

Past, Present and Future: Delirious nature of development of Burari Village

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Past

The first recorded description of people and their lifestyle of Burari Village is found in the Punjab Gazetteer of 1883. An agriculture-based settlement surrounded by river Yamuna in the East, a horse-shoe lake (present Bhalswa lake) in the west, the revenue boundary of village Ibrahimpur in the north, and large marshy lands of Dhirpur and Shah Alam Bandh (present coronation park) in the south. 'Jhau' and 'Sarkanda' are two common shrubs found in the marshy areas around Burari village, and many villagers were enrolled in furniture making from the 'Sarkanda' plant. Comparing the 1931 Survey of India map of Delhi with the current scenario, marshy areas of Burari village are now residential areas and categorised as unauthorised colonies. Due to yearly rain and flooding in river Yamuna, the west side of Burari till the historical GT Road retains water throughout the year. Horse-shoe lake (current Bhalswa Lake) is formed due to this yearly activity which has now been reduced to half its original size.

Present

This area has two peri-urban centers, Burari and NathuPura. Burari is well connected with the city by public transport. The Delhi Metro yellow line started functioning in the year 2006 which has also sped up the process of urbanization here.

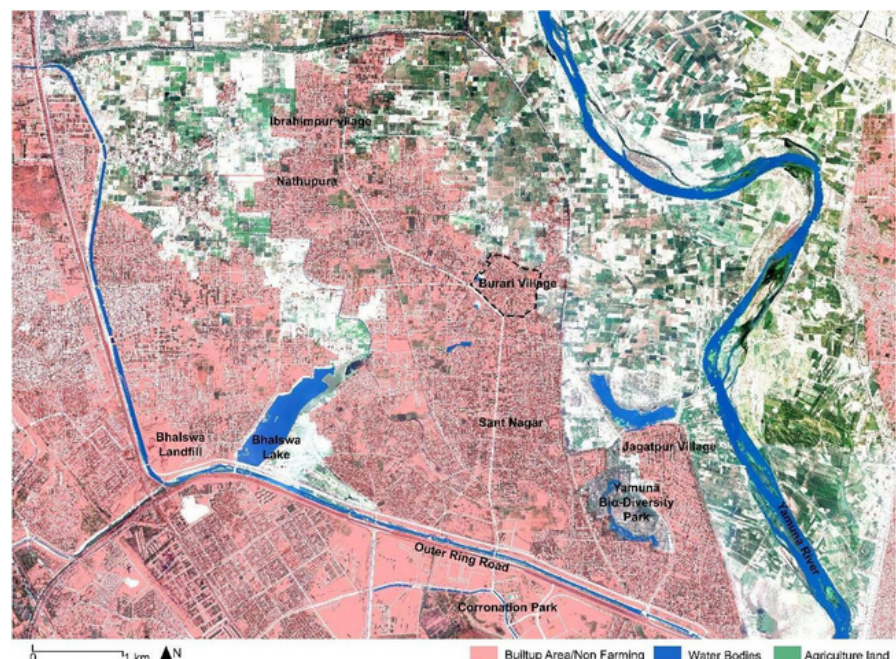


figure 1: Burari Village context

Out of 1731 unauthorized colonies of Delhi, 3.29 are present in this area. Bhalswa JJ colony, Bhalswa dairy, Bhalswa lake and golf course, Jhorada dairy were developed here when this place was considered rural Delhi. Over the last 40 years, this place has become a growth point with its own development patterns.

Agriculture patterns

Since 2000-01, Delhi's cropped area has reduced by more than 34 per cent (Economic Survey of Delhi 2017-18). The total cropped area during 2000-01 was 52,816 hectares, which reduced to 34,750 hectares in 2015-16. On average, there has been a 2.28 per cent reduction in the cropped area each year during this period. The main reasons for the reduction in agriculture in Delhi are "fast urbanisation and shift in occupational pattern, especially during the last two decades". However, the area under food-grain crops has decreased substantially, but the area under vegetable production has increased. The same pattern is observed in Burari village while comparing Census 2001 and 2011 data. Agriculture workers have increased in number because vegetable and flower farming needs more agriculture labour than wheat and rice farming.

