

# Delhi's Journey Part 3

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**Abstract :** Journey of any city is a very fascinating one to scholars of urban studies as well as dwellers, visitors, policy makers and managers of cities. Delhi has an extremely rich past dating back to pre-historic times and charting epochs like the Gupta period, Rajput phase, the Sultanate, Lodhis, Mughals, British and finally, capital of Independent India. This paper is third part of a series in which the first part presented a birds' eye view of the urban character of Delhi from the prehistoric times to 1638: the founding of Shahjahanabad and the second continued the story till the Twilight of the Mughals. The next phase of Delhi history has been covered in a previously published paper by the author- 'Delhi during Pax Britannica'. The third part of this series in this paper encapsulates the impact and aftermath of the 1857 uprising on the city of Delhi, including the three darbars and the announcement of shifting of the imperial capital from Calcutta to Delhi in the last one in 1911. The objective of this series is to contextualize many monuments, travel writings, novels, memoirs, films, myths, stories, stereotypes present in/ on Delhi to a continuity as well as complexity of urban and cultural tradition. As thinkers and users of cities, it is imperative that we appreciate the ethos we inherit, consume, represent and create. Using a variety of sources from history, sociology, cultural and urban studies, the paper puts together diverse dimensions of this ancient city and imperial capital from the perspective of underscoring that urbanity has always been a matter of intersecting spaces, lives, powers and intentions.

**IndexTerms:** *Delhi history, Delhi culture, 1857 uprising, Delhi darbars, Imperial capital*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Delhi has had a long and layered history up to the period of Pax Britannica or British Peace. The period of Pax Britannica extends from the turn of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. It inaugurated the British innings in the city leaving an indelible mark Delhi's political, cultural and urban history (Mittal, 2013). It was on the near idyllic setting of the British peace that the terror of the 1857 uprising landed. The British maintained throughout that 1857 was nothing more than a "sepoys mutiny", which was "wholly unpatriotic and selfish... with no native leadership and popular support" ("Talmiz Khaldun, 2007, p. 3). Later attempts at more objective analysis have had to stumble against the availability of only British records as the undercover pre-rebellion activities erased all records. Whether the "revolt" was instantaneous or organized, therefore, remains a matter of conjecture. "Talmiz Khaldun" (pseudonym of Satinder Singh, journalist and scholar) resolves the issue through a middling statement which most likely comes closest to truth that "the rebels had built up an organization in the pre-rebellion days. It is, also, equally evident that the organization was still in an embryonic stage at the time of the outbreak of the rebellion" ("Talmiz Khaldun, 2007, p. 33). The revolt, however, did cut across regions, religions and classes and can be seen today as the product of discontent of Indians with British economic, political, administrative and racial policies. It was evident to the poverty stricken artisans and cultivators, job denied middle classes, dispossessed landowners, annexed principalities who felt decimated and humiliated by the self serving British that this regime was exploitative and apathetic. Generally, the pattern of the revolt was that of near simultaneous eruptions in the barracks and the city, with government treasuries, records, courts and prisons assaulted for settling scores with the British and their beneficiaries. The revolt which began on May 10, 1857 in Meerut spread like wildfire engulfing East Punjab, Delhi, Oudh, Rohilkhand, Kanpur, Benaras, Jhansi, Bundelkhand, Central India, Arrah and Patna in Bihar. Despite a wide sweep and shared grievances of many segments of the society, the revolt was eventually suppressed due to the antipathy of many regions like West Punjab, Presidency towns and Bengal and chunks of the Indian populace like the rulers, taluqdars, money lenders, traders, officers and other western educated Indians. Also, the revolt hinged on the hostility towards a foreign power but lacked the concrete of a nationalist or reformist agenda. Each participating faction had common generality but different specificity. The pronouncement of Bahadur Shah as emperor motivated many principalities to join hands but repelled an equal number as they perceived personal threat in it. The command at Delhi tried to overcome the feudal nature of the rebellion by constituting new organizational structures like a democratic court of administrators in Delhi and other nerve centres. These raw methods were insignificant in the face of an economically, politically, militarily and intellectually seasoned opponent like the British.

