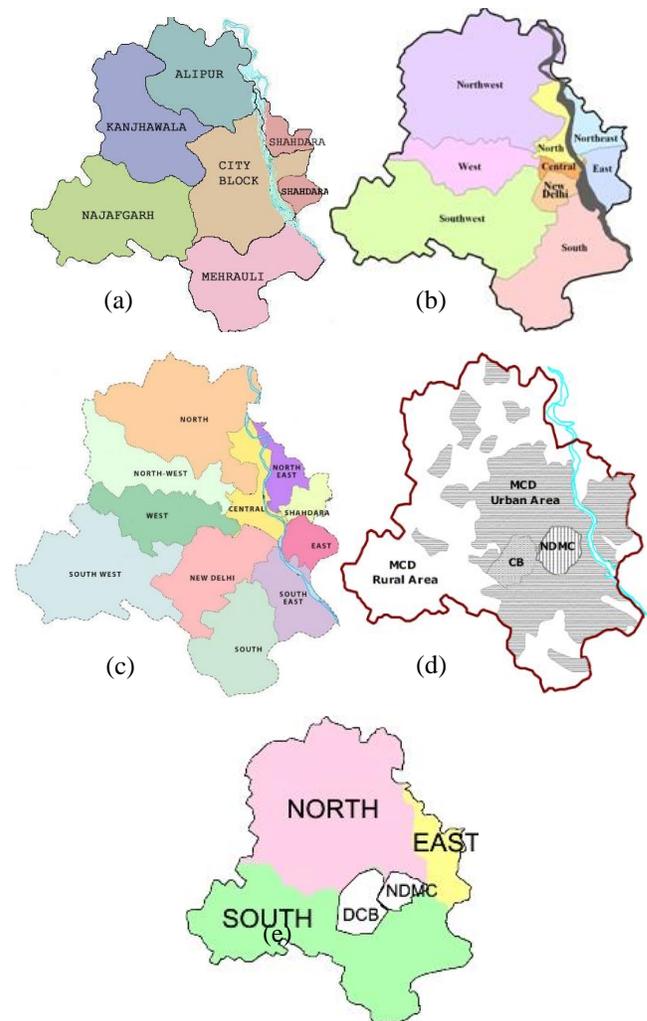
to the 1991 Census, the Delhi revenue district was divided into two tehsils, the Delhi tehsil and Mehrauli tehsil.

The National Capital Territory (Delhi) Act was introduced in 1991 and the Union Territory of Delhi became the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi in January, 1992. The Act provisioned a unicameral legislative body (Vidhan Sabha) with 60 seats for the NCT and a Government of NCT of Delhi led by seven member Council of Ministers, headed by a Chief Minister. However it should be noted here that according to the Act, the Head of the Government continued to be the Lieutenant Governor who is directly in charge of the land issues, law & order matters and the MCD. Four years later, in 1996, a Gazette notification divided the National Capital Territory of Delhi administratively into 9 districts and 27 subdivisions. The MCD, the NDMC and the DCB were the three statutory towns which together made up the entire geographical territory of the NCT of Delhi until 2011. After the re-division of the MCD in 2011, the statutory towns that now make up the NCT of Delhi are 1) North Delhi Municipal Corporation, 2) East Delhi Municipal Corporation, 3) South Delhi Municipal Corporation, 4) New Delhi Municipal Council and 5) Delhi Cantonment Board. Figure 4 illustrates the five most prominent recent and/ or contemporary administrative sub-divisions of the NCT of Delhi.

The presence of different divisions of Delhi leads to confounding and overlapping research conclusions and is a hindrance to long-term urban ecological studies. For example, survey of urban water management literature leads to inconclusive observations due to the use of different nomenclatures of Delhi by different researchers (Zerah, 1998; Datta et al., 2001; Trivedi et al., 2001; Kumar et al., 2011; Adhikary et al., 2011, Singh, 1999; Chatterjee et al., 2009). It is also interesting to note that while the status of sub-surface water pollution in the NCT is being assessed on a district-wise basis (DoE, 2010), its mitigation requires decisions at the level of municipalities which have administrative boundaries that do not overlap with the boundaries of the nine districts. At the same time the norms set for water demand are different for different 'zones' of the NCT, which do not overlap with any of the above discussed administrative sub-divisions.

To further add to the complexity, city development and resource management is undertaken by multiple agencies in the NCT (DUD-GNCT, 2006). It is therefore not difficult to understand the scale and level of challenges in managing and optimizing water resource in Delhi. Similarly, a study on urban sprawl in Delhi carried out by Jain et al. (2016) was based on the 9 districts (even though

Delhi was re-divided into 11 districts in 2012). The study has considerable district-level implications, which have now become diluted due to the redrawing of the administrative map of Delhi.