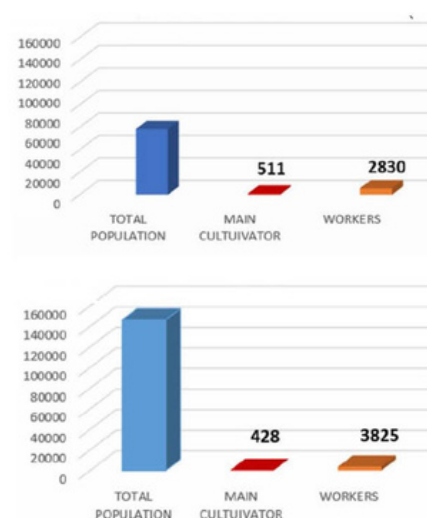


figure 2: Typical Agriculture farm(left), Burari Village 2001 and 2011 Census Demographic comparison

Traditionally, farmers and their entire families used to engage in agriculture at various stages. In recent times, the younger generation has stopped engaging in farming regularly and is seeking jobs in the service and IT sectors. This makes it difficult for a farmer to seed his farms on time.

Land Dynamics

Housing demand in Delhi-NCR makes the peri-urban areas the only available space for the urban poor to find refuge. Land-use change of any land is illegal without DDA permission. If any agricultural land is found in such condition, the concerned district magistrate puts that land under the category of 'Gram Sabha'. Therefore, before the status changes into 'gram sabha', builders quickly convert agricultural land into plot sizes of 50 and 100 yards.

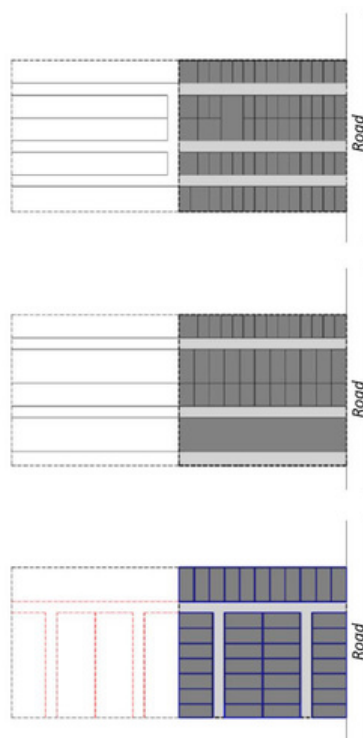
Figure

Different patterns of plotted housing on one 1acre agriculture land.

1. 75 plots of 50 yard
Area under road 9900 sq feet

2. plots arrangement of diff sizes
50yard,75 yard and 100 yard

3. Plots with 100 yard.



2019



2018

figure 3: Typical example of unauthorised plotted housing on agriculture land

Typologies of change

'Ghar' refers to the house in local conversation. This typology evolved over time with social norms and the requirement of space for agriculture practice. Traditionally, a house consists of a room and a verandah with a thatched roof. The ladies used the room to sleep and to store grains and clothes. This typology now refers to a permanent house with multiple floors.

'Gher' refers to the cattle house locally, mainly present in the periphery of the village, and few are in the village core. Many villagers have Ghar and Gher separately, and few have a hybrid typology in which one-third of the space is used for houses, and the remaining is used to keep cattle, vehicles and agriculture equipment. Gher are usually large in size compared to Ghar, also best suited with the changing aspiration of villagers to have large houses with cars and other facilities. Due to its large size, few have used gher to keep their agriculture

equipment and cattle, few have used this space for dairy or as rental housing for seasonal and construction work, and many have been converted to a warehouse and small factory.