Delhi lay very much in the eye of the storm as the enraged Meerut soldiers proceeded towards it reaching here in the morning of May 11, 1857 proclaiming Bahadur Shah as the emperor of India. This act of vesting authority in an old man of eighty two years who spent time in literary pursuits was a piece of inspired thinking or a momentary decision is debated from varying standpoints. On the one hand, historians of the revolt consider that it pitched the revolt not just at military level but at a far more popular level, while on the other, the act is seen as a desperate and unpremeditated recourse as it raised dissension in Hindu and Sikh allies (Joshi, 2007; Bhattacharya, 2007). When the Meerut soldiers arrived in Delhi rampaging on the bridge of boats on the Yamuna, first visible to Bahadur Shah through his *jarokha* of his *baithak*, he as well as the entire city was taken by surprise. The soldiers entered from the Daryaganj gate where the local infantry- the 38<sup>th</sup> regiment stationed outside

Daryaganj- joined them, killed the European officers and seized the city. The British officers at Calcutta gate met with the same fate and so did the British Commandant of the Palace Guard. On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1857, as Nana Sahib was commanding sepoys to besiege the entrenchment of General Wheeler in Cawnpore, the British began their bid to reclaim Delhi. The period between May-September 1857 is referred to as the 'siege of Delhi'. Many Europeans and Anglo-Indians were killed in the siege while many including John Metcalfe sought shelter in different places including the Palace (Red Fort) where mainly women and children were accommodated. Mirza Mughul, the son of Bahadur Shah, assumed command of Delhi rebels with other princes similarly commanding individual regiments. The rebels vented their bloodlust on the whites and the Christians but the worst episode of massacre took place in the Fort when about fifty women and children refugees were slaughtered in cold blood at the insistence of Mirza Mughul on May 16. Initially, military command lay with Mirza Mughul and civil with Bahadur Shah with his son, Jivan Bakht as *vakil*. The military and civil command of Delhi was unified with the appointment of General Bakht Khan, the leader of the Rohilkhand rebellion and a *subedar* in British army, as Governor General (*Sahib-i-alam Bahadur*) in July, and the constitution of the Court of Administrators, though Mirza Mughul redundantly clung to his title of commander-in-chief. During this brief period of inactivity from May 11, 1857 to June 8, 1857, when after the Battle of Badli, British troops positioned themselves on the Ridge, the primary controllers like Bahadur Shah and his advisors, Bakht Khan, Kotwal Rajab Ali and Colonel Gauri Shankar had to deal with the problems of soldiers' lawlessness, arranging finance, shortage of food supplies and managing military weapons and ammunitions. The common people, on the other hand, had to suffer extortion, communal tension, looting, vendetta, starvation and dislocation

## II. AFTERMATH OF THE REVOLT

The aftermath of the revolt is a story of vengeful annihilation not only of the people but also of the city at the hands of the British. In the hot summer months of June and July of 1857, the British remained in dire straits on the Ridge exchanging fire on daily basis with Delhi soldiers. They mainly camped in the Hindu Rao house, the Flagstaff tower and an old Pathan mosque. On June 23, 1857, the anniversary of Battle of Plassey, a vigorous attempt was made to push back the British but the British were able to resist. With the arrival of John Nicholson, the undisputed hero of the Delhi siege, on August 7, 1857, things began to look up for the British. The battle of Najafgarh on August 25, 1857 marked the turn of the tide. The operation of the siege of Delhi commenced on September 6, 1857 and ended on September 20, 1857 with days of furious fighting wherein Hindus and Muslims were indiscriminately killed, though children and women were spared (Spear, 1949, 2002, p. 194-217). Arbitrary executions and trial punishments were also carried out. The princes and other royal offenders were shot dead at Khooni Darwaza near Delhi Gate with the exception of Bahadur Shah, who though prosecuted, was assured of life, and eventually was asked to live in exile in Rangoon with his wife, Zeenat Mahal, and son, Jivan Bakht, and few more members of immediate family. Then, the entire populace was evicted from Delhi. Those who tried to re-enter were liable to death. The survivors of the siege spent the harsh Delhi winter without food and shelter huddled mainly near Qutub and Nizam-ud-din. Though John Lawrence was instructing General Saunders and others in charge not to indulge in random violence and to allow people to come in Delhi under supervision, but it was only in the beginning of next year that the population was allowed to inhabit inside (Gupta, 1998, 2002, pp.1-38). The British experience of the 'mutiny' had ill-disposed them towards the Muslims. Many mutiny papers voiced the conviction that the 'mutiny' was principally organized by '*Mohammedans*'. Major J.F.Harriot, Deputy Advocate General to the Commission which tried Bahadur Shah asserted that, "It is the most significant fact that though we come upon traces of *Mussalman* intrigue wherever our investigation has carried us, yet not one paper has been found to show that the Hindus, as a body, had been conspiring against us, or that their Brahmins and priests had been had been preaching a crusade against the Christians. ... Hinduism, I may say, is nowhere either reflected or represented; if it brought forward at all, it is only in subservience to its ever aggressive neighbor" ("Talmiz Khaldun", 2007, p. 30). Charles Metcalfe, in his *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny*, differs on the ground that Mohammedans are bad conspirators while the Hindus have a genius for it, in which he is supported by Kaye, the official British historian of the mutiny. Nevertheless, the British officers in Delhi followed the stereotypes of the treacherous Muslim and loyal Hindu in repopulating the city. General Burn promulgated the policy of only license bearers returning to the city and registering their presence in the *kotwali* thereafter. Apart from the policy of more Hindus and only useful Muslims, a policy of ten men, women and children along with Hindu shopkeepers per street was also followed. The reason cited for this selective permission was to "secure against sickness in the city from the accumulation of filth" (Gupta, 1998, 2002). By 1858, the Muslims clustered in Paharganj, Qutub, Nizam-ud-din and Purana Qila were still waiting for the city barrier to be lifted for them. Some well-to-do British supporters were allowed to remain in their houses but only on payment of a ransom sum for protection. The banker Chunna Mal living in Nil Katra and Hakims in Ballimaran-Mahmud Khan, Murtaza Khan and Ghulamullah. Master Ram Chandra of Delhi College, Ghanshyam Rai, Behari Lal, Girdhar Lal- all avowed British supporters- were able to secure protection tickets. Ghalib was the only Muslim who was not evicted from Delhi during the events of the 1857 uprising. In February, 1858, when John Lawrence took charge of the administration, decision was taken that the property of Muslims and guilty Hindus be confiscated. In November, 1858, a general pardon was issued but many Muslims were kept under house arrest. In January, 1859, ban on Muslim entry was revoked but attachment on their property was retained.