**Figure 4.** Administrative ambiguity: (a) blocks in Delhi, (b) 9 districts of Delhi and (c) 11 districts of Delhi, (d) 3 municipal divisions in Delhi; an (e) 5 municipal divisions of Delhi.

Another aspect that needs to be taken into account is that 'urban Delhi' exists beyond the NCT. However, lack of any single agency managing the NCT of Delhi along with the contiguous urban areas (and the lack of such a defined area) does not allow this true 'urban Delhi' to be investigated. This is yet another factor contributing to confounding conclusions while carrying out urban ecological investigations in Delhi. For example, Jain et al. (2015) carried out an urban transformation study of the "NCT of Delhi" and found a spatial shift of slums from

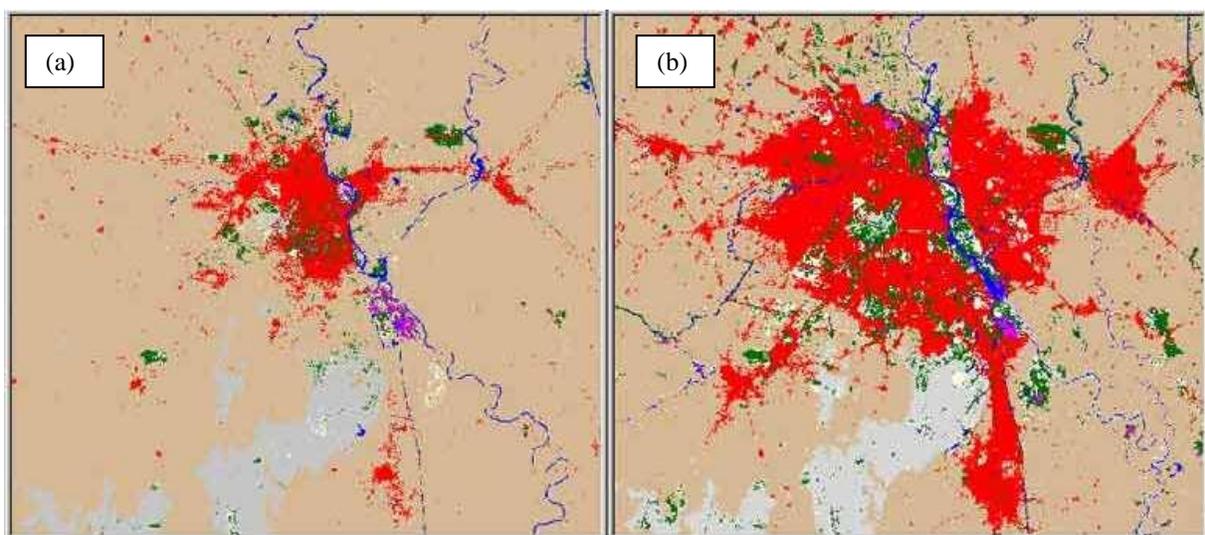
the city centre to the periphery. Had such a study been placed in true ‘urban Delhi’, it would have revealed a different scenario, viz. greater emergence and not mere shift of slums. Joshi et al. (2011) have carried out a study based on monitoring land use land cover change of Yamuna riverbed in “Delhi”. However, the stretch of River Yamuna selected by them neither corresponds to true ‘urban Delhi’ nor to the NCT of Delhi. It is actually only the lower half of River Yamuna in Delhi that they have chosen, thereby making their study relevant to only half of Yamuna riverbed in Delhi. Similarly, while Peshin et al. (2017) claim to have carried out a spatio-temporal variation of air pollutants across Delhi-NCR, their methodology reveals that out of the 8 monitoring sites chosen, 7 are situated in the NCT of Delhi (occupying 1,483 sq. km area) and only 1 site is located in Delhi-NCR (occupying 53,817 sq. km area). The study is thus not a representative of the Delhi-NCR and is at best limited to the NCT of Delhi. Similarly, Srivastava et al. (2018) seem to have sampled air at only one site in NCT of Delhi and have used the data to make generalisation for the “most probable mixing state of aerosols in ‘Delhi-NCR,’ northern India.” Several such published manuscripts can be identified where the ambiguity around ‘urban Delhi’ has affected the quality and relevance of individual manuscripts. Any urban environment study with policy implications in Delhi can be carried out only after resolving the following two challenges, at least one of which is characteristic to Delhi. 1) The NCT of Delhi is composed of different administrative sub-units with overlapping limits, and 2) ‘urban Delhi’ today includes an area beyond the limits of the NCT and that natural resources do not restrict themselves to political

boundaries. Urban ecological investigations in Delhi therefore require careful attention and a need is felt for identifying the true ‘urban Delhi’ where such studies needs to be situated.

