

# International Border Regions: The Case of Two Border Regions

Radhika Sarda

Post Graduate student, School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal, India

**Abstract:** *A border in a city or an area restrains the growth of that region due to security and militancy purposes by restricting the flow of goods, services and passengers e. g. India - Pakistan, East and West Berlin. Cities on either side combine into one organisation at the other end, where the border is open, e. g., Budapest. This article tries to understand the development programmes and guidelines along the contrasting international border regions by comparing the cases of two countries i. e. India and Northern Ireland. Indeed, the similarities and dissimilarities compared, a direct application of a border from one part of the world to another may not be easy as it is subjective to country's principles and priorities.*

**Keywords:** cross - border, balanced development, settlement, economic strategies

## 1. Introduction

Urban Planning is challenged with a variety of problems ranging from financing and zoning to serving the needs of the growing population. Consisting of several social units, a city is a single unit that uses its scale, political power, and its economic base to meet the diverse needs of its inhabitants. (Hansen, n. d.) A city offers flexibility, freedom, and a range of services, markets, and opportunities to its dwellers which is unlikely in border cities or trans - frontier cities due to spanning of an international border. Indeed, a significant proportion of the world's international boundaries, more than one hundred thousand miles long, cross deserts, mountains, and other uninhabitable terrains. (Tocups, 1980) .

Borders are therefore complicated structures that evolve from international institutions' links, primarily out of the perceived need to protect their countries through regulations. (Herzog, 1991) Majorly, the settlement patterns along these borders are observed sparse, devoid of proper services and facilities like the India - Pakistan border areas.

To address the special socio - economic needs and balanced development of border regions, the Border Area Development Plan (BADP), a 100% centrally funded scheme is initiated by the Department of Border Management, Government of India in 1993 - 94. India shares a land border of 15, 106 km with 6 countries and the management involves block as the planning unit involving state government, district level institutions, local authorities and, other voluntary organizations as participants. Under this scheme, priority will be provided to the villages nearer to the international border and, funds are provided based on the length of the international border, population and, areas of the border. (*BADP Guidelines.*, 2015)

A baseline survey is suggested to assess the gaps in the basic physical and social infrastructure of the area. The BADP guidelines also provide maximum/minimum fund allocation limit suggestions to the State Government. Moreover, the roles & responsibilities of various administration units are also mentioned to prepare a 10 - year perspective plan with the convergence of various schemes & programs under BADP. (*BADP Guidelines.*, 2015)

BADP covers 381 blocks in 106 districts panning around 17 states of which Punjab has 553 KM long international border with Pakistan that spread along 4 districts, viz., *Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Amritsar* and, *Tarn Taran*. (GOI, 2015) In Amritsar, the BADP (2007 - 2008) was implemented in two blocks namely Ajnala and Chogaon allotted with 70% and 30% of the fund in 2007 - 2008 respectively. The evaluation report by NABCONS analyzed the activity - wise fund distribution highlighting that 71% of the funds were directed towards infrastructure however the sector of agriculture (the dominant economic activity), health and social, sectors were neglected. It was observed that the border villages in Amritsar lack basic amenities of Education & health infrastructure, are economically backward due to the inability of farmers to grow tall crops and limited, and restricted surface infrastructure due to militants and Ravi and Sutlej rivers. (Border et al., n. d.)

After listing the problems, a similar trend of fund allocation was observed in the annual action plan of 2008 - 2009 where infrastructure received 85% of the funds. It was observed that on a whole the infrastructure created added to the convenience of the people of the area, however the zone remains underdeveloped. (Rangnekar, 1966) The people are unaware of the scheme and the execution of the projects was observed delayed and underutilized which shows the lack of needs assessment surveys on the ground. No provision for repair & maintenance of the projects and no attention was paid to the management of rivers. There is a requirement for more technical field staff & technical institutions for skill development and monitoring project execution at the village level. (Border et al., n. d.)

With the objective of economic competitiveness and balanced development through a unique interface between Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Border Regional Authority provides regional planning guidelines 2010 - 2025 in the Border region which comprises 6 counties as a commonplace to travel and free trade within the region. (West & Authority, 2004) The region has outstanding natural beauty with two long rivers crossing creating a strong base for tourism.