## III. RE-OCCUPATION OF DELHI

As the displaced residents returned to Delhi, they found that much had disappeared and dislocated from its premises. Samuel V Noe alerts us to the fact that the "conflict and punitive measures which followed are well known although their cumulative

physical impact are not always appreciated” (Noe, 1986). Similarly, Percival Spear reiterates that “the impact of the mutiny on the city itself has never yet been systematically treated” and hence his objective in *Twilight Of the Mughals- Studies in Late Mughal Delhi* is “to examine the Mutiny in Delhi from the point of view of the Delhi citizen”. (Spear,...., p.) The British wrath wished to wreak nothing short of extermination on the city to avenge their ordeal on the Ridge, the indignity and agony faced by their women and children, the challenge to their power and the death of Nicholson and many other soldiers, a memorial to whom was raised in 1870 near the Ridge. Writes Narayani Gupta: “Delhi was made to forget that it was a Mughal City” (Gupta, 1993, p. 4). The British on the Ridge, waiting to storm the mutineer’s bastions, were in fact sustained by the ‘Delhi Prize’ which awaited them. Hence, apart from a senseless carnage, their pent up suffering also resulted in greedy plunder. Already the pitched battle on the streets of Delhi had caused irreparable damage- the magazine or the arsenal in the walled city had blown up on May 11, 1857 and St. George’s Church had been wrecked by the rebels. Zahir Dehlavi’s Dastan-e-Ghadr recounts how Red Fort was a target of the British cannon on a daily and nightly basis:

‘.....and as they perfected their range, the shells used to create havoc on bursting. If a cannon ball fell on a several-storey building it would go in right through it to the floor, and if it fell on a flat surface it would dig deep—at least ten yards into the ground-destroying everything around it. Shells were worse. The old Shah Jahan houses of the fort were completely blown apart if they received a direct hit. Later in the siege, on bad nights, it was like hell on earth, with ten shells fired at a time in the dark, and bursting one after the other’. {Zahir Dehlavi, Dastan-e-Ghadr: 95}

A cannon ball destroyed the *zenanakhana* alongside the Shah Burj tower located at the south of the palace. The Emperor himself narrowly missed being hit on the morning of June 14, 1857.

The third English column of the four-pronged British battery to arraign Delhi on September 11, 1857 had blasted Kashmiri Gate. After British reoccupation, houses were dug up to unearth treasures. In the initial euphoria, a demand was voiced to raze the entire city but after the intoxication had subsided, measured steps were taken to tame the city.

As Noe notes, “within a brief period the following devastations occurred”:

About 80 percent of the interior of the fort was destroyed (an area of about 120 acres). This had been densely covered with elaborate royal pavilions, gardens, store-rooms, barracks, and quarters of artisans and other court functionaries. Displacing a substantial residential population, the British converted the fort into a military garrison. To help protect it from assault they cleared a field for artillery fire an area 300-400 yards broad around its western and southern perimeter. ... The additional destruction resulted in the elimination of many of the more prestigious *mohallas* of the city, a number of the richest and most active bazaars, one of the largest mosques in the city, and several important charitable institutions. Assuming a population density of around 100 persons per acre..., the clearance around the fort resulted in the displacement of 10,000-12,000 residents. These figures do not include the seizure and, in some cases, demolition of the *havelis* of important officials ... (Noe, 1986, pp. 237-249)