#### 4. Introducing the ‘Delhi Conurbation’

Urban landscapes are dynamic ecological systems, rapidly transforming to meet the requirements of increasing populations and post modernity (Gospodini, 2006; Pickett et al., 2011). Cities evolve from towns and transform themselves into megacities in time scales proportional to their social, political and economic prowess. With time, the more influential and magnetic among these cities evolve from megacities to conurbations. A conurbation has been defined as an extended urban area, typically consisting of several towns merging with the suburbs of one or more urban centers (Geddes, 1915). A comparison of satellite images between a gap period of 25 years (1974 to 1999) (Fig. 5 indicates rapid pace of urban growth in terms of built environment. Interpretation of the spectral growth pattern indicates that Delhi’s urban growth has taken place without giving much respect to the political limitations of the NCT (Fig. 5).

‘Urban Delhi’ today is a contiguous area encompassing the NCT of Delhi along with the neighbouring Ghaziabad, Gautambudh Nagar, Faridabad and Gurugram. Of these, Ghaziabad and Gautambudh Nagar are administered by the state of Uttar Pradesh and Faridabad and Gurugram are administered by Haryana state. It needs to be mentioned here that in order to diffuse the rapid pace of urban population growth in the NCT, a National Capital

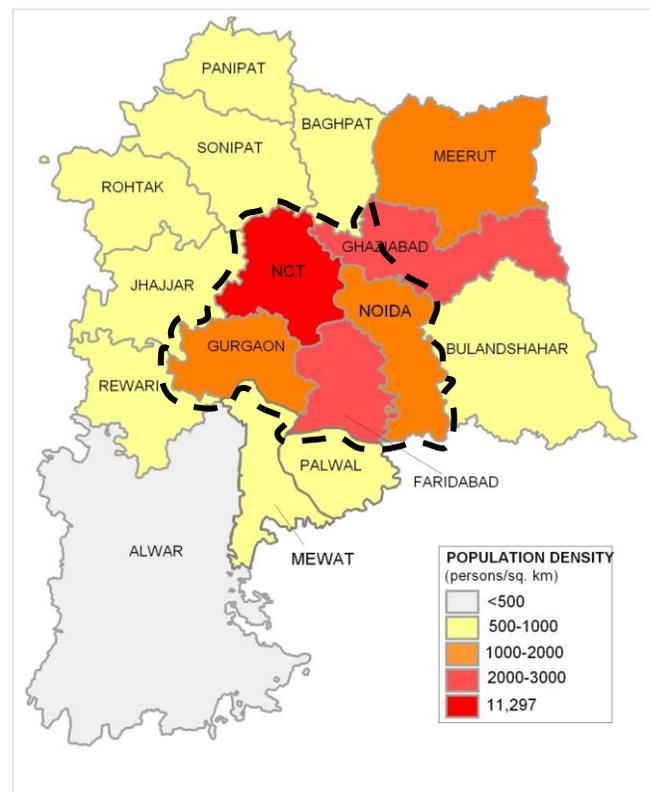


**Figure 5.** Satellite image interpretation for growth in urban area (red) over a period of 25 years in the Delhi region: (a) urban area in the year 1974, (b) urban area in the year 1999 (Source: UNEP, 2005).

of Delhi Region Planning Board (NCRPB) was formulated in the year 1985. The planning for the creation of the NCRPB had started as early as 1956 when it was felt that growth of Delhi could lead to problems of land, housing, transportation and management of essential infrastructure like water supply and sewerage (MoH, 1956). The NCT of Delhi initially included 9 districts from the state of Haryana, 5 districts from the state of Uttar Pradesh and 1 district from the state of Rajasthan. However, in 2013, the NCT was expanded to include 1 more district from Haryana (Bhiwani) and 1 from Rajasthan (Bharatpur). In 2015, the NCT was again expanded to include 2 more districts from Haryana (Jind and Karnal) and 1 more district from Uttar Pradesh (Muzaffarnagar). The primary objective of the NCRPB has been to prevent the very spill over urban growth which is being witnessed all across the eastern border of the NCT today. While it can be argued that the urban growth scenario in the Delhi region could have been much more sinister without the NCRPB, the fact that Delhi today has evolved from a megacity to a conurbation remains undisputed.

