

Executive Summary of the North-East Delhi

An Introduction to the North-East Delhi

The North-East District of Delhi shares its northern and eastern borders with Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh; on its south is the East Delhi district and the North Delhi district lies on the west across the river Yamuna. Its population size stands at 1,76,8061 in an area of 60 sq. kms., with an extremely high density of 29,397 persons per sq. km. Administratively, the district is divided into three subdivisions, Seelampur, Shahdara and Seemapuri with Seelampur being the largest. Shahdara with no rural population is the most urbanised while Seemapuri has the largest proportion of rural population.

Thus, the district is highly urbanized with nearly 92 % of its population marked as urban; it also has a sizeable chunk of the population residing in villages many of whom retain their rural characteristics. It has a total of 28 villages of which only 12 are inhabited.

If literacy rate is an indicator of backwardness, the district, with literacy rate much below the state's average (82%), remains the most deprived. In terms of religious distribution, the district has nearly 30 % minority concentration with Muslims being the predominant minority group. As is evident from Table 1.3 b, the community has the lowest literacy figure when compared with other religious groups.

Development Deficits in North-east Delhi

S1 No	Indicators	Survey results 2008	All India (2005)	Gap between All India and District	Priority ranking
		1	2	3 = 1-2	4
Socio-economic indicators					
1	Rate of literacy	72.0	67.3	4.7	7
2	Rate of female literacy	69.9	57.1	12.8	6
3	Work participation rate	31.2	38.0	-6.8	3
4	Female work participation rate	10.3	21.5	-11.2	2
II					
Basic Amenities indicators					
5	Percentage of households with pucca walls	92.8	59.4	33.4	10
6	Percentage of households with safe drinking water**	78.6	87.9	-9.3	1
7	Percentage of households with electricity	93.7	67.9	25.8	9
8	Percentage of households with water close set latrines	88.3	39.2	49.1	8
III					
Health Indicators					
9	Percent age of fully vaccinated children	79.7	43.5	36.2	5
10	Percentage delivered in a health facility	59.3	38.7	20.6	4

Note: (1) Survey data of the district (Col. 1) pertains to rural area only, but other data (Col 2) pertains to total. (2) Data in Col 2 from Sl. No. 5 to 8 pertain to year 2005-06 from NFHS-3 and the rest of the data in Col. 2 pertain to the year 2004-05 from NSSO

Method of the Survey

For the purpose of survey, 600 households were sampled from 30 different localities from across the district. The data collected was both primary as well secondary, qualitative as well as quantitative. The sampled localities were segregated into three strata in terms of minority population, inhabited in these localities. These strata were termed as Category I, II and III depending on their respective concentration of minority:

Localities with minority concentration between 0 to 25 % : Category I

Localities with minority concentration between 25 to 75 %: Category II

Localities with minority concentration 75% and above: Category III

In the absence of religion wise population distribution, the electoral list were resorted to prepare the sampling frame to identify the minority concentrated localities and villages in the district. The universe of our household survey, therefore, had to be shrunk to the voting population in the district. This shortcoming was, however, taken special care of though focus group interviews of children and minors, during the course of field work. A multistage systematic random proportional sampling method was adopted to sample out 30 localities from a total of nearly 155 of them identified from the voter list. Subsequently, the households were sampled by *cluster quota sampling* after looking at the house numbers in the voter lists and locating clusters of minority populations and non – minority populations. The district population being largely urban at 92% as against a mere 8% of the rural , it was decided to take this district as an exception and take both urban and rural areas into account while selecting the 30 localities.

Income and Employment

A very high proportion of respondents (27.3%) across all categories refrained from divulging information regarding their earnings. An estimated 15 % of Delhi's urban population lives below poverty line. The survey data from the North-East Delhi however suggest a much higher proportion of population that could be declared as living in impoverished conditions. A total of 37 %of the population managed its living with an annual earning below Rs.50, 000 which is near about close to the poverty line declared by the Planning Commission for the state of Delhi in 2004-05. Of these, nearly 29% were found to be living in conditions of abject poverty with annual income less than Rs.25,000. Interestingly, despite the income backwardness of the district, a substantial section of the population, 14.3% seemed to be fairly affluent with annual household income above Rs.100,000. An analysis of income disparity suggested that minority households residing in the district were comparatively more deprived than those belonging to other persuasions.

Despite the opening up of the economy, the task of creating new employment opportunities has remained unfulfilled in the North East Delhi. The performance of the district with respect to employment opportunities was quite poor with only 28.3 % of the population able to join the workforce.