The royal palace and the fort fell to the overwrought zeal of the British bolstering. The Governor General Canning had ordered “to preserve isolated buildings of architectural or historic interest” but as Percival Spear puts it “care was there, the taste lamentably lacking” (Spear, 1949, 2002, p. 221). Only the *Diwan-i-khas* escaped the British alterations. Mosques were regarded as conclaves of conspirators. Jama Masjid was occupied by British troops, five years later to be handed back to a restoration committee under Maulvi Sayyid Ahmed. Fatehpuri Masjid was leased to Lala Chunna Mal for commercial use with just the main courtyard available for worship. Its sanctity was belatedly restored 20 years later for the Durbar. Zinat-ul Masajid was used as a bakery. Narayani Gupta aptly summarises the British approach to the city in the following words:

For an imperial government, the commercial and historic *raison d’etre* of a town is often obscured by military considerations. ... Once it had been decided to retain Delhi, accommodation had to be found for the large European and Indian army contingents that were to be posted there. ... Lawrence’s line was consistent that- Delhi was to be retained as a fortification, but the people of Delhi should not be punished any longer. (Gupta, 1998, 2002: 25)

Immediately after the recapture of the city, the soldiers were housed in Colonel Skinner’s house, Ahmad Ali Khan’s haveli, Khan Mohammad’s residence, Bara Hindu Rao, the Jama Masjid, the Delhi College, the Idgah and the Red Fort. As the issue of internal and external mechanism for city’s future defence was thrashed out, it was resolved to position the European troops within the walls and only some outside in Bara Hindu Rao. This decision to interchange the military and civil hubs in the city had far-reaching consequences on the city:

What the Government decided was necessary for its security led to some of the loveliest buildings of the city being destroyed- Kucha Bulaqi Begum, the Haveli Nawab Wazir, the Akbarabadi Masjid, the palaces of the Nawab of Jhajjar, Ballabgarh, Farrucknagar and Bahadurgarh.. Ghalib noted that thirty lakhs’ worth of property had been destroyed. (Gupta, 1998, 2002, p. 27)

The confiscated property was sold through a complex procedure of tickets which actually resulted in concentration of holdings with cash-rich community, some of the members of which were Chunna Mal, Sahib Singh, Ramji Das, Narain Das, Mahesh Das, Janki Das, Mohun Lal, Debi Sahai, Jwala Nath, Gouri Mal, Mahar Chand and Mirza Ali. Lord Canning proposed that compensation for the property claimed by the Government for Cantonment and Railway development be given in the form of confiscated houses. The scheme, however, soon got embroiled in speculative trading and erratic distributions. If the financial statistics of this large scale land sale are scrutinized, then as Narayani Gupta demonstrates, the real beneficiaries were neither the army nor the Government, but the Jain, Khattri and Mughal British loyalists who became millionaires by hoarding property (Gupta, 1998, 2002, p. 30). The *nouveaux-riches* as well as the *nouveaux-pauvres* were a feature of Delhi as a result of the crisis of 1857, though social status did not correspond to income levels. Even impecunious aristocrats were treated with deference. Much of the new wealth translated into donations to schools and hospitals rather than displayed in conspicuous consumption. Though the Court had been ended, the bond of language, Urdu, united the people of Delhi, transcending religious and caste difference (Gupta, 1993).

