

Counter Magnet Urban Centres to Delhi Metropolis: A Strategy of Decentralization

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Abstract

Keeping in view the urban management problems of colossal magnitude; a regional plan based on the premise of developing Counter Magnet urban centres around Delhi metropolis to channelize the growth of metropolis has been analysed in the present study. The main focus of this research paper has to identify areas surrounding the Delhi metropolis that have the potential to ease the pressure of population in Delhi. Most of the data have been collected from secondary sources and analyzed using simple statistical techniques.

Keywords:- Metropolitan, Counter-magnet, Decentralization, Periphery, Hinterland.

INTRODUCTION

The term counter-magnet is a strategy of decentralization in the context of metropolitan region. It has been used to define an urban centre which is already functioning or has the capacity and potential to function as an alternative centre of growth. It should possess, or attain through developmental support a desired level of attractiveness for people and activities to converge towards it and not get lured towards the metropolitan core. The counter magnet would thus thrive to a substantial degree in the initial stages, on the deflected growth of an overall decentralization strategy of a metropolitan regional plan. Thereafter, it would eventually develop its own hinterland and influential area, as a dynamically growing urban centre.

A counter-magnet should therefore have inherent growth propensity, i.e., in the long run it should be able to grow on its own hinterland as an independent centre of manufacturing or trade or commerce or else develop a multifunctional base.

APPROACH TO IDENTIFICATION OF COUNTER-MAGNETS

A quantifiable system has been evolved and applied to a large number of urban centres in the constituent of adjoining five states, viz., UP, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and MP, with a view to identifying the potential counter-magnets to Delhi metropolis.

NODALITY CONSIDERATIONS

The towns to be developed as counter-magnets to the Delhi metropolis would be desired to function as alternative centres of growth in the territories of constituent states surrounding the NCR, and would thus command their own influence zones in the regions of their setting. The influence zone could be on an average be considered over an area upto a distance of 25-30 kms.

SPATIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The NCR plan 1973 and the Interim Plan Report brought out in 1987 have identified certain priority towns within the NCR. These towns are earmarked for accelerated growth through intensified developmental efforts in respect of infrastructural facilities and amenities. It is expected that these priority towns, once developed, would be able to expand rapidly by absorbing, within themselves, the future migratory streams which would otherwise come and settle in or in vicinity of Delhi. Following the basic principle of gravity model a counter-magnet in a district in general direction of priority town, will have to be a population size that would atleast be comparable and larger than the population size of priority town and have comparable functional specialization. Otherwise, the designated counter-magnet will fail to arrest the flow of migrants from the outlying areas.

SIZE AND VIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Following the policy trends relating to urbanization and planning, there is unanimity that in order to overcome the problems attributed to metropolitan concentration and to achieve a balanced pattern of urbanization, medium sized cities should be encouraged. In the context of NCR, this would imply that budding metropolises or large cities which have already a sub metropolitan scale of population and economic activities should be excluded from consideration as counter-magnets.

MIGRATORY FLOW CONSIDERATIONS

As a general principal, it would be logical to summaries the need for a potential counter-magnet would be more in districts, which have shown a higher rate of out-migration of population to Delhi. It is observed that districts closer to Delhi, even though more developed than other located further away, have shown a higher rate of out-migration. This is attributed to distance criteria. Development of counter-magnet at anodal center in such districts would also help to establish a new alignment for future migratory streams.

DELINEATION OF SEARCH ZONE

A counter-magnet is expected to maintain within Delhi and NCR, a certain amount of complementarily in respect of metropolitan functions which may be rendered difficult at distances in excess of 350-400 kms or 6 hrs journey at prevailing transport facilities. At the same time, undue proximity of a possible contender to Delhi would impair its developmental autonomy and functional identity as a regional growth centre. Based up on these premises, the region falling within a 400 kms radius of Delhi metropolis but outside NCR boundary has been delineated as the search zone for possible counter-magnets.

IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE COUNTER-MAGNETS

From the 36 listed (Fig. 1) applying the size criteria, Kanpur & Agra in UP, Jaipur in Rajasthan and Ludhiana in Punjab are ruled out. Chandigarh being the capital city of two states also ruled out. Haridwar in Uttrakhand & Mathura in UP, Ajmer in Rajasthan may be eliminated being religious & cultural centres. The ecologically significant Bharatpur in Rajasthan, Dehradun in Uttrakhand not suited for development as counter-magnets.

Ganganagar in Rajasthan being close to international border is ruled out for strategic considerations. Jalandhar in Punjab, being located as an integral part of an emerging urban continuum, may also be ruled out on account of its proximity to Ludhiana. Ajmer (though already eliminated) could also be eliminated due to its proximity to Jaipur. Thus, 7 urban centres, viz., Hardawar, Mathura, Ajmer, Bharstpur, Dehradun, Ganganagar and Jalandhar stand excluded leaving 24 centres for further considerations. These 24 centres were subjected to quantitative analysis, viz., population size, population growth, work force participation ratio and population density. The respective ranges of variables, which differ widely, have been brought to a common scale of 0-10 to make them quantitatively comparable. Thus, in case of each one of the five variables, the lowest and highest from among the 34 values (excluding Jaipur & Kanpur from the original list of 36 towns) are assigned respectively; the scores 0-10 and intervening values are converted in proportionate fashion.

The individual scores of each town may be termed as the average level of urbanization – both demographic & economic amongst the class-1 towns in search zone (excluding metropolitan cities) . In sense, scores below this value may be understood to represent low levels of urbanization and slow rates of growth with respect to the region and such towns may be eliminated.

FINAL SELECTION OF COUNTER- MAGNETS

From the 12 possible counter- magnets identified, it is recommended that five one from each state, be selected for investment initially. This has been suggested not only in view of general financial constraints, but also to enable proper synchronization of development programs in the priority towns of NCR. Further, addition to counter-magnets in each state could be considered at subsequent stages of the NCR Plan implementation.

Normally, the selected counter-magnets would be the top ranking contenders in a state and accordingly Ambala in Haryana, Patiala in Punjab, Kota in Rajasthan, Gwalior in MP and Bareilly in UP would qualify as such. However, in terms of directional split, both Ambala and Patiala would be lying west of northerly axis, Bareilly along easterly axis, Gwalior along southerly axis and Kota along west of southerly axis, with the entire westerly direction remaining devoid of a counter-magnet. In view of the close contiguity of Punjab and Haryana territories and coaxial location of Patiala, and the first two ranking contenders Ambala & Karnal in Haryana, a modification in this principle appears justified.

In the interest of a balanced directional split, the consultants have therefore, making an exception in the case of Haryana, recommended the following urban centres as counter-magnets to the Delhi metropolis for first stage intervention.

1. Hisar in Haryana
2. Patiala in Punjab
3. Kota in Rajasthan
4. Gwalior in M P
5. Bareilly in UP

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