FESTIVAL OF PLACES

2022

White Paper

Making Cities Inclusive:
Exploring Children's Place in Public Spaces

CATTS

December 2022

EDITORS

Urvashi Srivastava, Principal Conservation Architect, Srijan Sanrakshan
Chhavi Lal, Associate Principal, Perkins Eastman

CONTRIBUTORS

WRI India

Sreekumar Kumaraswamy, Program Director, Sustainable cities and Transport
Madhura Kulkarni, Program Manager, Sustainable cities and Transport
Arunima Sen, Senior Program Associate, Sustainable cities and Transport

NIUA

Krishna Kant Pandey, Team Leader, ITCN Capacity Building Programme

Plan India

Anushree Mishra, Director, Programmes (Gender, Education and Livelihoods), Plan International (India Chapter)
Poonam Mehta, Senior Programme Manager, Gender Based Violence, Plan International (India Chapter)

Raahgiri Foundation

Akash Basu, Associate, Communications and Research, Raahgiri Foundation

Individual Experts

Dr. Amita Sinha, Former Prof. of Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, USA
Dr. Rachna Khare, Department of Architecture, School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal
Dr. Gayatri Nanda, Department of Urban Design, School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal
Dr. Mohit Kumar Agarwal, School of Architecture & Planning, BBD University, Lucknow
Urvashi Srivastava, Principal Conservation Architect, Srijan Sanrakshan

Research Intern

Anjali Sreekumar

COVER PAGE PHOTOGRAPH

Playful Street Rampuria Havelis, Bikaner, Rajasthan. Photo credits: Urvashi Srivastava

White Paper

Making Cities Inclusive:
Exploring Children's Place in Public Spaces

CONTENTS

मनोज जोशी
सचिव
Manoj Joshi
Secretary

FOREWORD

Cities have evolved as the habitat for urban living and will play a significant role in the future as engines of growth, development and creativity. Public spaces define cities and it is around them that citizens go through their life journey engaging in not just transactions but also creating a healthy and vibrant society through social interaction.

Cities in India have had a character which needs manifestation through rapid paced expansion of serviced land. A close look at the cities and towns will reveal an indigenous system of creating spaces and appropriating them as shared social spaces. These shared social spaces, 'Places' make our cities and towns and even villages unique and vibrant. Learnings from the past have great potential in informing contemporary Placemaking and in creating a lively a healthy public realm for our citizens.

Festival of Places conceived and curated by CATTS, supported by IGNCA brings public attention on the state of public spaces. The festival has been successful in creating a unique space for both academia, professionals and common people to engage on some very pressing issues that face urban living in our times. The festival bridges the gap between people and programmes.

The theme of the 4th edition of Festival of Places 'Making Cities Inclusive: Exploring Children's Place in Public Spaces' which also is the focus of this white paper is a very pertinent. Cities are a collective expression of its people and are constantly being created through their industry and hard work. It is therefore extremely important that our cities are inclusive and cater to the needs and expectations of all especially the most vulnerable sections of our society namely children, women, senior citizens and specially-abled people. Only if our cities respond to these needs can we claim that our cities are inclusive in the true sense. The organization of this 4th edition of festival of Places and the formulation of the White Paper is a much needed and timely intervention and is an attempt to take a fresh look at our cities through the eyes of the children and evaluate our collective progress in the direction of making our cities and towns inclusive. My best wishes for this endeavour in times to come.

Manoj Joshi

(Manoj Joshi)

<u>New Delhi</u>
10 November, 2022

Office Address: Room No. 122 'C' Wing, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi-110011
Tel.: 011-23062377, 23061179; Fax: 011-23061459; Email: secyurban@nic.in
Website: www.mohua.gov.in

RESTAURANT

Roof T Restaurant

श्री कृष्णा
सेन्टर

रसगुल्ला   मैगी   सैंडवीच   सब्जी   ढोंसी

SHAHI
KULHAD
LASSI

Mango Las
Banana La

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to extend my special thanks to our 12 eminent Knowledge Partners to Festival of Places 2022 namely World Resources Institute India (WRI India), National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), UN-Habitat-India, Plan India, Raahgiri Foundation, Institute of Urban Designers India (IUDI) Delhi NCR Centre, Amity School of Architecture and Planning Noida, Jindal School of Art & Architecture, Vastukala Academy, College of Architecture, Urban Villages Charitable Trust (UVCT), Quizcraft Global Knowledge Solutions and Confederation of UNESCO Clubs and Associations of India (CUCAI). I would also like to thank all the participants who whole heartedly participated in Place Stories 2.0 competition organized as part of Festival of Places 2022 and made the extraordinary effort to create Place Stories around public spaces.

The Festival of Places as envisaged is a long term collaboration under The Cultural Collaborative initiative of CATTS between like-minded partners. Every activity undertaken as part of the initiative is a step closer towards realizing the vision. The journey so far has been no mean task. I am thankful to the team at CATTS. I am most grateful to our mentors Mr Arun Kumar Chairman, CATTS and Vice Chairman Mrs Archana Srivastava for their support and encouragement. I am also thankful to Palash Srivastava for supporting The Cultural Collaborative initiative and enriching the idea of Festival of Places with his wide experience and knowledge. I am sincerely thankful to our Festival team members Manju Basoya Pundir, Chhavi Lal, Vikas Kanojia, Jui Katrekar and Nidhi Batra who volunteered their time, energy and mind space to fuel this edition of the festival.

Finally, I would like to thank each one of our patrons who give us the much needed enthusiasm and energy to keep going on. We at CATTS promise to keep the discussion on Public Spaces alive, each time taking a fresh look at how we think, engage and talk about public spaces and would like to request each one of you to carry within your heart the light that this festival has lit, one that will guide each one of us to celebrate and nurture the places we live in our cities and towns.

This is a journey just begun and much needs to be done to initiate a dialogue on public spaces in Indian cities. The discussion on the future of public spaces needs to be taken to the masses and people need to be involved in the creation and sustenance of meaningful and vibrant public spaces in our cities. We surely have taken the first step in this direction. Despite all the odds and challenges, we do sincerely hope that Festival of Places continues to be widely celebrated in times to come!

Urvashi Srivastava
Secretary, CATTS

PREFACE

Globally there has been an emergent trend towards making cities inclusive as indicated by the growing quantum of research work, field studies and projects being undertaken worldwide by academicians, research scholars, experts and professionals in urban areas especially with respect to public spaces. The holistic and detailed framework of Sustainable Development Goals laid down by United Nations has been adopted by countries and lays great emphasis on making cities inclusive with clearly defined goals and targets.

According to the population projections by the United Nations it is evident that India is going to become the most populous country in the world. In other parts of the world where the population is declining our country projects a positive trend and to take advantage of that position it is necessary that we give good care to the citizens of tomorrow, by looking into the vulnerabilities and then proposing solutions to create a healthy and happy space for children.

UN SDG 11 lays emphasis on providing universal access which is safe, inclusive and accessible. Children being in the vulnerable group and considering how the cities of the present are planned, designing and planning spaces for children become an important component of achieving SDG 11. Festival of Places conceptualized, curated and promoted by CATTS has created a unique platform to bring together academia, practitioners, students and people from all walks of life to engage in a meaningful conversation around children in public spaces and hope to make a positive change at the grassroots.

Festival of Places celebrates People, Places and Memories. The Festival celebrates public spaces in our cities, towns and villages. The focus is on understanding public spaces in contemporary as well as historic contexts through interactions and discussion with both experts in the field and enthusiasts. The Festival helps people explore and experience 'Public spaces as vital, meaningful and connected spaces' through which city life throbs. It inspires people to enjoy and creatively engage with these shared spaces in cities for meaningful action. It aims to motivate people to reimagine, reclaim and revitalize public spaces around them.

The vision of the festival is to advocate research on historic and contemporary public spaces; to encourage participation of professionals, researchers, and ordinary people in a common dialogue about public spaces; to raise awareness about the state of public spaces; to facilitate creative public engagement with public spaces; and to promote community participation in the planning, maintenance, and management of public spaces. The idea is to involve people from all walks of life as active participants in reimagining public spaces and to collectively build the narrative on the future of public spaces, particularly promoting the agendas of place-led development, sustainability, resilience, inclusiveness, accessibility and pedestrian mobility. The festival is a platform to engage people from all walks of life with these very relatable themes.

CATTS in collaboration with IGNCA has been organizing the Festival of Places since 2017 with the intent to facilitate and trigger a wider discussion on public spaces through talks, film screenings, exhibitions,

place stories around public spaces captured by various participants using the format of storytelling and other activities engaging participants with public spaces. The festival in its fourth edition is being organized this year on the theme of 'Making Cities Inclusive: Exploring Children's Place in Public Spaces'. The subject of this White Paper is aligned to the theme of Festival of Places 2022 and throws a sharp and focussed spotlight on this pertinent issue.

We at CATTS feel very strongly about the dismal state of public places in Indian cities and towns and firmly believe change in the way we think, talk and use public spaces can only begin at the grassroots by creatively engaging with people and empowering them to make a difference to the places and spaces around. We see the Festival of Places, a very strong component of *The Cultural Collaborative,* as a great opportunity to jointly develop the agenda of reimagining public places and creative public engagement with public spaces in cities and towns. The Festival is an attempt to engage people with these very relatable themes. We hope to create a strong network of people who are deeply concerned about their cities and towns, about public spaces and neighbourhoods.

The larger *Cultural Collaborative* initiative seeks to inspire people to also play an active role in place led development and preservation and sustenance of urban heritage. CATTS sees its role as that of a mediator, facilitator and collaborator carrying the momentum forward and precipitating the ideas generated through The Cultural Collaborative. Place Research, Place Stories, Expert Talks, Discussions, Creative Modes of Engagement such as Poster Making, Art and Craft based activities, Photography and Performances undertaken as part of the initiative apart from mobilizing people for places help create tangible outcomes.