#### IV. DEMOGRAPHIC, CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL CHANGE

The population of the city fell to 20,000 with deaths and immigrations. This mass was directed to fit within the walls as building outside was prohibited. It was 1860s onwards that people began to once again settle in Delhi. Now, the settlement was more in the western suburbs, as a new Sadar Bazaar came up to service soldiers quartered in Idgah and Pahari Dhiraj. Labourers constructing railway infrastructure also lived there. Some displaced Muslims shifted to Kishanganj. Mostly, the settlers were those who opted to weather penury for the culture and custom of a familiar place. The European population also multiplied. Last came the tourists, with the rolling of the Railways in 1867. The first train chugged into the city on January 1, 1867 operated by the East India Railway Company. The Railway lines sliced the city into two halves longitudinally. The Railway network became more elaborate with the advent of Sind, Punjab and Delhi Railways in 1867, Rajputana Railway in 1873, Delhi-Ambala-Kalka Railway in 1881, Southern Punjab Railway to Karachi in 1897, Ghaziabad-Muradabad Railway in 1900 and Delhi-Agra-Bombay route in 1905. Craftsmen of *gota* (gold lace), shawls, jewelry had dispersed to South India while Muslim craftsmen of brassware, bangles, dyeing and shoes had relocated to Jaipur. The craft which came to the rescue of hundreds was that of manufacture of *gota* and *salma-sitara* (sequins). The embroidery forms of *tarkashi* and *kandlakashi* also offered livelihoods to many, especially women. With the Punjab-Calcutta corridor of the Railway plying, Delhi became an important distribution centre. The economic recovery of the city speeded up, allowing it to cope up with post-famine depression. Now, the city imported rice, sugar, iron, brass and copper and European cut pieces and chinaware and exported raw cotton, Indian cut pieces, wheat, ghee, hides and leather goods. As the Delhi Gazetteer of 1883-84 documents, "Of its special industries, perhaps the most famous is the production of jewellery, gold and silver lace, real and imitation, and tinsel work in all its branches; but there is probably no trade known in India that has not its representative in the city" (A Gazetteer of Delhi: 205). By 1912, not just Delhi, but its hinterland as well, had become well connected by Rail to all parts of north India. This era also saw the establishment of the first few mechanized "factories", especially the cotton mills and flour mills which drew workers from Rajasthan and the United Provinces on a large scale. Some native industries like *kandlakashi* came to the brink of extinction due to mechanization and European competition. The cotton industry which developed in Delhi owing to its nearness to raw cotton producing areas eventually declined when Karachi emerged a rival centre on account of Railways. 1902 onwards, availability of electricity catalyzed the next phase of mechanization. By the onset of the twentieth century, Delhi had become the busiest Railway junction and the commercial capital of north India with flourishing of sectors like trade and manufacture and banking and insurance. Though the 1857 uprising had tilted the demographic scales in the favour of Hindus and Jains, yet Bhola Nath Chunder's observation of the entire commerce concentrated with these communities appears to be impressionistic, as many Muslim entrepreneurs still existed in the city. Trade and commerce as well as manufacture and production led to the city growing populous as well as prosperous, though the initial swell was caused by men who flocked to the city as labourers, petty shopkeepers, workers in factories and domestic servants. 1901 census records 75000 to be the number of working men and 16000 to be the number of working women. 1860s and 1870s saw the greatest influx in the nineteenth century which, however, compared to the great escalation of the 1940s, was numerically miniscule. In 1881, the population of Delhi was 173,393; in 1891, it was 192,579; in 1901, it touched 208,575 and in 1911, it was 232,837. The 1881, census counted 17,498 pucca houses. Building activity continued unabated during the 1880s and '90s. This construction activity ushered in the 'flat' system of occupancy as the luxury of one house per family had now to be jettisoned for meeting the rising demand for space. Very soon after the ravages of 1857, Chandni Chowk reverted back to its traditional spirit of cosmopolitanism, cultural continuity, and concentration of elite commercial as well as residential activity. Area around Jama Masjid was dominated by "substantial and comfortable houses" of loyalists. Kayasths, Khattris and some Muslims also resided in pockets in this area. The *nouveaux pauvres* of the Muslim community who turned teachers and *karkhandars* (craftsmen) as well as the new entrants of the rich trading community also subsisted nearby. On the peripheries in the walled city, in Mori Gate, Farashkhana, Ajmeri Gate, Turkman Gate and Delhi Gate, lived the lowest strata of the economic hierarchy. The demographic density of Hindus, Jains and Marwari immigrants in the city and the emergence of a new middle class also led to a further mixing of flavours in this urban cocktail.

## V. COLONIAL AND INDIGENEOUS CITY INTERFACE

As has been often noted, till the colonial interface, the Indian city was an altogether different paradigm from the European city where culture, communal cohesion and commonality were preferred over a planned urban ambience that prioritized privacy and amenities. These two different approaches were also manifest in the visual and organizational distinctness of the indigenous city and the European city (represented in Delhi by the Civil Lines and the Cantonment). The two were contiguous but cordoned in Colonial India. The indigenous city originated from an “economy which ... was primarily agricultural and rural-based (and) the physical size, form and population of the city were still governed by a technology based on animate rather than inanimate energy” (King, 2006, p. 47). On the other hand, in the European city, “scientific and technical changes ..., stemming from a scientific revolution in the seventeenth century, had led, with the growth of capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the development of an urban-industrial economy based on new fossil fuel sources of energy” (King, 2006, p. 47). The Civil Lines came up predictably at a safe distance from “the fascinating but dangerous native city” (Platt, 1923, p. 27). It installed many safety valves against indigenous contaminations. The European feel in Civil Lines was achieved through “low density, horizontal, single-storey developments and broad tree-lined roads which give access to a system of large compounds, each containing a roughly centrally sited bungalow” (King, 2006, p. 45). By and large, the colonial community adopted the lifestyle of the European middle class and hence Civil Lines bore a classless, suburban type character. In keeping with the neat temporal division of job hours and leisure hours in the lives of European middle classes, spaces were got demarcated as ‘work’ and ‘play’. ‘Leisure’ emerged as a brisk industry in the affluent but stressed capitalist society. Hence, clubs, picnics, entertainment, vacationing- all gained a distinct spatio-cultural identity. The mid-nineteenth century European social norm of the nuclear family was followed by the colonial counterparts as well. Hence, the expansive dwellings available to them housed very few people. The discourse of ‘division and specialization’ as well as ‘labour and consumption’ called for discriminatory spaces within this large complex. Technological and scientific advances of Europe of this time made the colonial populace aspire to healthy surroundings produced from systems of water supply, drainage, sewerage and other town planning ideals of sanitation. Civil Lines duplicated these features verbatim not only by force of habit but also hubris.