The first guidelines were adopted in 2004 which ensures proper planning and economic enhancement through strategy formulation in various sectors considering environment and floods as critical components involving the community as a key stakeholder. (Rafferty & Lloyd, 2014) The regional Planning guidelines inform various administrative units and provide direction to County Development Plans of constituent Councils within the Border Region. (West & Authority, 2004)

The Monaghan county within the border region with a population of approx.60, 000 population faced many challenges like promoting the main urban centres are growth towns, densification and services provided in the existing settlement areas, enhancing the employment & educational opportunities with adequate infrastructure investment & environment protection. The strategies adopted includes balanced development strategy formulation by linking rural and urban areas, economic strategy with regional competitive factors after assessment of the market and housing needs. (Mhuineach, 2019) Provision for smooth cross - border facilitation through gateways and hubs and enhancing the technical institutes for better skill - based development providing accessibility not only physically but also digitally. There are various cross - border initiatives for better provision of trade facilitation and migrant workers. Appropriate zoning of flood - prone areas is also demarcated to maintain the flood risky zones. (Mhuineach, 2019)

Apart from the above - listed strategies, it was observed that the border region was observed as a network of metropolitan & sparsely populated towns. The internal accessibility & flows are weak as motorways connect larger cities. The capital flow increased however the 'quality of life' did not change much. (Nauwelaers et al., 2013) The trade and commerce at the border are affected by the socio - economic conflicts in both countries. The innovation and major businesses are concentrated in the urban hubs while the rural areas still account for imbalanced development.

The above illustrates that the existing model of Ireland border cooperation is not the panacea for border planning. It can be noticed that several political and social factors constrain the development of border cities. (Blair et al., 2007) It can be observed that either a high - secured border or an open border, the challenges faced are similar however the approach is different. Both countries draw a similar target of balanced development, economic and infrastructure development, social and health infrastructure provision but a different approach towards achieving it. The approach of participation and assessment is followed in the guidelines for both the nations. Moreover, regional authorities are responsible for the implementation of programs and plans in both countries with the involvement of local authorities and voluntary organisation for better implementation. Bi - annual/annual discussions on progress reports and quality inspections are followed by both the nations for preparation of annual plans. It was also noted that Health remains an ignorant sector in both countries.

The Irish boundary areas also house increasingly larger volumes of cross - border interaction which is restricted in the Indo - Pakistan border. With a characteristic of natural

landscapes and beautiful scenery locations, Ireland concentrates on the environment while India allocated a percentage of funds in the security and Border guarding Forces (BGF) sector. Economic & skill - based development is given lesser importance in India while Ireland has three Institute of technologies in the border region encouraging distance learning and e - learning programmes. Ireland created the infrastructure for the surface as well as digital connectivity however in India, the surface connectivity is not only well established. The format of implementation in India is through schemes while Ireland incorporated these into county development plans and towns and local area plans.

The urbanization & balanced development of international border regions is a challenge which does require a bi - lateral approach. The direct application of an international border from one part of the world to another may not be easy as the development is highly sensitive to the political - economic forces, priorities of the economic policies, national sovereignty principles, co - operative programs, historical conflicts, and cultural and language differences that shape the areas of the border states. (Herzog, 1991) Co - operative programs between the countries do lead to the economic development and attraction of incentives from both the countries but the social and cultural differences of the nations do hamper the pace of development amongst the citizens.

## References

- [1] Authority, T. B. R., 2010. *Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022*, s. 1: s. n.
- [2] Ayog, N., 2015. *Evaluation Study on Border Area Development Programme (BADP)*, s. 1: s. n.
- [3] BOARD, M., 1980. City growth and cooperation along the united states/mexican border. *Georgia journal of international and comparative law*, Volume 10.
- [4] Claire Nauwelaers, K. M. A. M., 2013. "The Case of Ireland - Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) - Regions and Innovation: Collaborating Across Borders". *OECD Regional Development Working Papers*.
- [5] Herzog, L. A., 1991. International Boundary Cities: The Debate of Transfrontier Planning in Two Border Regions. *Natural resources journal*, 31 (3).
- [6] India, G. o., 2015. *Modified Guidelines of the Border Area Development Programme (BADP)*, s. 1: s. n.
- [7] Lloyd, G. R. / G., 2014. Community Planning and Spatial Planning in the Irish Border Region: Shaping the relationship between people and place.
- [8] LTD. (NABCONS), N. C. S. (., 2010. *Inspection & Evaluation Study of BADP Projects, Amritsar District, Punjab*, s. 1: s. n.
- [9] Mhuineacháin, C. C., 2019. *MONAGHAN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019 - 2025*, s. 1: s. n.
- [10] Neale Blair, A. A. B. B. J. B. C. C. J. D. S. M. a. F. V., 2007. Delivering cross - border spatial planning: Proposals for the island of Ireland. *TPR78*.
- [11] Székely, A., 2013. BORDER REGION STRUCTURES. *ResearchGate*.

## **Author Profile**



**Radhika Sarda**, graduated from Madhav Institute of Technology and Science, Gwalior. Post - Graduate Student from School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal. She is currently Working as Urban Planner at Rajasthan State Industrial development and Investment Corporation (RIICO), Jaipur. E - mail - radhika.sarda06[at]gmail.com