The fourth edition of Festival of Places this year endeavours to put the spotlight on 'Making Cities Inclusive' by exploring the relationship of young individuals with public spaces in order to understand, 'The Place of Children in Public Spaces in Indian cities and towns'. The White Paper on Children's Place in Public Spaces is one such tangible outcome that will apart from capturing insights on public spaces and experiences shared during the festival also encapsulate the views of experts working in the domain of cities especially public spaces.

The White Paper has been conceptualized as a narrative on the state of public spaces especially with regards the 'Place of Children in Public Spaces'. The document has been prepared through a collaborative process between the Knowledge Partners of the Festival of Places 2022 and experts specializing in various aspects of public spaces. The document has been prepared through a process of ideation and brainstorming on the theme of the festival. Online discussion meetings were organized to solicit the views of all the contributing experts on the theme.

It is envisioned that the White Paper will highlight the need for making cities inclusive and therefore public spaces and reinforce the idea that 'People are Central to Cities' which seems rather to be a paradox given the fact that it is people who build cities but somewhere down the line the human aspect of cities has got completely lost being driven by larger political and economic forces. The White Paper

will pave the way for deliberations amongst various stakeholders and encourage future research on the theme of the festival.

The White Paper has been written in the form of a long essay centred around 10 thematic sections, Engaging People with Public Space, Historical Perspective on Children's Place in Public Spaces in Indian Cities, Child Behaviour and Interaction With Spaces, Changing Domains of Children's Interaction, Stories from Pubic Spaces; Policy, Programs & Initiatives: Making Public Spaces Inclusive for Children, Problems, Possibilities & Partnerships, International Perspective Programs and Initiatives, Children Friendly Spaces versus A City for Children and the last one Way Forward for Children Friendly Public Spaces and Cities.

The first section on Engaging People with Public Space presents the idea of Festival of Places and the merit of 'Engaging People with Public Spaces'. The section talks about the conception of the idea of Festival of Places and the urgency of creating a platform for discussion on public spaces in Indian cities and towns.

The second section on Historical Perspective on Children's Place in Public Spaces in Indian Cities attempts to understand how children have interfaced and experienced public spaces in Indian cities, and towns over the centuries exploring the nature of their activities with the overall intent to understand the 'Place of Children in Public Spaces'. This section sets the tone for the arguments and deliberations in the following sections as it explores different public spaces and attempts to understand the 'Idea of Public Space' and children's engagement with them.

The third section on Child Behaviour and Interaction with Spaces is about trying to understand the complex world of children and how they use public spaces. It establishes the fact that children are an important group to consider in designing public spaces and that their interaction with the physical environment is crucial for their motor, cognitive, and emotional development and therefore the society at large.

The fourth section on Changing Domains of Children's Interaction understands in detail the different types and typologies of public spaces that children engage with and the nature of their interactions. The primary focus is on the physical space while touching upon the intangible attributes of the space. This section also explores how different types and typologies of public spaces have changed over the years and presents an evaluation of the transformation process.

The fifth section on Stories from Pubic Spaces captures five Place Stories from real world that showcase how children experience public spaces in cities. Five best Place Stories submitted by participants of Place Stories 2.0 competition organized as part of Festival of Places 2022 have been documented. The intent of Place Stories has been to capture voices of children and their care givers at the grassroots and weave them seamlessly into a narrative that encapsulates both the opportunities and the issues with regards engagement of children with public spaces and encourages students and practitioners to understand the complexities at play in public spaces and the need for making cities inclusive.

The sixth section on Policy, Programs & Initiatives: Making Public Spaces Inclusive for Children is a comprehensive mapping and overview of all the initiatives, policy and programs vis-à-vis public spaces to understand the legal, institutional and financial framework for care, upkeep and management of public spaces in Indian cities and towns in the context of making them inclusive for children. This section of the white paper touches upon national level policy for children, built environment related policies and framework, initiatives taken in India to make the cities children friendly and recommends some action which needs to be taken in this regard.

The seventh section on Problems, Possibilities & Partnerships aims to curate best practices in the form of projects both by government and private entities as well as community led initiatives that have been aimed at making cities and public spaces inclusive for children. The idea is to capture the ground realities through case studies, document learnings from each of the case studies, highlight the complexities of working in public spaces, present the undercurrents of stakeholders and the dynamics of forging stakeholder partnerships. This section also sheds light on various on-ground problems with respect to making public spaces child friendly and explores the possibilities present therein to tackle these issues with simple interventions, as seen in various case examples from different cities in India. Furthermore, it also dwells on the multifarious partnership models tried and tested in urban planning projects in the country.

The eighth section on International Perspective Programs and Initiatives extends the Indian discourse on children's place in public spaces to the larger global context and captures the evolution of the international perspective on the making cities inclusive for children. The idea of this section is capture the complexities involved and the thought behind the changing perspectives in order to understand the process and not just the end product in the form of projects and initiatives.

The ninth section on Children Friendly Spaces versus A City for Children builds an argument on 'Children Friendly Spaces versus a City for Children' leaving the stage open for a debate on the same by a larger audience of stakeholders comprising of government, private entities, non-governmental organizations and common people. The section lays down the contours for developing an approach for children friendly public spaces and cities in the Indian context and presents the preliminary outlines for developing the conceptual framework for children friendly public spaces. The idea of this section is to draw the attention of all stakeholders on making cities inclusive with special focus on children and present recommendations for future research and action on the theme.

<div align="right">
Urvashi Srivastava
Secretary, CATTS
</div>

ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH PUBLIC SPACES

Urban settlements are growing at a much faster pace than ever in history. While basic human needs of existence remain the same the ever-transforming built environment is discreetly changing ways of collective living and social interaction. This has been highlighted by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11 which aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and targets to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities by 2030[1]. More recently the pandemic brought back the focus on the basic need for human interaction. It brought the attention on the dependency of a large section of the population on public spaces for livelihood, access to public services, shelter and health and therefore the value of shared social spaces in our lives.

Indian cities and towns with an ever expanding urban sprawl have for long nestled deep within their dense and complex urban fabric an 'Oasis of Spaces' that give respite from the grind of daily living. If we were to reminiscence and rummage through our memories, of times spent together or simply recollect everyday experiences, we will recall 'pauses in spaces' that bid us to stay a little longer, hang on to sip another cup of tea with a friend, share ideas, strike a conversation with strangers or just simply sit in solitude looking at people as they go about their lives. These 'pauses' which are more than spaces, more than geographic settings with physical or spatial characteristics are the staging grounds for daily activities, they are locations often filled with history, memories, meanings both emotional and symbolic. These shared social spaces that have acquired with time a distinct identity are what we refer to as 'Places'.

Communities as they appropriate public spaces as shared social spaces they bestow upon those spaces unique attributes and a distinct identity transforming them into 'Places'. 'Place Experiences' entrenched within the urban challenges of our cities and towns have a significant say in how urban areas hold the promise of fostering cultural bondage, civic engagement, economic prosperity, creativity, innovation, and a sense of belongingness. Human interactions and experiences make people get attached to particular places in their own personal way as well as through collective memory and emotional attachment to the place. This is usually gets translated into an assigned value of qualitative aspects of a place through its physical, observable, social, psychological, cultural and mythical realm. Without such a narrative, a space can seem bare and unadorned, engendering an inanimate set of dimensions and materials, while with an associated story, the same space can be a dance of emotive experiences and captivate hearts.

Public spaces make our cities liveable and lively and promote creativity. Public spaces are thus at the heart of human experience. Be it landmark ones or simple open spaces, streets or squares, market place or community space, water bodies or river fronts all form a network of vital connected spaces through which city life throbs. So whether it is sharing of ideas, meeting friends and acquaintances or chance social encounters, exchange of goods or ideas or simply living together, public spaces consciously and

---

[1] *https://sdgs.un.org/goals*

unconsciously shape our lives and our collective behaviour. However, such public spaces of social encounter are increasingly being eroded in fast growing urban areas. Existing public spaces that functioned as informal spaces for socialization are turning into commutation spaces overwhelmed with vehicular traffic and haphazard parking. Most of the newly designed public spaces are either completely alien to the needs and sensitivities of its users or fail to establish a connection with them. In this scenario the 'Oasis of Spaces' that still exist in several of the cities and towns especially in the inner core areas and those that continue to draw attention and encourage wholesome community living have much to offer to our understanding of spaces in the public domain. It is therefore very important to safeguard and interpret the places that lend the city its unique attributes. It is extremely critical to initiate a dialogue on public spaces especially in light of the transformations that they are undergoing.

Festival of Places is one such initiative that aims to create a unique space for common people to engage in a discourse around public spaces. The festival has been envisaged as a convergence of people from all walks of life and disciplines who seek a deeper understanding of our cities through the places we live in as well as share an eagerness to rejuvenate them. The Festival in its fourth edition this year is helping build a community of people passionate about public spaces. It is energizing people through sharing of memories, experiences and exchange of ideas and more importantly it has created opportunities for people to creatively engage with public spaces and subsequently participate in shaping the future of our cities. The festival has helped discover the much over looked human dimension of spaces encouraging participation of people of all ages, youth and experience for developing an in-depth understanding of places and spaces we live in.

The festival has encouraged people to play an active role both in the creation of new places and the preservation and sustenance of existing ones and has rekindled the bond that people have with places and memories associated with them nurturing the spirit of creativity. The festival has stimulated people to think about sustenance and resilience, about accessibility and mobility, about culture and creativity, about the future of their cities and neighbourhoods. The festival continues to inspire people to enjoy and creatively engage with places in cities for meaningful action.