Anthony D. King’s very interesting study of ‘The Colonial Bungalow-Compound Complex in India’ demonstrates how this residential unit in the Civil Lines is a juxtaposition of the residential urban forms of the host society (India) and the imperial society (Britain) giving rise to the forms of the colonial society (the British in India). As King describes:

Most typically, it consists of a low one-storey spacious building, internally divided into separate living, dining and bed rooms, each with an attached room for bathing. A verandah, forming an integral part of the structure or alternatively, attached to the outside walls, surrounds part or all of the building. The bungalow is invariably situated in a large walled or otherwise demarcated ‘Compound’ with generally one main exit to the road on which it is situated. ... the kitchen, servants’ quarters, stables, and room for carriage or car, are separate from and placed at the rear of the bungalow. (King, 2006: 44)

Despite the juxtaposition, King emphasizes that the Colonial Bungalow-compound Complex resembled neither the host indigenous structure nor the immigrant metropolitan concept. It was a matter of economic, political, cultural, and civic adaptation and utilization of available space. Spatial economy was not required as space was abundantly available and bungalows spread over 1 to 25 acres were one of the chief incentives of a life otherwise in exile. In a planned post-industrial city, where all infrastructure was in place, even a small dwelling could be a fully serviced one as it received the inputs through externally placed outfits. In the nineteenth century colonial India, however, while the expectations were the same as those in a metropolitan environment, the availability was radically different. Thus, the lavish paraphernalia had to be erected from scratch which required space, money and manpower. All three were readily available, especially manpower, which shifted from the Fort and nobility households to colonial households for survival. Politically, the Bungalow and the Civil Lines expressed the main tenet of imperialist ideology, that of territorialism. Seizing space and demonstrating distance were simultaneously symbolized by the Bungalow. An impregnable enclosed space with vast stretch of intervening hiatus pronounced the disdain for the indigenous way of life. Culturally, it provided opportunity to simulate the home setting. It is through this validation of European sensibility that the lifestyle choices of the native landed gentry and other affluent sections were also impacted. The much needed bulwark of ‘community’ was also crafted in the ample confines of the bungalow through formal and informal entertainment held here. The civic sense was an important determinant in the location, design and décor of the bungalow. The British did not share the parameters of sanitation, health, privacy, child bearing and rearing with the natives. Thus, for them a *cordon sanitaire* from the potentially harmful atmosphere was mandatory. The bungalow was sited at a high ground, in the leeward direction and nestling in a cleansing groove of green. As in the nineteenth century, the theory of pathology stressed the air-borne nature of disease, hence, this necessitated that the political, cultural and spatial divide was suitably reinforced by an aerial divide as well. The 10-20 strong domestic helps living inside the Compound were pushed sufficiently to the rear to avoid auditory, olfactory and physical contact. The garden was not only a venue for social dos but also offered the European staples of vegetables and fruits along with respite from heat and infections. It provided the requisite visual equivalent of the lush home flora which did not exist naturally in the tropical climate.

## VI. CITY IMPROVEMENTS AND CITY CHARACTER

Local level municipal bodies were also instituted in this complex and evolved urban ethos to maintain civic standards. 1863 onwards, Delhi had a Municipal Commission for “police and conservancy and such other funds as the members may think fit to expend on works of improvement, education and other local objects” (Gupta, 1998, p. 70). The Commission chiefly consisted of British loyalists, the chosen ones to replace royalty, an elite circle, interaction with which was safe and decent. In 1871, 15 Municipal wards were created, of which 12 were intramural. Delhi was conferred the status of a first class Municipality which meant autonomy in expenditure and thus, elaborate plans of “improvements” could be executed. Most of these plans were hatched to serve military, commercial and administrative interests of the Government. Though initially the Municipality spent around 70 percent on policing but by the by, it came down to 25 percent. The biggest spurt of public works in Delhi was witnessed in 1860s and 70s and after 1912 when temporary and imperial capitals were constructed. There was a Cantonment Committee as well which “had a separate administrative organization but was part of the Municipal area” (Gupta, 1998, p. 87). The military and municipal perspectives often differed and collided on key issues. The foremost was the demolition of the wall which from the municipal perspective was a health hazard and space constraint but for the military it was indispensable to the defences of Delhi. The wall remained a stumbling block for commissioners like Cracroft and Clarke who advocated again and again that its demolition was necessary for better urban planning in the city. When the military, historians and natives had more or less overcome their inhibitions of felling the wall, there was a realization that a new technological impediment has already sneaked in, that of the criss-cross of railway lines. Grappling with the insanitary conditions and space crisis in Delhi, the Municipality built hospitals, school for midwifery and nursing, women’s medical branches and made proposals for creating waterworks and drainage systems in the city along with an intelligent use of government owned *nazul* property. Though it was supported by the philanthropic spirit of the city’s rich in their individual capacity, yet its composition of wealthy merchants forced it to adopt more adhoc and rich oriented methods than long term and egalitarian ones. In 1884, as part of the local self government agenda of British governance, the structure of the Municipality underwent a change- the representation was now based on elections where the candidates as well as the voters were taxpaying citizens of Delhi. The Deputy Commissioner was to be the President of this organization. This meant lesser interference from Imperial or Supreme Governments but also lesser grant-in-aid and thus, more taxation. Despite this change, the Municipality was always short of revenue not only due to ever increasing numbers in Delhi but also its own shortcomings in raising the revenue. Full twenty years after the proposal for waterworks and drainage system was mooted, the work could begin in 1889 from a loan granted for the purpose. When electricity reached the city in 1902, it also occasioned the inauguration of a tramline network. In 1905, the Municipality for the first time bid for planned expansion under Commissioner Merk as the situation had become really grim in terms of amenities and space, aggravated further by two Darbars held in quick succession in 1877 and 1903, the former at a time when a severe famine had hit the area. This is when the decision to shift the capital to Delhi from Calcutta was announced and Municipality crisis managers were replaced by town planning masterminds who craved for a blank, clean slate to showcase the imperial glory and racial snobbery.