In terms of activity wise deployment, the data drawn from the sampled households reaffirm a similar trend in the North-East district. Majority of the residents of the area (26.05 per cent) were engaged in business or sales followed by a large proportion of service workers (18.17 per cent) such as carpenters, electricians, masons, smiths etc. The tertiary sector is further strengthened by managerial, administrative and clerical workers. A sizeable proportion of the workforce also populated the secondary sector with 15.22 % engaged in production and manufacturing and 12.26 % providing support as professionals and technicians. Consistent with urbanizing trends, the primary sector comprising farming and cultivation remains insignificant with only 1.4 % worker engagement. Although the Sachar Committee findings indicate an astonishingly high occurrence of self-employment among Muslims in India, including Delhi, the figure returned for self employment in this survey remains low across all Categories. This is surprising but can be explained by referring to the presence of overlapping and multiple variables. For example much of business and sales, service workers etc related figures could as well be included under self employment. Despite the fact that a considerable proportion of residents are able to find employment in business and sales, yet the sector has failed to draw adequate institutional attention. Credit at high interest rates is one of the most serious issues plaguing the sector. Most of the respondents saw institutional lending inadequate and inaccessible, and therefore depended on non-institutional credit. Lack of fixed and sufficient working space was another major road block identified by workers and businessmen. Localities such as Seelampur, Welcome Colony, Subhash Park, Mandoli, Jaffrabad, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, are swamped with small one or two room industrial units in which majority of the population finds employment. An intervention that addresses this concern is urgently required.

Education:

Literacy rate that emerged from the survey was nearly 73 %, much lower than the state's average as well as the district's average computed in the Census exercise of 2001. Notably, minority concentrated areas of the district reported alarmingly high proportion of the illiterate population. The survey showed that universal primary education was a far cry. Nearly 6.5 % of children in the sampled areas are denied formal schooling. The schooling status showed a heavy leaning towards government schools among minorities with nearly 86 % of them in the age group 5-25 years attending or having attended them in the past. Contrary to prevalent belief, the option of Madarsa for schooling and education has not received much favour from the Muslims of North-East Delhi. Only 4.35 % of 5-25 population in Category III areas had attended or was attending a Madarsa. This was consistent with the earlier findings of national level survey conducted by NCAER. This also has implication for policy initiatives that have banked on Madarsas and their modernization to address educational backwardness among Muslims. The requirement for Government schools was therefore strongly felt by the Minority residents. Inclination towards higher education was found to be dismal especially amongst the minorities. The absence of institutions of higher learning in the area was possibly one reason. The district has only two affiliated colleges that offer under-graduate teaching.

Across all Categories , Hindi was the medium predominantly used in schools; English came to be the next choice. The proportion of respondents or their wards studying in English medium schools was the highest in areas of majority concentration. Notably, schools with Urdu as a medium of instruction were largely preferred by the minority population in Category III areas. The Nehruvian three language formula remained largely unimplemented in the schools of the District.

Infrastructure and Amenities

Despite being part of the NCT North- East Delhi, it does not even have the most basic amenities that are considered to be essential for any town. For example, 31.3% of households reported that they do not have tap water facilities in their houses. The electrification was not universal. Even the electrified households , were not satisfied with the nature of supply. Street light was not available either in the streets of 27.5 % households. Of the total 600 households, only 533 households were having toilet facility at home. The percentage of such households in Category I was the highest at 59.7%. There were no sewage lines on the streets of almost half (48.2%) the total households sampled. The sewage condition was extremely poor for the households drawn from minority concentrated areas. Even where sewage line was present, its functioning was reported to be unsatisfactory. The proper drainage system, too, was missing in most of the district. During rainy season, while the survey was going on, the roads and streets were constantly blocked with water and could not be navigated. 41.5% of the households complained of improper drainage. The incidence of these cases was much higher in the minority concentrated areas especially of Seelampur subdivision. On being asked about the overall situation of garbage cleaning, 62.9% of the respondents felt that the situation was quite unsatisfactory. It was observed that people living in Seelampur and Seemapuri also were not sufficiently aware of the importance of hygiene because of lack of proper education. In an interview , the Imam of a Masjid in Seelampur, confirmed this by saying that people in the area were not sufficiently educated to fully comprehend the importance of cleanliness and hygiene.

The data showed that more than half i.e. 57% of the total respondents used buses for commuting. 49.1% i.e. almost half the respondents from minority areas reported that bus service was irregular. Infrastructural facilities such as a sports complex and public parks that depict the overall development of a district were missing in the district. There was very little open space and encroachments on public land was quite common. That is why, on an average 84% households in the entire sample denied having any access to a sports complex. 86.6 % of respondents from households in minority concentrated localities reported that they did not have access to any play ground in their area. Public parks are also a scarcity in the district. 79.5 % of households in Category III reported on not having access to any public park.

Health data revealed that polio immunization was not universal. The immunization reported for DPT, BCG and Measles was even less than polio. The notable fact was that status of immunization in households from minority concentrated areas and also to some extent from mixed areas was relatively poor in comparison to those from non-minority areas. The maximum number of households in all Categories reported that they used the government agency for immunization of their children.