There is merit in creatively engaging people with public spaces, reconnecting them with memories and engaging them in a public discourse for a better future of our cities and promote wholesome community living.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CHILDREN'S PLACE IN PUBLIC SPACES IN INDIAN CITIES

Urbanization and indeed the planning of cities, towns and villages in India has had its own distinctive trajectory of conceptualization, growth and transformation having its roots in thousands of years of collective knowledge and wisdom. Travelling back in time we can understand how human settlements have grown over centuries. Initial human settlements in the Indian subcontinent were spurred by multiple waves of early migrations. The subcontinent witnessed the growth of planned urban settlements going back approximately 4500 years to the Indus-Sarasvati Valley Civilization. From the meticulously planned cities of the Indus-Sarasvati Civilization to the cities of the medieval period to more recent ones, Indian cities and towns have a legacy of planning and design that bestows upon them a unique identity, character and way of living defining the earliest contours of Indian Urbanism.

A deeper look at the planning and design of the earliest urban settlements right up to the medieval cities reveals a deep comprehension of human behaviour, need for shelter, security and socializing as well as a profound understanding of its immediate environment and its ecological processes. Historic cities and towns therefore even today draw visitors both domestic and international to the inner core areas. Human scale, opportunities for social interaction, highly specialized markets, local crafts, flavours of food and a unique experience offer much to the visitor despite the traffic snarls, congestion, derelict infrastructure and unhygienic conditions that have come to characterize these cities. The human scale of the built environment, the unique way of life, sociability, traditional livelihoods and skills make these historic settlements stand apart from the contemporary urban sprawl. Creativity, sustainability and resilience are the hallmarks of these historic settlements despite the pressures of rapid urbanization.

In contrast a closer look at modern cities, towns and ways of living reveals that since the Industrial Revolution increasing amounts of toxic gases due to human activity have polluted the atmosphere triggering an unprecedented amount of global warming. According to the IPCC, human activity has caused around 1°C of global warming (above pre-industrial levels). Between 2030 and 2052, global warming is likely to hit a 1.5°C increase[2]. It is being said that increase of 1.5°C could put between 20% and 30% of animal species on the brink of extinction. If the planet warms by an average 2°C the consequences could be even worse. For humans one of the biggest threats of climate change triggered by rapid urbanization is rising sea levels. Another risk is climate-driven drought leading to mass migrations similar to those witnessed thousands of years ago. This seems to be a compelling reason to take a fresh look at our cities and our ways of living.

In any settlement public spaces form the lifeline binding together all its urban components into a complete whole one that behaves like a living breathing organism. Right from some of the most significant cities in India to the humble towns and villages across the country all boast of a network of public spaces through which urban life pulsates. Beginning from the modest threshold spaces associated

---

[2] *Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 ºC Summary for Policymakers. Retrieved 2022-11-05.*
https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/

with building edges to the streets, *chowks*, *chaupars*, *bagh*, *bageechas*, *maidans* and *mela sthals*, traditional settlements have a seamless, hierarchical and diverse variety of multi-functional and flexible spaces that function as shared social spaces.

Interesting to note here is the fact that the vibrancy of these public spaces stems not from any prescribed framework of formal rules and regulations but more from socially accepted norms and behaviour patterns. Also fascinating is to see how different user groups appropriate the shared spaces, use them and co-exist in a dynamic manner that gets created from moment to moment through a complex interplay of human relationships, social norms and individual behaviour so much that the physical space transcends to a different level and becomes a 'place'. Within the complex multi-cultural phenomena that characterize historic cities a focused and incisive gaze at their urban fabric especially the network of public spaces offers significant learnings for understanding 'Children's Place in Public Spaces', how children interacted and negotiated these spaces in the past as well as in present times.

In the Indian context public spaces are a unique mix of formality and informality, seasonality and daily routines, activity and rest, having varying levels of 'publicness' with a very clearly defined differentiation between private and public domains. Social structure existing in cities, towns and villages at any given point in time greatly influenced how people interacted in public spaces and therefore the physical nature of public spaces as did other parameters such as topography, religion, politics and economics.

Historically families lived in a joint family system. As a general rule, the family consisted of parents, unmarried sons and daughters, married sons and their wives and children. Each joint family provided shelter for its members. Family acted as a link between the individual and the larger society, established conduct, social awareness, norms with religious sanctity and social control. Activities of the household were segregated as per gender and familial relationships. Within the family roles and responsibilities were clearly laid down. The male members of the family were responsible for the economic support of the family while the females were involved with household jobs. The distribution of roles assigned to both the sexes enabled men to remain free from household work and confined the women mostly to the house, secluded from the outside world. With mostly males dominating the society, women were restricted to the four walls of the house.

There was a clear-cut demarcation between the activities and there was hardly any direct visible interaction between the two genders more so in public spaces. The house form also reflected a complete segregation of activity areas of both sexes and hence offered a varying degree of privacy and interaction. Socialization of women was considerably restricted in the public domain unlike in the present times. This greatly influenced the way in which public spaces were used and the nature of social interactions therein for different members of the society.

At the neighbourhood or mohalla level also households were organized as per rules of social groupings and norms for behaviour. People belonging to the same caste and religion often stayed together their houses being clustered around a common space with a landmark such as a religious structure, water source, a tree etc. This facilitated a degree of interaction between the people of the same caste staying

close to each other sharing common resources. The design of the house form and other buildings responded to this interaction between different members of the social groups as well as within the family. At the household unit level, the design incorporated architectural features fostering interactions at the neighbourhood level. Architectural elements in different cultural contexts such as the *otlas*, *gokhas*, *chabootras*, *oltlos*, *osaris*, *thinnais* and *verandahs*, all different forms of raised seating spaces along the building edge associated with the main entrance of the building projecting on to the street encouraged interaction amongst the occupants of the building with the larger social group at the neighbourhood level.

Within the bigger canvas of the city a hierarchical interconnected network of streets defined the urban blocks within the settlement. Main streets with markets functioned both as spaces for commerce and interaction while secondary and tertiary streets functioned solely as social spaces encouraging interactions between passers-by. Intersections of streets often created larger open spaces such as chowks or squares depending upon the nature and character of the intersecting streets. Besides the smaller public spaces, the city also had large open spaces such as fair grounds, *bageechas*, gardens and parks all offering and encouraging interesting forms of social interaction.

Within this larger socio-cultural canvas children developed their own ways of interacting with public spaces depending upon their gender, age, social and economic background. The house and its immediate associated spaces, the threshold spaces, were the first interface with the outside world. The entrance to the house even today revered by Indians of all social backgrounds was the first point of socialization. Threshold spaces across the country even today have different forms but the concept and essence remains the same. Threshold spaces were and to a large extent even today are an activator of public activity keeping streets alive at an arm's length from the sheltered interiors hospitality[3].

During the growing up years threshold spaces and other incidental spaces attached with the dwelling unit were the immediate space for interaction and play spaces of children with their peer group. For young children raised plinths, *chabootras*, verandahs and other vernacular threshold spaces were convenient spaces for social interaction as well as play areas while being in a safe space yet having the opportunity to interact with the outside world. This is where the children first learnt to meet, greet and socialize. Threshold spaces therefore were the first stepping stones of the child into the more public spaces in the neighbourhood and subsequently in the larger city.

Gradually as children gained physical independence they explored spaces beyond their immediate surroundings and the nature of their interface with public spaces also changed. Their daily routine as they grew up embraced newer forms of public spaces such as streets, neighbourhood bazaars, open *maidans* and incidental spaces associated with socio-cultural landmarks in the settlement. The essence of their experience of public spaces however being one of an unbridled exploration and familiarization

---

[3] *July 15, 2022. The Veranda: A Disappearing Threshold Space in India. Retrieved 2022-11-05*
https://www.archdaily.com/985402/the-veranda-a-disappearing-threshold-space-in-india.

growing each day with the expansion of their social circle. Recreation, enjoyment and play largely remained the sole motivation for their being in the public space.

Over the years large scale changes in socio cultural norms and indigenous ways of living spurred initially by industrialization and more recently by globalization have had a great impact on the urbanization of cities and therefore its public spaces. Architectural design, planning and vocabulary has come to be largely driven by economic forces. This new form of urbanization and architectural expression is not only slowly eating away the traditional informal spaces for social interaction in historic settlements but has also completely abandoned the 'Idea of Threshold Spaces' in contemporary cities and towns. Informal and chance social interactions have become a rarity.

In the past public spaces in historic cities and towns informally shaped children's growing up years however in contrast in contemporary cities public spaces have become unsafe and anonymous. In most of the modern cities and towns, the moment the child steps out of the house the child moves into a world of strangers, an insecure domain one that instils fear and insecurity. Threshold spaces that were once the norm and a form of social courtesy have no place in modern ways of living. The street that once evoked a sense of bonding and bonhomie has become an unsafe, anonymous and discourteous space especially for children and young adults. Spaces that were once the stepping stones for children into the outside world of relationships and courtesies find no place in modern day planning and design. To make Indian cities inclusive especially for children we need to understand the behaviour of children and how they interact with spaces. The past as encapsulated in our historic cities and towns has much to offer in terms of learnings for the future rooted deeply in the Indian ethos of social interactions.

CHILD BEHAVIOR AND INTERACTION WITH SPACES

Children form a large demographic-about one third of the urban population—and their needs have to be met with in planning for urban growth. India's urban population is estimated to be 675 million (43.2% of its total population) by 2035 according to United Nations Habitat's World Cities Report. This will increase to about half of India's population living in cities by 2050.[4] A tremendous shortage of urban housing is projected, especially in metro cities, destination of millions of rural migrants in search of economic opportunities. By 2030 around 25 million affordable housing units for economically weaker sections and low-income groups will be required. Much of this demand would likely be built in high-rise and high-density housing wherever land is available, mostly on the urban periphery. Of particular importance are public spaces, used by children intensively in and near residential neighbourhoods. Public spaces will form the urban structure of the expanding city and their quality will determine to what extent it is child friendly. With the predominance of high-rise housing children's access to public open spaces could decline, thus affecting the quality and extent of their interaction with the outdoor natural world.