The ‘Delhi conurbation’ was first presented as part of a paper identifying challenges in optimizing Delhi’s urban water footprint (Singh et al., 2011). In October 2012, a United Nations report also noted this evolution with the statement, “in recent past, Delhi has joined the league of ‘meta-cities’, those massive conurbations of more than 20 million people” (UN Habitat, 2013). A closer analysis of population density in the NCR reveals that out of the total of 15 original districts (excluding the NCT of Delhi) which make up the NCR, only 5 note population densities above 1,000 persons per sq. km (Fig. 6). These are Meerut, Ghaziabad, Gautambudh Nagar (NOIDA), Faridabad and Gurugram (Gurgaon). Among these, Meerut does not have the spatial advantage of sharing a physical border with the NCT. At the same time, Meerut and central-eastern Ghaziabad do not show an urban growth pattern which is influenced by the NCT, any more than it is influence by the thickly populated Western Uttar Pradesh state. It is for this reason that Meerut and central-eastern Ghaziabad districts do not form part of the ‘Delhi conurbation’. In the case of Ghaziabad district, the district may be re-divided on the basis of pace and influence of urban growth. Such a re-divisioning and creation of a ‘Western Ghaziabad’ as an administrative entity would certainly help in more effective administration of the ‘Delhi conurbation’, as and when it is established. Although a recommendation to divide Ghaziabad district may sound overly ambitious, lessons learnt from recent past indicate that such a re-divisioning indeed took place for two other districts in the NCR. The district of Mewat

was carved out of the district of Gurugram (then Gurgaon) in the year 2005 while Palwal district was carved out of the district of Faridabad in 2008. The ‘Delhi conurbation’ can be defined as a contiguous polycentric urban area with the NCT as the urban driving force and flanked clockwise from the NE onwards till SW direction by the districts of Ghaziabad (western part), Gautambudh Nagar (NOIDA), Faridabad and Gurgaon. This forms a region which, in total area, is greater than the NCT and is far less than the NCR (Fig. 6).



**Figure 6.** District wise population densities of the original districts (until 2013) comprising NCR of Delhi. The dotted line indicates the geographic area of the recommended ‘Delhi conurbation’.

In the past, attempts have been made to describe a Delhi Metropolitan Area (DMA) or a Central National Capital Region (CNCR) (NCRPB, 2005). But these entities have been 1) superfluous, 2) without the purpose of administering ‘urban Delhi’ and therefore also included areas which are not already urban but may become so in due course of time, and 3) often without any administrative powers or any kind of jurisdiction. A need is therefore felt to establish the ‘Delhi conurbation’ and assign an overarching agency which has administrative powers in order to ensure sustainable urban growth of Delhi. An effective urban resource assessment and

management study should necessarily focus on the ‘Delhi conurbation’ for it to be comprehensive and result oriented. However, in the lack of any administrative agency managing such an entity, this can only be possible by carrying out individual studies in the NCT and abovementioned districts forming part of the conurbation and subsequently overlaying and analysing these studies. This makes the work four-fold and thus is a significant lacuna while carrying out urban ecological studies in Delhi.

## 5. Conclusion

Urban growth in the NCT of Delhi has surpassed its political border and Delhi is now a contiguous meta-city involving at least two neighbouring states. The Delhi megacity has now evolved into a conurbation with unique and inherently complex urban challenges. The conurbation includes the NCT of Delhi along with neighbouring districts of Ghaziabad, Gautambudh Nagar, Faridabad and Gurugram. Interestingly, this development has taken place on the eastern and southern part of the NCT, mainly along the course of River Yamuna. River Yamuna therefore plays a prominent role in influencing urban growth in Delhi, a fact which needs to be imbibed during the urban planning of the NCT. Due to the urban expansion of the NCT and the evolution of the ‘Delhi conurbation’, the setting up of a regulatory body for the latter is recommended. This is especially because the proposed area outlined by the ‘Delhi conurbation’ is far less than the overarching geographic area of the NCR. The environmental challenges of ‘urban Delhi’ can best be studied with respect to the ‘Delhi conurbation’, but this requires a central statutory body which presides over this area beyond and above the federal restrictions of state boundaries. It is recommended that such a central, administrative agency be setup for regulating, planning and sustaining urban growth in the ‘Delhi conurbation’. A periodic, decadal review of the political boundary of the ‘Delhi conurbation’ is also recommended prior to making policies for ‘urban Delhi.’

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