The quintessential ‘Indianness’ of Delhi combined with its inward looking character had already been tampered by, as has been mentioned earlier, not only the application of imperial designs but also the superimposition of an alien paradigm on the original city. Chandni Chowk now had a neogothic railway station along with the Town Hall, the Clock Tower and the Company Bagh. Lord Northbrook commissioned the building of a fountain in Chandni Chowk. Mor Serai, or Lala Chunna Mal’s serai, a Post and Telegraph office and Dak Bungalow – all contributed in their own way to change the face of this area. This shifted the notion of city-centre to this area from the hitherto centric Fort. After the Railways, a traveler entered the city not from the Bridge of Boats which opened up a magnificent vista of the Wall and the Fort but through the Station to be accosted by a miniature replica of Victorian England. Queens Road and Hamilton Road, constructed in the neighborhood of Chandni Chowk with contrasting cleanliness and commodiousness, held public offices and private property respectively and formed the new westernized definition of urban outlook. A concomitant aspect of enshrining European superiority and functionality in the cityscape was a disregard for the Indian legacy. Daryaganj was a victim and so was the Fort which now had eyesores of military barracks peeping over its façade. By the dawn of the nineteenth century, Civil Lines had to take in working class Europeans as well and Indian land owners also started living there due to frequent outbreaks of epidemics in the walled city and western suburbs. Western suburbs were also bursting at the seams, now having a population more than the walled city. In 1908, army occupied a new cantonment on the Ridge. However, Sadar Bazaar did not decline in terms of industrial and human volume despite the loss of this clientele. Its proximity to the Railway line attracted traders as well as construction workers. Gradually, Paharganj, Kishenganj and Pahari Dhiraj and Sadar Bazaar all coalesced to form one big chunk of the city to very soon find itself unexpectedly in the thick of things when the decision to build New Delhi and New Delhi Railway Station was taken on a site which was almost contiguous with it. The Sabzi Mandi area, which till the 1890s boasted of a series of gardens, was deforested for Railways, factories and houses. The urban morphology during these years was dependent on the route of the rail line and the parallel ribbon development alongside.

## VII. DELHI DARBARS AND “CAPITAL SURPRISE”

The Coronation Darbars of 1877, 1903 and 1911 were another factor which left an indelible impact on the morphology and demography of the city. The 1877 *darbar* was the brainchild of Viceroy Lytton, the favourite poet of Queen Victoria, who envisaged a great pageant to celebrate the passing of the Indian territories into the direct dominance of the crown. The word ‘*darbar*’ itself revealed the intention of its organizer who was astute enough to recognize the fact that the feudal Indian form of display of power through pomp and ceremony would be the most effective on the Indian mind. Thus, the great assemblage of 400 Indian princes was held on a tract of land near the village Burari in which approximately 68,000 people participated living