The configuration of the physical environment allows or limits the kinds of activities in which children can engage in and this interaction with the physical environment is crucial for their motor, cognitive, and emotional development (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969). The child assimilates new knowledge from his/her experiences into organized patterns of thought and behaviour known as schemas. The schemas are updated with new experiences resulting in a higher level of cognitive functioning. Learning is therefore an interactional dynamic process characterized by stages in which the development of child's abilities derives from accommodation to new challenges in the physical environment. Much of this interaction is in the form of play. The impulse to play is innate and is fundamental to the health and well-being of children. Children will play anywhere and everywhere, and the kind of play they engage in is impacted by the environment they live in. They can convert almost any activity into playful behaviour and create their own play spaces improvising with whatever is available in their environment. Children begin engaging in constructive play along with symbolic or fantasy play once they are three and continue until they are eleven or twelve years old. Parallel play or playing alongside others without fully engaging with them evolves into games with rules based upon co-operative and competitive behaviour in a group.

According to the theory of loose parts formulated by Simon Nicholson (1972) the ability to manipulate their physical environment makes children's play creative and imaginative. Children invent play with loose parts--any found material-- not necessarily toys which have no defined purpose and can be used in any way. Thus, any physical environment with a wide variety of loose parts gives children the opportunity to explore, discover, and innovate. A manipulable and explorable physical environment can also provide emotional security and aid in developing a sense of personal identity. Children during their middle childhood, from five to eleven years, universally create special places such as dens, forts, playhouses (Sobel, 1990). These special places are children's organized worlds or 'microspheres' giving them a sense of agency and control. They foster the evolving sense of self in being able to shape the

---

[4] https://unhabitat.org/wcr/

world that is continuing source of empowerment and motivation later in life. The favourite places of childhood when recalled in adult life in environmental autobiographies were found, moulded, or constructed--acts of appropriation and place-making to express an emerging self, separate from parents and families (Marcus, 1992).

Children's place-making happens regardless of whether they are –in urban or rural, natural or built environments. Children in low-income urban neighbourhoods in Vadodara and Mumbai have been found to play in spaces not specifically designed for it such as construction sites, parking and other paved areas, abandoned buildings, and near railway tracks (Oke, Khattar, Pant, and Saraswathi, 1999). However, they are much more engaged with the natural landscape in a rural environment as Sinha (1989) discovered in doing a comparative study of children's play in an urbanizing village, Ujariyon, on the outskirts of Lucknow and a new low-income housing colony coming up in its proximity. Rural children's environmental knowledge was richer and their values deeper as a result of many more interactions with the environment. The rural landscape was in a sense their playground and they mentioned as many as thirty-five environmental settings including orchards, fields, open spaces, ponds, and the graveyard. Trees were an integral part of their games. Their intense use of the landscape was reflected in their maps which contained these natural settings as well as salient features of the sacred landscape drawn pictorially such as *dargah sharif*, *idgah*, *mazaars*, and *masjids*. Children in the housing colony, on the other hand, reported using only twenty places among which markets, parks, and *chaurahas* dominated. Their favorite place was the *bazaar* which had many things for them to buy. The major landmarks in their maps were electric poles, trees, temple, and hospital. They reported not being allowed more than one or one and a half hour to play indicating the emphasis on school and homework. Girls in both the village and housing colony mentioned fewer places than boys and were observed playing in courtyards and in alleyways and streets close to their homes due to restrictions on their movement.

Children's preference for the natural outdoors has been documented in many parts of the world. Roger Hart's (1979) seminal study of children's 'phenomenal landscape' in rural Vermont in North America revealed their intense, fluid, and intimate encounter with it. Robin Moore (1986) found in his studies of children's play in England that their favourite places were the natural landscape when they gained freedom to explore on their own and their activity range extended as they grew older. Growing Up in Cities, a UNESCO project directed by the late Kevin Lynch (1977) in Australia, Argentina, Mexico, and Poland concluded that the most important places for the young teenagers were the urban interstitial spaces, so called 'wastelands" that they could use with their friends for adventurous play. A follow up project in the 1990s in eight countries including England, Norway, India, South Africa, and the United States, in addition to the original sites, showed use of vacant land for exploratory and creative play although parks were also valued for active play and meeting friends (Chawla, 2015).

Play in the natural outdoors has therapeutic effects by improving children's psychological health and sense of well-being. With the rise in the use of digital devices and lack of access to greenery, children are developing a nature-deficit disorder leading to obesity, problems with attention, and emotional and

physical illnesses (Louv, 2005). Contact with nature reduces stress and promotes healing (Ulrich, 1984). Nature invokes fascination or involuntary attention that diverts the mind from directed attention in focused tasks and has a restorative affect (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). In cities, 'nearby nature' ---gardens and trees-- close to living and workspaces becomes important (Kaplan, 1992). Children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) who play regularly in natural play settings have milder symptoms than children who play in built outdoor and indoor settings (Taylor and Kuo, 2011). Access to the natural outdoors means that children not only engage in constructive play but also develop a sense of stewardship towards the natural world.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) recognizes childhood as separate from adulthood with special rights to grow, learn, play, develop, and flourish with dignity. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history; 195 countries including India are State Parties to the Convention, thereby accepting obligations and responsibilities for ensuring the full development of every child including his/her right to play.[5] Planning for the 21st century Indian city therefore entails that children's rights be kept in focus in creating public open spaces. Their design has to be based upon evidence-based research on children's preferred environments as well as an understanding of Indian socio-cultural norms for socializing children. At the local (micro) level in residential areas of the city and at the city-wide (macro) level, children's play needs can be met by ensuring they have safe access to the outdoors.

Children can be the largest group of users of open spaces within housing clusters (Marcus, 2003), especially since private open space is minimal in high-rise housing for low income and economically weaker sections. This shared space can have natural areas where children can climb trees, dig in the earth, build forts, splash in water, and play hide-and -seek. The landscape becomes a playground for them instead of playing on a few isolated pieces of play equipment which fall into disrepair without regular maintenance. In the densely built urban areas, 'left-over' spaces are premium spaces for children's play and can be preserved. The urban periphery may have extant features such as remnant tree groves, ponds, creeks, *maidans*, local shrines, historic building relics etc.; these can be incorporated in site planning as interesting and diverse play spaces for children. At the macro-scale the city can be an educational environment for children, fun to explore and learn from, instead of an intimidating and dangerous place as it is perceived to be (Southworth, 1990).

---

[5] *https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention*

CHANGING DOMAINS OF CHILDREN'S INTERACTION

Children, with their innate ability to explore and creatively reconstruct urban environments often carve out places for play which may not be formally designed for. The natures of places with which they engage in are diverse in natural setting. A child's sense of a place is based on his/her imagination of the place and interactions with the place. The types of public spaces children engage in differs from one urban environment to the other and is based on various factors such as accessibility, demography of the area, population mix, socio-economic status, use of surrounding areas, security and surveillance, gender etc. to mention a few. The sense of territory also differs amongst various age group and gender of children. Chatterjee (2006) in her research on "Children's Friendship with Place" identifies certain place types as formal open space in the local level, informal open space in the local level, streets in local area, formal open space at the city level as four of the most used play spaces of children. Other places which she identifies as less used spaces are areas around monuments, school spaces and the neighbourhoods as place to mention a few. The scale, geometry, access, design, components and landscape features influence their usability.

Studies have shown that children are aware of the importance of the built environment, and they need more than just playgrounds to flourish. A critical component of child-friendly urban planning is prioritizing opportunities for learning and healthy development both in and out of school. Today many public spaces are being commercialized and leisure spaces are being privatized resulting in the increasing exclusion of children from there. Consideration of play, cultural exchange and interaction between two generations is often missed out. Independent mobility is a crucial concept for children because it helps develop their physical, social and creative skills. It also allows them to interact with their surroundings and move freely resulting in stronger mapping and spatial skills which cannot be taught formally.

In public spaces, children's mobility is mainly about discovery and freedom in space. Unsupervised spatial mobility promotes independence and responsibility in contrast to institutionalized activities (Haider, 2007). Institutionalized outdoor activities, as opposed to free play, do not bring about spontaneity and freedom in children. Compared to free play, these activities do not develop interpersonal and intellectual skills, self-reliance and independence. Children claim spaces and create new meaning by free expression via art, music, personalization through activities and physical modifications of settings (Chatterjee, 2006]. The affordances of public space have to, firstly be recognized and secondly satisfy the needs of the children. If the children's needs and spaces' affordances are compatible, children may develop a sense of affection for the place and consider it 'friendly'. A city offers a diverse range of users in terms of age, gender, ability and background. It is crucial to develop a viable inclusive approach that caters to stakeholders of all generations and offers flexibility in the usage of the space. Designers and planners also need to consider the concept of intergenerational interaction in their designs because it also considers children as stakeholders. The characteristics of good spaces for interaction are that they provide reasons for people to go there;

reasons to linger once they're there; safety and security; and welcoming and accessible to all. These, to a greater or lesser extent, are dependent on the design.

A few more attributes which are related to the design of public spaces for children are sensory perception, flexibility, territorial claim, and sociability (Windley, Scheidt, 1980). A multi-sensory space encourages children to explore, be independent and also generates interesting intergenerational activities. They engage positively with their environment if it offers flexibility in terms of changing the character of a space, manipulating or restructuring for new activities and experiences. Territorial claims can be encouraged through the use of symbols and clues that invite children and exercise control over the space. Sociability has a strong relationship to children's mobility in spaces. Public spaces that promote social interaction are generally accepted for children and considered safe by parents.