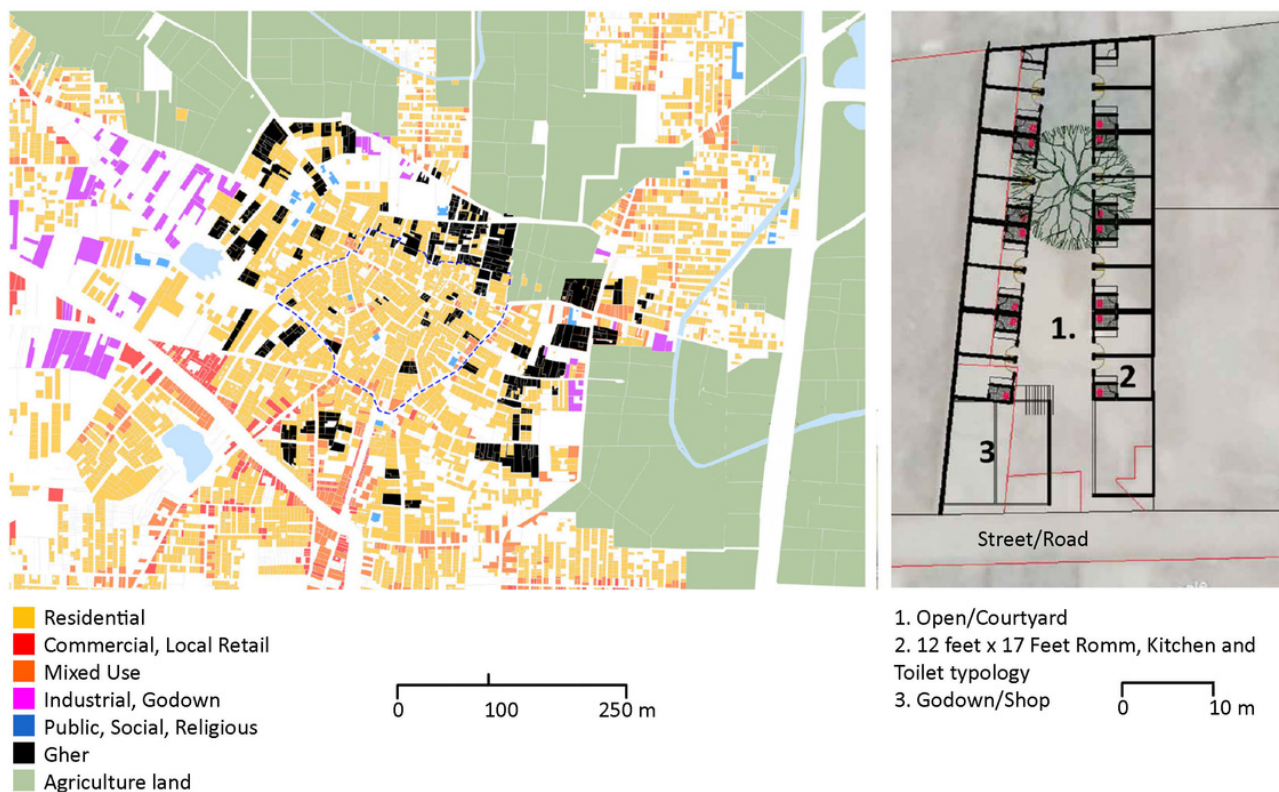


figure 4: 'Gher' typology in the peripheries of Burari Village (left), Gher typology converted into rental housing (right)

Future

Burari Village falls into the PII zone of DDA. This area is subject to development with the help of a land pooling policy in which farmers can pool their farmland with DDA; in return, they will get 60% or 48 % of land size for development. River Yamuna and its flood plains come under 'O' zone, which is a non-development zone. Urban development policy is dividing rural communities from natural resources with urban development.

The concept for PII zonal plan is to develop the sub-city with sustainable settlement and a state-of-the-art provision of quality infrastructure. It discusses the synergy between transport and land use by concentrating intensive land use development along the new mass movement corridor. But these mass transit corridors will create a physical divide between religious, cultural and emotional connections of people with the river Yamuna. The development plan talks about saving river Yamuna from pollution and improvement of drainage, wastewater treatment with the help of infrastructure development. Still, it fails to look into public participation with the people associated with agriculture occupation in the

floodplains of river Yamuna.

Rivers are the origin point of cities and civilization as well as many villages. With current urban development policies, Burari village will be another 'Urban Village' of Delhi, and soon it will be surrounded by large residential colonies and wide and fast movement corridors. Current development policies must focus on embracing the cultural and occupational connection of people with the river and creating spaces connected with nature rather than making infrastructure that hides them in the backyard of our cities.

Nitin Bhardwaj is an Urban Designer and Architect, currently teaching at Department of Architecture and Planning, Gautam Buddha University. He is also enrolled in Farming practice in Burari village and has research interest in Urban farming and the issues of food security and urban development.