in camps erected for the purpose all around Delhi. Lasting 14 days, spread over the first two weeks of the year, the whole drill costed Rs. 60 lakhs. While on the one hand, it had the desired influence of overawing the Indians with the might of the empire; on the other, it also drew flak from the Delhiwallas who were struggling to save a revered seat of learning like the Delhi College through petitioning to the Government for financial aid. The latter was declined whereas the ostentatious extravaganza of the *darbar* was mounted (Gupta, 1998, p. 106). The next *darbar* was put together by Viceroy Curzon to announce Edward VII's ascension to throne in 1901 in order to sculpt once again the formidability of the empire which would subdue the first surge of Indian nationalism. Delhi was once again the selected venue as it was sufficiently removed geographically and politically from the ferment of Bengal. As expected, the spectacle commencing on January 1, 1903, got only bigger with railways and other resources at disposal with not only the Indian principalities, but other Asiatic colonies also represented. Edward VII chose to stay away but was represented by his brother and sister-in-law, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, and many other dignitaries from Britain. Lord Curzon made a state entry on December 29 and the next day led a procession sitting atop a caparisoned elephant through the streets of Shahjahanabad before reaching the site of the *darbar*. An Investiture ceremony, a State Ball and sports tournaments, art exhibitions, sightseeing of historical monuments and display of native culture were all added to the grand carnival. The *darbar* of 1911 was, however, more distinguished and therefore, the ultimate in show business, owing to the presence of the King himself, George V, and his consort, Queen Mary, who became the Emperor and Empress on the death of Edward VII in 1910. In his first speech itself in the Parliament in February, 1911, he caused quite a flutter when he announced his inclination to visit India (Raman and Agarwal, 2012). The decision was partly motivated by the Regent's personal interest in the country owing to a previous visit in 1906 and also the political situation where the 1907 split of the Indian National Congress, 1909 segregation of Hindu and Muslim electorates through Morley-Minto reforms and the tapering off of aftermath of the partition of Bengal by 1910 had the British steeped in a mood of self gratifying display of benevolent superiority and authority (Frykenberg, 1986, 2002).

Thus, unlike its predecessors, this Coronation *darbar* was the real thing and not a proxy one. However, the King was compelled to wear a new 'India' crown for this coronation as his Christian coronal ornament could not be used in a non-Christian ceremony. This bill was footed from Indian revenue. 9,00,000 pounds sterling were spent on the rest of the spectacle which included the construction of a temporary tented city spread over 45 sq. miles. The Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, set up a Darbar Committee under Sir John Hewett, Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces which, as per the instructions of the king to have the *darbar* in an open area to facilitate participation by the masses in maximum numbers, identified an open field from where six villages had to be evacuated to start construction. An integrated city with all possible connectivity and facilities needed to be built along with two amphitheatres- a small, covered one for individuals to pay homage; and a larger, open one of 1,00,000 capacity for bigger congregation. A dais for the thrones was located at the centre, which along with traditional splendour had a dome encased in gold visible for many miles around. The architecture was Indo-Saracenic. All care was also taken to accommodate Indian customs like *pardah* for the ladies. The Royal Camp was a city in itself with 2000 tents holding the Royal Suite, the Reception Tent, Kingsway and the official camps. The Darbar Camp comprised of 475 camps, once again fully furnished, for the Governors, Officers of the Government of India, Maharajas and Princes. Railways were pressed into service for ferrying resources and people. Two new stations were built at Sabzi Mandi and Azadpur and the Delhi Station was refurbished with an addition of 11 new platforms. 29 full-fledged stations came up within the *darbar* area along with a temporary nodal Station with six platforms. New lines were laid, special trains plied and rail traffic was diverted to handle the unprecedented bulk of transit before and during the *darbar*. A 'Light Railway' was also inaugurated from Tis Hazari to the various sections of the *darbar* area for inner connectivity. Another technological feat accomplished for the *darbar* was the creation of a Telephone, Telegraph and Postal network with the Coronation Post Office located near the present day Oberoi Maidens Hotel. The task of setting up this gigantic canvas city and its support systems was entrusted to the army with 50,000 personnel collaborating on the job. The first day of the *darbar* was declared to be a public holiday and people gathered along the processional route throughout the night of December 6, 1911. The procession itself charted the course from the Delhi Gate via Queen's Road, Khas Bazar, Dufferin's Bridge, Jama Masjid, Mori Gate, Chandni Chawk, Rajpur Road, Fatehpur Bazaar, Chauburja Road ending at the Reception Pavilion at the Ridge in the Darbar complex. While the King wore a Field Marshall's red uniform and rode a horse and not an elephant, the accompanying Indian princely entourage was replete with all possible native finery. The Royal couple carried out several ceremonial, social and religious obligations apart from enjoying the sports, cultural and sightseeing recreations available at the venue. The main ceremony, the Coronation Darbar, held on December 12, 1911, was a resplendent formal affair in which apart from the proclamation the King sprung the 'capital surprise' announcing abruptly the well kept secret of shifting the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. On the morning of December 15, in an impromptu ceremony at the Government of India camp near what is today the Kingsway Camp, the King and the Queen, laid the foundation stones for the new capital which later were transferred to the North and the South block in 1915 where they can still be found today. Stage was now set for the redrawing of Delhi as the showcase capital of the British Empire.

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