Over the years, there has been a spatio-typological transformation of public spaces which children engage with. The public spaces that historically played an important role in the everyday life of the people and with which children engaged on an everyday basis such as streets, *chowks* and cul-de-sacs are today reduced to mere movement corridors and parking spaces. With the development of Industrial city, the play/recreation spaces started being located in more formalized spaces in the urban fabric like *maidans*, parks and community centres etc. Hence, play increasingly became rationalized and controlled. Over years, the play/recreation spaces have been institutionalized and made inaccessible to a sizable chunk of the populace. Thus, the 'publicness' of public spaces has reduced dramatically as play spaces have become less and less physically accessible and economically inclusive.

Meanwhile traditional everyday play spaces have begun to shrink due to lack of recognition and developmental pressures. The rise of gated communities with restricted access in todays' cities have destroyed older spatial patterns and formed privatized community spaces. Moreover, these enclaves brand themselves as exclusive developments with world class amenities and facilities. Spatial fragmentation thus caused leads to social segregation and is an inherent feature of the "enclave urbanism" seen in newer developments in all cities today. The older fabric has also been retrofitted with gates which have added to the social divide. The enclave development has fractured the public realm and resulted in loss of street-life where children engaged with public spaces. Streets have turned into high-speed car centric roads which connect different gated compounds. This scenario has pushed away everyday activities from streets, making streets unsafe and pedestrian unfriendly. A sense of fear bars people from letting their children engage with such spaces.

STORIES FROM PUBIC SPACES

The public realm shapes the character and personalities of the young individuals in many ways but are public spaces in Indian cities and towns sensitive to their needs? Are they inclusive? Five Place Stories presented as part of Festival of Places 2022 explored Children's Place in Public Spaces' and looked at various attributes of public spaces from the eyes of children, explored hidden dimensions as well as investigated how they interact with places, negotiate and use them. The stories capture the finer nuances of day to day experience of children in cities. Apart from capturing children's experiences as they navigate and explore public spaces, Place Stories also examined problems, opportunities and transformations associated with different public spaces and recommended strategies for mitigating negative aspects of the spaces and measures to make them inclusive. Place stories explored aspects of identity, mobility, accessibility, safety, comfort, activity and interaction within the public spaces through experiences of children. In addition, storytellers through their narration explored the multiple facets of the place that give the place its character, identity and meaning. Place Stories focused on five different types of public spaces namely fair ground, neighbourhood market, urban park, space around a garbage dump and lake-front. The case studies took a closer look into the urban situation through the lens of a child which helps in understanding the important concerns and how to move in a step by step process in creating an equitable environment for children. The case studies were from different parts of India and explored the place of children in public spaces through different lenses.

The first case deals with the Keventer's market in Delhi and its transformation from a children dominated space to an adult dominated space by bringing in changes that are adult oriented thus making the space very unsafe and unwelcoming for children. Kharbanda Complex

A Market for Children?

renowned as 'Keventer's Market' was once children's hotspot. The market used to be appropriately maintained with lush green small courtyards, paved walkways, and clean surroundings. The market was safe and children friendly. Its location near two schools made it an enjoyable space for children with fewer shop outlets than now and those were properly maintained with lush green courtyard space in the middle. Later on when more outlets came to this place the student population accessing the market reduced and created an unhealthy environment for children. The case highlights the need for making local shopping areas, a very different typology of public space than the routine parks and grounds, accessible and enjoyable for children fostering a sense of independence and social responsibility in them. Certain small interventions such as creating a designated smoking space, good even pavements and good pathway for cycling, clearing the low-level jumble of wires that may be hazardous, and

maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation could greatly transform this small urban pocket, restoring it for children. The courtyard could be opened up and a good play area could be created with resting places for children. By just clearing up the place and maintaining it well could make the space inclusive for children.

The second case focuses on making public spaces especially ones in the immediate place of residence accessible for children who are living near garbage landfills, explained with the example of Ghazipur. In these spaces children are exposed to very toxic living

Some Space for those on the Margins?

conditions with unequal access to basic human facilities such as air and water. Here children work in the landfill areas rather than having access to education. Examples of recycling approaches to effectively treat waste from various cities need to be looked into for providing equitable access to good air and water for people living around such spaces. In such scenarios people could be relocated and special focus may be given to children and their health as they are more vulnerable to these conditions than adults while ensuring they have access to good education as well. This case study also brings our attention to all the areas near such landfill sites and to all the kids who are living in such areas where they have inequitable access to air, water and public space.

What does Deer Park mean to its locals?
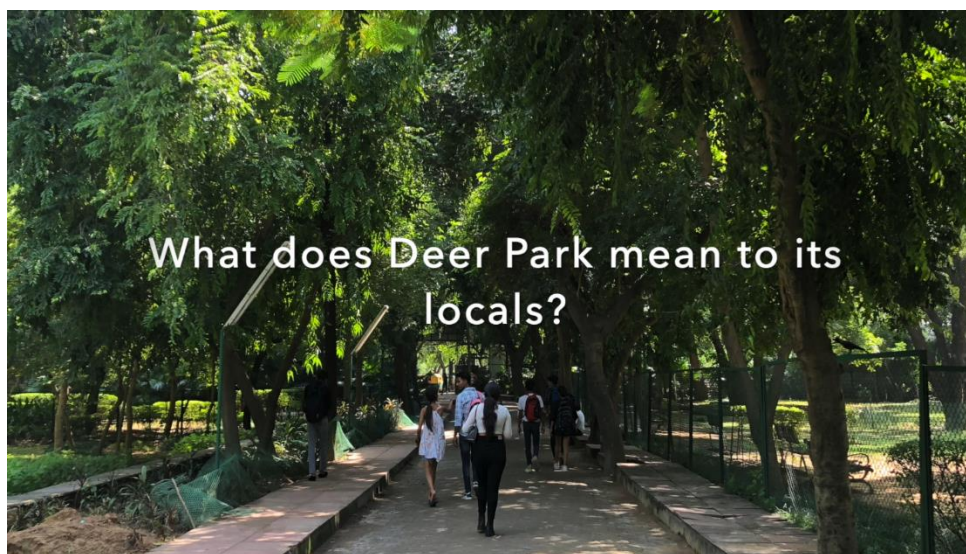
The third case deals with deer park's historic environment and how we can take care of an existing open space in an effective way, placing required value for the historic monument and developing the area around it in an inclusive manner. This case study brings our focus to existing green areas and how that could be developed in a way placing emphasis on children and their needs and the critical need to develop the blue green networks in urban areas.

The fourth case deals with the lake in Bhopal named 'Bada Talaab' also known as Upper lake, a green space in the city which has historic importance and how the various current situation scenarios make it hard for children to access that area with problems ranging from physical to

Accessibility for Children?

social. This space also poses the question of, how such a huge recreation area in the city has very few children accessing the space? From the lack of physical barriers, a proper walkway, lack of play equipment, cleanliness and maintenance covers most of the major issues. The proposed interventions are divided into four areas: access, tactical urbanism, networking and education. These interventions would also uplift the place and its identity. This case study brings our attention to how recreation areas could be properly designed to make them inclusive. Even when there is a large open area it doesn't make it accessible for children and every public space requires thoughtful and inclusive planning and interventions to cater to the needs of children.

Opportunities for Celebration for Children?

The fifth case explores the situation of a child in social events such as a traditional *mela* (fair), where they are often left out due to the way it is planned and designed though it offers a lot of attractions for children. The case highlights the fact that the Dussehra Mela in the Maidan as understood from a macroscopic perspective seems to be inclusive - with its welcoming rides and food stalls however through unpacking the "micro" of the producing space, its complexities are revealed. Children form an important stakeholder (among others) within the space of the mela, evidenced by the sizable amount of children accessing the rides and buying things from the food stalls and the hawkers. However, the reason they are an important stakeholder is that they also form to be a part of the labour force of the mela. The agency of the children over the mela is determined by the role they play. The children who are part of the workforce find themselves to be

frequently excluded from the "fun" that the other children have and this case brings in the aspect of economic inequity and deprivation of children from lower income strata and the role of public spaces in shaping their personalities. This case study also brings out that the world is adult-centric, the spaces are designed to cater to the needs of an adult with children as an independent entity is ignored as he/she is considered only an accompaniment with an adult.

All five case studies captured as Place Stories are just few of the hundreds and thousands of real life stories and challenges that children across various segments of the society in India face on a daily basis. This calls for revisiting the existing conceptual framework including policy, programs and initiatives with respect to public spaces in the Indian context and how they can help make cities and public spaces inclusive for children.

POLICY, PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES: MAKING PUBLIC SPACES INCLUSIVE FOR CHILDREN

Children need to be included as one of the key stakeholders in city planning. Every child has the right to play, learn and enjoy their living across various socio-economic strata and settlements in cities. Given the traditional practice of city planning which happens with technical and professional stakeholders, the needs of children have been often ignored. Cities have begun to realise this planning gap and are now looking to address these needs in a holistic manner by including child-friendly aspects into city planning. Accordingly, existing policies and norms need to be reviewed in relation to child friendliness and to identify need-gaps to cover children welfare more holistically. There is also a need for advocacy for children friendly practices making public spaces inclusive for children.