Development Schemes: Awareness and Benefits

BPL card is given to the most marginalized and poor people so that they could benefit from government schemes. The findings of the household survey showed that only 23% of the total respondents had BPL cards. The respondents were not able to access the facility properly because of several underlying difficulties such as bad quality and insufficient quantity of food grains, dishonesty in measurement, unavailability of stock on time and irregularity in supply.

Government of Delhi runs several development schemes and programmes for the poor and needy. In North- East District, due to lack of proper awareness about these schemes and several other hurdles, the benefits of these schemes did not reach the needy. For example, the data collected from the survey showed that ICDS could benefit only 12.5 % of the women and children in the district. More than half the households amongst minorities were not aware about MMDS. No wonder, only 3.6 % reported to have benefited from it. The awareness about 'National Maternity Benefit Scheme', 'National Family Benefit Scheme' and 'National Social Assistance Programme' was not even spread to one third of the total households. In all, only 4.9 % of the households benefited from NMBS, 3.1% from NFBS, and 1.8 % from NSAP in Category I. For Category II, there were only 1.5 % beneficiaries for NSAP. The rest of the households showed no benefits at all.

Public Perception about Different Public Facilities

A look at the detailed perceptions about different facilities and services showed that the 1/3rd to 1/4th of the respondents reported an average level of satisfaction from different services and facilities. The respondents who perceived the services to be 'very good' were negligible, irrespective of their localities. Sanitation and garbage was the poorest and rightly perceived so. Drainage, too, was very poor. A large percentage of 'very poor' and 'poor' responses were also elicited for business and employment opportunities. Drinking Water availability was thought to be comparatively better which may be due to the proximity of the district to river Yamuna. Power supply was considered average and generally it was not perceived to be very bad and rather 8.33 % thought it to be very good. Health facilities were considered poor by more than half of the respondents. So was governance. Roads and public safety, and women's safety were also thought to be poor. Access to transport also was perceived as poor by almost 1/4th of the respondents. The quality of environment also did not generate happy sentiments as almost 1/3rd of the respondents found it to be poor and some of them thought it to be very poor. In general, the overall image of the district, amongst all the Categories was poor.

Migration

A total of 238 households out of 600 households—nearly 40 per cent—reported that they had migrated to the capital city from other towns or villages. Migrant households comprised 41.8 percent of Category I; 34.7 % of Category II and 36.6 % of Category III. Most respondents overwhelmingly picked infrequent employment in their native villages/ towns as the single most important reason for their migration. Other factors such as displacement, lack of amenities in the native area and children's education

were also cited but were not granted the same primacy as lack of employment. Most of these migrant households were either landless or had very small landholdings—which could not sustain the family—thus forcing them to seek work. However non-availability of work through the year pushed families to travel to Delhi. As migrants and casual workforce in the unorganized sector, they are vulnerable to exploitation and unfair practices.

Issues of Security and Conflict

Seelampur, one of the biggest and most densely populated localities of the district, has been communally sensitive in the past. While Seelampur is predominantly Muslim, Welcome colony, the adjoining locality, is a mixed one where a substantial section of the population comprises of low caste Valmiki Hindus. In the wake of the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, violent clashes broke out between the two communities in which several lives were lost. Barring this incident, there has been relative calm between the two communities. Inter-communal relations, insecurity and discontent with the law enforcing agencies were few concerns that the survey attempted to tap and make sense of.

While communal clashes were a rarity in the area with the last one occurring a decade and a half back, yet this had not reassured feeling of security among the inhabitants across all Categories . It is noteworthy, however, that this feeling of insecurity seems to be alarmingly high in localities with overwhelming Muslim population. The data also suggest an increasing lack of confidence in the law enforcing agencies. This is particularly the case with the minority settlements. While a very high proportion of residents of Categories I and II localities found the state agencies cooperative, those in Category III clearly disagreed with such a contention. They were also unequivocal in terming the role of such agencies as biased against their community. They were equally categorical in terming the role of the district police as uncooperative and prejudiced against their community. The opinion of Category I and II residents however differed. They found the police cooperative and also impartial in all situations of inter-community conflict.

Concluding Remarks

The survey showed that North – East District is far behind in terms of all indicators of development and progress, be it the literacy rate, employment opportunities, income levels, equitable access to quality education, status of infrastructure, health, and other public amenities. The perception of people about the role of state in providing basic facilities such as roads, housing, health care, sanitation, etc. was quite poor. The situation of minority concentrated areas was far worse than other parts of the district, though on the whole the entire district seemed like some poor country cousin of the national capital – physically a part but far removed in any substantive sense. Our focus group discussions and case studies of villages and informal sector revealed startling inequalities and horrid tales of injustice, exploitation of labour and indifference by the state as well as the private employers. There is a strong and urgent need for remedial measures in the North- East District for it to be able to come at par with the rest of the country.