National Level Policy for Children

India has a comprehensive legal and policy framework to protect rights and interests of children. There are national level policies and guidelines for children welfare such as National Policy for Children (NPC), 2013; National Plan of Action for Children, 2016; Midday Meal, 1995; Right to education, 2009; Kishori Shakti Yojana, 2007; Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), 1975; National Commission for Protection of Child Rights -Regulatory Guidelines for Private Play Schools, 2016 and Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme, 2006. The National Policy for Children (NPC), 2013, affirms the government's commitment to addressing the challenges faced by children. Many programmes and missions related to children, developed by the central government, are being implemented by state governments at the city level. These programmes largely respond to specific physiological needs of children.

There are some provisions pertaining to safe environment for children in various laws like the Factories Act, 1948, The Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996. These acts provide some basic norms, like crèches shall provide adequate accommodation, be adequately lit and ventilated, and be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. Similarly, the Amended Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme provides some provisions for built environment for Infant Toddler and Caregivers (ITC).

Statutory Physical Plan, Guidelines and Codes

It is important to understand these generic built environment related policies and frameworks if we are to make public spaces inclusive for children. There are statutory physical plans related to built environment such as Master Plan (MP); City Development Plan (CDP); Zonal Development Plan; Local Area Plans (LAP); Layout Plans of Plotted Development; Group Housing Plans; Town Planning Scheme (TPS) and Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP). Though, the Master Plan primarily focuses on land use planning, but Infant, Toddler and Caregiver Friendly Neighbourhoods (ITCN) friendly guidelines can be incorporated by including relevant sections on neighbourhood based policies. LAPs are being looked to as a valuable tool to create a framework for enhancing public spaces, and areas under roads by enabling redevelopment of the existing built up environment and preparation of a new layout with enhanced infrastructure provision. This could help integrate ITC guidelines in relevant provisions.

There are guidelines and codes that includes Urban & Regional Development Planning, Formulation and Implementation (URDPFI) Guidelines, 2014; National building Code (NBC) of India, 2016; Indian Road Congress Guidelines (IRC); Unified Traffic and Transport Infrastructure (Planning and Engineering) Centre Guidelines (UTTIPEC); Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP) Guidelines; Indian Green Building Code (IGBC) and Building Bye Laws.

Guidelines for pedestrian facilities, published by the Indian Road Congress in 1989 and revised in 2012, identified walking as an important mode of transport. Pedestrian facilities are a critical element in producing a pedestrian-friendly environment. Engineering solutions to improve quality of pedestrian network should take into account the children, families with young children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and people carrying heavy luggage. Mobility and safety of all the pedestrians including those with disabilities and reduced mobility should be ensured to promote inclusive mobility and universal accessibility.

The current system of codes and guidelines don't have a cohesive understanding of young children specific requirements. Some of them have touched upon through pedestrian friendly design guidelines, barrier free design guidelines, and traffic calming guidelines but there are no specific guidelines related to children.

The Infant, Toddler and Caregiver Friendly Neighbourhoods (ITCN) Capacity Building Documents

The Infant, Toddler and Caregiver Friendly Neighbourhoods (ITCN) Capacity Building Documents were developed by Bernard van leer Foundation (BvLF) with support from other organizations under the leadership of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' India Smart Cities Mission in year 2019. There are five such documents including policy framework, policy workbook, design guidelines, evaluation and monitoring metrics, and best practices compendium. These documents prepare city-level stakeholders like Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), community-based organisations, professionals, and caregivers themselves with the tools that they would need to create a holistic neighbourhood. The documents aim to create an ideal neighbourhood where young children feel safe, explore, play and engage with their built and natural environment.

Role of National Missions in Development of Public Spaces

In India, recent years have seen various Government programs becoming key to driving sustainable and planned urban growth, such as, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), Smart Cities Mission, HRIDAY, AMRUT, various campaigns by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) such as the Placemaking marathon etc. These initiatives[6] helped enable structured investment by the Centre and State Governments in the design and development of public spaces. The planning of these public spaces is a work in progress, with each initiative informing the other; a closer look at them reveals the links in the evolution of policy, programs, and initiatives in the past decade.

---

[6] *Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation, Government of India. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission Overview. Retrieved from*
ttps://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/1Mission%20Overview%20English(1).pdf

JnNURM, launched in 2005, focused on the improvement and reform of Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG), Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP), Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT), and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programmes (IHSDP).[7] The mission linked the release of funds for the proposed reforms to their successful implementation; grants from the central and state governments were combined and passed on to cities as soft loans and grants. The JnNURM helped to introduce a reforms-oriented approach to city planning, pushing the government authorities to focus on implementation.

The Smart Cities Mission, launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in 2015, introduced the concept of Area-based Development (ABD) that focuses on improving living conditions in existing areas of the city through retrofitting or redevelopment. The Mission also enabled greenfield project proposals to develop and expand to inhabit the growing population in cities. Along with these, the pan-city proposals were instrumental in integrating smart solutions in the city-wide infrastructure[8].

Under AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation), the development of green spaces and parks with a special focus on child-friendly components was a crucial aspect along with ensuring the provision of basic services like water supply and sewerage. For such public space development, ULBs were also encouraged to establish a system for maintenance with the local resident population. The initiative also focused on capacity building of officials, based on the learnings from the JNNURM initiative[9].

These initiatives have played a pivotal role in enabling city ULBs to undertake projects such as the development of parks and gardens, sports and recreational facilities, and the conservation of rivers, lakes, and other water bodies. Several cities such as Ahmedabad[10], Lucknow[11], Surat[12] and Pune,[13] developed river rejuvenation and

Bhubaneshwar focused on incorporating a child-friendly lens in its Smart City Proposal. This included developing Smart parks for children, model anganwadi centres for early childhood development, implementing Safer routes to school programme and adopting last mile connectivity to ensure child safety.

Source: Smart City Proposal, Bhubaneshwar, Retrieved from https://smartnet.niua.org/sites/default/files/resources/BHUBANESWAR_SCP_0.pdf

---

[7] *AVASIHA, V. K., & GARG, A. (2016). Urban Infrastructure and Governance Mission under JNNURM: Have the Reforms Delivered? Economic and Political Weekly, 51(2), 41–45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44003080*

[8] *Smart Cities Mission | IBEF. (n.d.). India Brand Equity Foundation. Retrieved October 12, 2022, from https://www.ibef.org/government-schemes/smart-cities-mission*

[9] *AVASIHA, VIDHEE KIRAN, and AMIT GARG. "Urban Infrastructure and Governance Mission under JNNURM: Have the Reforms Delivered?" Economic and Political Weekly 51, no. 2 (2016): 41–45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44003080.*

[10] *Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority. Ahmedabad City Development Plan, 2006-2012. Retrieved from http://resma.info/images/file/auda_cdp.pdf*

[11] *Lucknow Municipal Corporation, (2015). Revised City Development Plan for Lucknow city – 2041, (Volume 1). Retrieved from https://lmc.up.nic.in/pdf/Final%20CDP%20-%20Volume%20I.pdf*

[12] *Surat Municipal Corporation, Surat Urban Development Authority. Surat City Development Plan (revised), 2008-2013. Retrieved from https://www.suratmunicipal.gov.in/Downloads/CityDevelopment*

[13] *Pune Municipal Corporation. (2006) Pune City Development Plan 2006-2012, (Volume 1). Retrieved from https://pmc.gov.in/informpdf/jnnurm/CDPPUNE/Pune%20CDP-%20Volume%201.pdf*

conservation plans and other public space development proposals. The development of Sabarmati Riverfront and Kankaria lakefront in Ahmedabad, and Gomti Riverfront in Lucknow provide city-level public spaces to all. Various street cross-sections in cities like Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat, and Visakhapatnam were improved to incorporate pedestrian infrastructure and amenities in street networks, transit-oriented development along Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) and last-mile connectivity. Cities also focused on enhancing the children-oriented government institutions such as schools, health centers, and anganwadis precincts, especially around housing developed for the urban poor.

The Smart Cities Mission, through its concept of ABD, enabled an integrated approach to public space development projects across the country such as various riverfront and lakefront projects with surrounding area development. The objective was to provide public spaces along the water bodies, market redevelopment and placemaking, pedestrian-oriented and cycling infrastructure on streets and intersections, retrofitting of heritage precincts, redevelopment of station areas to provide safe access to pedestrians and streamline vehicular movement, and so on. This helped to plan a comprehensive and integrated program as an adaptable model in a selected part of the city.

Hubbali Dharwad is converting a city canal (Unkal Raj Naala) into a Green Mobility Corridor, transforming inaccessible, under-utilized spaces into vibrant, accessible, green public space for the city. Along with infrastructural changes, the development is set to provide dedicated spaces for children's play areas, themed gardens, continuous walkway, and cycle lanes along the 8.5km long canal. Public bike sharing and BRTS connectivity will be ensured to enable easy access. The project is being done under the CITIIS (City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain) program, in convergence with the Smart Cities Mission.

Figure 1: The canal side development at Hubbali Dharwad providing accessible, green public space to the city

Image Source: WRI India

Source: A. (2021, February 17). Smart City Projects in Hubballi-Dharwad; Hubballi Infra. Retrieved October 12, 2022, from https://hubballidharwadinfra.com/smart-city-projects-in-hubballi-dharwad/

AMRUT enabled the development of parks at the city and neighbourhood levels in many cities. This gave an opportunity for cities to fill in the gaps in their per capita open space availability. It also provided guidelines to develop parks and gardens in cities with dedicated play spaces for children and adolescents.[14] This has mainstreamed the development of parks and gardens across 500 cities - around 1850 parks and green spaces were developed across the country as of June 2021[15]. AMRUT also enabled linking the local community with the maintenance of public spaces.

---

[14] *Government of India. AMRUT, Sector wise template: green spaces and parks. Retrieved from http://amrut.gov.in/upload/597047926809703TemplateSLIPFormatParksV614Aug2015.pdf*
[15] *Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. (2021, June 25). 6 years of urban transformation. Retrieved from https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1730341*

Beyond such systematic programs, various short-term national campaigns have also been launched by MoHUA in recent years. These include the Placemaking Marathon, national challenges like Cycle 4 Change, Streets 4 People, Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge, Eat Smart, and Transport 4 all. These campaigns have been introduced with a competitive framework to develop inclusive public spaces and pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, improve children-oriented facilities and amenities and improve public

Figure 2: Quick transformation of a dump yard to public space for community under the Placemaking Marathon in Greater Warangal. Image Source: WRI India

transport systems to create healthy cities for all. Through such campaigns, public spaces were transformed with the help of citizens, paving the way for co-creation in the future. By doing so, it allowed for establishing proof of concept to the public and other stakeholders/departments for buy-ins before spending large sums of money on permanent interventions.

National Level Initiatives

Child Friendly Smart Cities (CFSC) initiative of NIUA and BvLF has facilitated the development of CFSC in India. The programme has complemented the endeavours under current national urban missions such as Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT through knowledge distillation to cities in India and various civil society organisations.

As a follow-up to the efforts channelled through the CFSC programme, NIUA supported by BvLF, is implementing the ITCN Capacity Building Programme with specific capacity strengthening outcomes for city officials and young professionals. The programme is anchored by the Inclusive Cities Centre (ICC) at NIUA and aims at addressing the development needs of the cities' youngest citizens, below the age of six years, and their caregivers through planning and development interventions at neighbourhood level on a city-wide scale. The programme is a part of Urban95, a global initiative created by the BvLF with goal to encourage cities to create spaces where children can grow, learn, create, imagine and play across all neighbourhoods, reaching as many families as possible.

There are several initiatives taken by cities in India to make public spaces inclusive for children under Urban 95 initiatives. Bhubaneswar, Udaipur and Pune have fostered young child and family friendly city planning and development focusing on sensory and perceptual development and tactical elements of cities through retrofitting of city layouts. Bhubaneswar is working on improving green spaces under AMRUT cities. Pune's child-friendly initiatives include mobility and footpath re-design, place making, and increase in open spaces. Udaipur has implemented tactical interventions in utilising open spaces for the recreational purposes of young children, and re-designing streets and parks to improve planned structures for meeting the needs of children. The city undertook pilot projects such as re-designing the Town Hall Park to suit the sensory, perceptual and cognitive development needs of children and

revitalised the Meera Bagh Park by upgrading the overall layout of the park. In Gwalior, under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Urban), fully equipped tot-lots are being planned at strategic locations for children.

Role of State-Level Programs in Development of Public Spaces

Several state programs also focus on promoting the development of public spaces, urban greening, and cleanliness. There have been many successes around this and have helped the development of public spaces and their maintenance. One such example – State-level missions such as the JAGA Mission in Odisha, launched in 2018, primarily focused on transforming

Figure *3*: *Children in public spaces created in slums of Odisha Image Source: JAGA Mission*

informal settlements into liveable habitats through a physical improvement process, along with land rights[16]. The improvement process included the provision of basic infrastructure in slums like piped water supply, pucca streets, sanitation, drainage, household electricity, and street lighting, community centres, public spaces. The initiative has been instrumental in empowering slum dwellers, enabling community mobilization, and resulting in more than 2000 Slum Dwellers Association (SDAs) across Odisha.

City Level Models for Development and Maintenance of Public Spaces

At the city level, there have been successful models of development and maintenance of public spaces, not only by the city ULBs but with the involvement of private entities as well. In Ahmedabad, parks and gardens often take shape under Town Planning Schemes[17] or Local Area Plan. Amul Dairy has partnered with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority to maintain and revamp public parks in Ahmedabad in exchange for setting up Amul kiosks within their premises. Of the 242 parks in the city, 218 are maintained by Amul[18]. The revenue from the shop is used to pay for garden maintenance. In recent years, there have been other private stakeholders as well, who have entered similar contracts with AMC and AUDA for the maintenance of public parks in the city.

Role of Government, Private Stakeholders and NGOs in O&M of Public Spaces

Developing quality public spaces and their maintenance is a capital-intensive process. The above-mentioned initiatives by the Central and State governments enabled the inclusion of operation and maintenance costs in the development process. For instance, both JnNURM and AMRUT made it mandatory to include O&M costs as part of the project life cycle costs in the tender document. However,

---

[16] *Government of Odisha. (2020). JAGA Mission, Participatory Slum Upgradation and Delisting, Standard Operating Procedure. Retrieved from http://www.urbanodisha.gov.in/pdf/SOP-Slum-Upgradation.pdf*

[17] *Town Planning schemes allow for 5% of land (of total TPS area) to be earmarked for the development of parks and gardens. This provision has been used in Gujarat cities to develop several city-level as well as neighbourhood level public spaces*

[18] *https://ahmedabadmirror.com/amc-to-revamp-242-parks-and-gardens/65314188.html*

AMRUT allowed O&M costs to be covered by States/ULBs through user charges or other revenue streams to make the process self-reliant and cost-effective[19]. These national missions also encouraged private stakeholders to partake in this process through Public-private partnerships (PPP), maintenance mechanisms with residents, and so on.

---

[19] *AMRUT Mission Statement and Guidelines, Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, June 2015*

PROBLEMS, POSSIBILITIES & PARTNERSHIPS

India is a rapidly urbanizing country and has a young population. Over 1/4th of the Indian population is under 15 years old, so it is important that we build cities that are resilient for the future, and make sure that the youth is kept in mind when considering the inclusivity of our cities (O'Neill, 2022). To build a city that is responsive to the needs of children and their caregivers, the most important aspect to consider is that public spaces, transportation modes and neighbourhoods are safe and child-friendly (Bhattacharya, 2021).

Gaps in Making Public Spaces Inclusive for Children

Public spaces are crucial for children right from their early years; children need to spend quality time outdoors, where they can play and learn, enabling their overall physical and mental growth. "Play in outdoor environments can make a positive contribution to well-being across age groups and socio-economic backgrounds."[20] A city with a higher ratio of safe, accessible, and inclusive public spaces significantly improves the quality of life for children and thereby for people of all ages. Various agents such as the government, citizen groups, NGOs, and other private stakeholders have been responsible for the planning, development, and management of public spaces in our cities. Government-led development and management of public spaces has had a significant role in developing children-oriented public spaces in the Indian context. While recent urban development programs have significantly improved urban development in the country, much remains to be done.

Lack of measures ensuring even distribution of public spaces across cities – Urban development programs have ensured the production of public spaces. However, it has been mostly uneven. While WHO considers 9 sq.m. green space per person[21] a as the standard, and URDPFI mentions 10-12 sq.m. per person[22], Indian cities still lag on the

Figure 3: Per capita open space available in some Indian cities

per capita public space requirements.[23] In cities like New Delhi or Bengaluru, even though the per capita

[20] Barton, H., Thompson, S., Grant, M., & Burgess, S. (2015, June 1). The Routledge Handbook of Planning for Health and Well-Being. In Shaping a Sustainable and Healthy Future.

[21]

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6209905/#:~:text=The%20World%20Health%20Organization%20%5B36,50%20m2%20per%20capita.

[22] URDPFI Guidelines, GoI

[23] Udas-Mankikar, S. (2020). Formulating Open-Space Policies for India's Cities: The Case of Mumbai. ORF Occasional Paper (241). Retrieved from https://www.orfonline.org/research/formulating-open-space-policies-for-indias-cities-the-case-of-mumbai-65007/#_edn6

public space is adequate as per standards, the distribution of these public spaces is uneven, especially around vulnerable settlements.

Lack of adequate focus around children-oriented development – Public space development has seen a boom in the past years, but little work has been done in the development of young children-friendly public spaces. For instance, anganwadis are the most frequented destinations for young children. There are more than 13 lakh operational *anganwadis* in the country[24] (as of June 2018), but most lack dedicated outdoor play areas which are safe for young children.

Inclusivity in Public spaces – Urban parks and gardens seldom reflect any sensitivity towards the needs of young children and caregivers in their design. Furthermore, most of these parks are not easily accessible to the vulnerable sections of society.

Vehicular domination of streets – Streets today are predominantly vehicle-centric and lack proper pedestrian infrastructure. This in turn has rendered streets unsafe and uncomfortable for use of all age groups. Unorganized parking activity plays a major role in making spaces unavailable for public use. Residual spaces are left unattended or underutilized, making them detrimental to public safety.

Lack of gender-sensitivity and negative spaces – The physical safety of children and women in public spaces, are often interlinked. However, their needs in the design of public spaces are often neglected. Natural surveillance and eyes on the street are important factors that exponentially increase the utility value of a public space.

Lack of ownership of public spaces by local community – The development of public spaces in Indian cities is often done by the Government. Due to lack of involvement of the local community in the planning process, the residents feel a lack of ownership, which eventually results in the underutilization of public spaces.

Lack of supportive amenities for children and families – Children and their caregivers often avoid being in public spaces due to lack of basic amenities such as toilets, drinking water, diaper changing areas, lactation booths and so on.

Lack of institutionalizing management and upkeep of public spaces – Even though O&M forms a part of the project costs for most urban development programs, States and ULBs have been encouraged to take up innovative ways to manage the upkeep costs for public space and other projects. This has often led to a gap in the process, where ULBs struggle to find ways to manage maintenance costs. Private entities, NGOs, and other stakeholders can play a role in filling this gap in a formal manner to reduce the burden on the city governments.

---

[24] *Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development. (2018, July 30). 13.63 lakh Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) of the 14 lakh AWCs sanctioned across the country are operational as on 01.06.2018. Retrieved from https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=181218*

Possibilities and Partnerships

In spite of the many challenges that appear unsurmountable in Indian cities today the development of public spaces is gradually evolving towards a co-creative process between multiple stakeholders encouraging a collaborative approach towards urban planning involving city leaders and officials, urban practitioners, various civic groups, NGOs, and other private stakeholders such as corporates, etc. Various organizations are coming together to create places that are child friendly and set an example for other cities to emulate.

Udaipur Urban 95

Urban 95 is a global initiative by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation that works with leaders, planners, designers, communities and advocates to support the healthy development of young children and infants and the well-being of caregivers in cities around the world. The standard height of a 3-year old child is said to be 95 cm's according to UNICEF guidelines. The term 'Urban' can be seen as synonymous with cities. Therefore, the purpose of Urban 95's is to create an ideal environment as seen from the eyes of a child. 3 cities in India have implemented the Urban 95 programme into their city planning – Bhubaneshwar, Pune and Udaipur.

Urban 95 in Udaipur, which was officially inaugurated in 2019, is designed as a 2-phase process. The first phase used tactical urbanism as a tool to make the city friendlier toward children and caregivers. Due to covid-19 restrictions, only 4 out of the 6 proposed projects could be executed and they were:
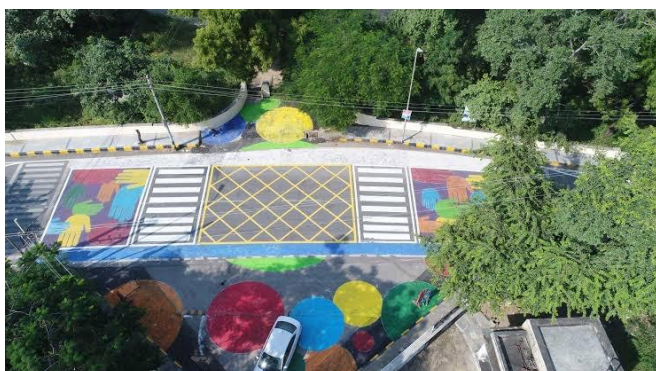

Figure 5: Street art around the pre-primary school. Photo courtesy of ICLEI South Asia

Traffic calming measures: Measures were implemented outside of a pre-primary school, accompanied with beautiful street art. A recent study showed that art actually makes streets safer by increasing the visibility of pedestrian spaces and encouraging drivers to slow down (Hurford, 2022).

Activating unused public spaces: A public chowk (known as Nayion Ki Talai Chowk) was transformed into a vibrant and attractive public and safe space, especially for children and their caregivers, but for the community at large too.

Another intervention by the Urban 95 team in Udaipur was the rejuvenation of a previously badly maintained public space – Meera Park. Local people were engaged to turn the space into an attractive park through better upkeep of plants and vegetation, improved awareness about proper waste disposal, and through the rejuvenation of benches, greenery, lighting and walking space in the area (ICLEI South Asia et al. 2020d).

Planting of samplings at a festival for children: Another park, the Manikya Lal Verma park at Dudh Talai was redeveloped and opened for a 2-day festival wherein the demand for green and open spaces for

children was demonstrated. The event attracted around 1,300 children and caregivers who partook in activities including the planting of seed saplings and storytelling which would contribute to the greening of Udaipur. The storytelling also conveyed awareness around the environment and climate change (ICLEI South Asia et al. 2020e).

Figure 6: Visually appealing urban streetscape at Nayion Ki Talai Chowk. Photo Courtesy of ICLEI South Asia

Safer Commute for School Children Project in Rohtak

The goal behind this project was to transform the city of Rohtak in Haryana into one where children can travel and move about safely on a road, whether it be on foot, cycle or transit, and irrespective of whether they are on their own, or accompanied by an adult (Bhatt, 2018). World Resources Institute (WRI) India, in collaboration with Rohtak Police, NASSCOM Foundation and Municipal Corporation of Rohtak started this project in 2018. The project was funded by Botnar Foundation, a Switzerland-based international charitable organisation.

The two primary objectives of the project were to reduce the crash risk of 5 school districts in Rohtak and reducing crash risk for children in Rohtak. The project primarily focussed on the design and engineering of roads in vicinities to schools. The commute patterns of children are very different to those of adults. In the city of Rohtak, most children walk or cycle to school. Therefore, to ensure safe commute for children to school meant reduced road width for car usage, slower speed, with safe and vibrant spaces.

Figure 7: Trial design interventions. Images courtesy of report by urbanmobilityindia.in

Along with these design interventions, several workshops were held with parents, teachers and children, capacity building programmes were arranged with engineers and policemen in the area, awareness campaigns with students & more was done to further advocate for change in the area.

The effects of these interventions were significant. The one-month trial at the HUDA Park intersection was made permanent. Further, based on the lessons learned from this intersections, the tender of 4 more junctions that are to be permanently redesigned was put into work. Once the positive effects of such policies are seen, and the design methods are learnt, the initiative to transform more intersections gains confidence. In the long run, the hope is that it can lead to city-wide permanent safe infrastructure for children, naturally making it safer and more inclusive to all.

Safer Cities for Girls programme

Safer Cities programme Implemented by Plan International (India Chapter) for girls has led to improved

confidence and increased mobility among girls in the neighbourhood. Plan International (India Chapter) has been implementing Safer Cities for Girls in communities of Delhi since 2014 as a part of Global Girls 2030 initiative to build safe, accountable and inclusive cities, especially for adolescent girls and women, with and for girls in all their diversity. The programme strives to increase safety and access to public spaces for women and girls; their independent

and unrestricted use of public transport and meaningful participation in urban governance, planning and management.

Safer Cities represents a collaboration between Plan International, Women in Cities International and UN-Habitat and Women in Cities International (WICI). The programme worked with governments and institutions, families and communities, and girls and boys themselves so they can become active citizens and change-makers through their meaningful participation in urban governance, planning and management aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5, SDG 11 and SDG 16.

The project had put adolescent girls and young women at the centre and intended to adopt an integrated community based approach to address issues of girls' safety in the public spaces. It was a long-term gender transformative programme, working to address gendered power relations and to

challenge stereotypical social norms that perpetuate insecurity and exclusion of girls in cities. The programme worked with and through community, particularly with young girls equipping them to raise awareness and advocate for positive change. The project was implemented in four locations of Delhi i.e. Mangolpuri and Holambikalan of Northwest District and Gautampuri and Madanpur khadar of South East District and one location in Jaipur,

Rajasthan. The project had included men and boys as active stakeholders to be the partners in change by supporting girls and women to access and enjoy their rights in the city as equal citizens. A key component of the project was intergenerational dialogues between girls, parents and the community to enable a dialogue process across genders and generations to strengthen their relationships and take joint action for gender equality.

A number of studies have been conducted under the project. These include gender budget analysis for Delhi Municipality, assessing the Public Transportation Policy of the Delhi State Government from the lens of girl's safety and use of mind craft tool for mapping of safe and unsafe public spaces. These studies provided useful evidence that became pivotal to develop an approach on how to impact a whole city and on how to integrate participatory, age- and gender-responsive urban planning processes in the city administration. Following are the case studies of the good practices:

Safe Houses: Demonstrated community engagement on the issues of girl's/women's safety by establishing volunteer-run Safe houses in project communities which provided support and immediate shelter to girls/women facing any form of harassment in public spaces. A total of 206 Safe Houses were established in the communities to support girls in distress situations.

Sports for Development: The intervention was designed to combine sport and gender equality training. This module reflects two of their programmes. Touch Rugby game was used a strategy to engage boys and girls in breaking the norm that restricts boys and girls from playing an outdoor sport together. Boys and girls came together, learned the game with a sport professional who organised regular weekly practice sessions. The parents also encouraged to participate in the training sessions. A detailed training module was developed to provide coaches a tool to improve their pedagogical approach towards gender equality by challenging the negative stereotypes. Regular Touch Rugby tournaments were organised between boys and girls by using the sports for development approach.

Self Defense Training of the girls: Regular workshops were organised in collaboration with Delhi Police with the purpose to empower the women and girls to tackle the untoward situations by their own. More than 1,000 girls were equipped on dos and don'ts in unsafe places. All these girls received certificate from Delhi Police.

Intergenerational Dialogue for Eliminating Gender Stereotypes: Intergenerational dialogues between girls, fathers, mothers, and community members are moderated dialogue process across sexes and generations that are specifically designed to enable participant to reflect and change their behaviour, to strengthen their relationships and their ability to take action for gender equality.

Digital Youth Led Community Score Card for the youth- led Safety Audits: The Young Citizens Score Card (YCSC) is tool children and young people along with their communities can use to measure the quality of services such as healthcare, water and sanitation, education or child protection and advocate for their improvement. It is easy to use and can be adapted for any sector in which services are being delivered. The YCSC tool is digitalized to conduct safety audits by using the android phone based app and a Dashboard is developed as a tool for advocacy with the duty bearers and elected members. As an outcome of the Safety Audit more than 10 parks in the project locations were reclaimed, repaired to design as girl friendly parks, more than 100 CCTV cameras were installed, regular repair of broken street lights and regular repair and maintenance of public toilets were ensured.

Gender Sensitization Sessions with Police and Public Transporters: More than 1,000 Police Officials and public transporters are sensitized on the issue of Gender and safety of girls in the public spaces through different workshops and through specific campaigns designed for them.

Mass Orientation of Girls on Cyber Safety: During the COVID-19 pandemic increased number of cybercrime was reported by the girls of the project location. To overcome the situation series of virtual sessions were organised with the girls on cyber safety by engaging Delhi Police and several cyber experts. More than 1,000 girls received orientation of cyber safety through the regular sessions.

Variety of Campaigns on Girls Safety in Cities and Gender Equality: The project has been able to reach out more than 200,000 people reached through variety of approaches such as rallies, use of social media, radio programmes, signature campaigns and street plays.

Inclusive Public Space for Children – Case of Visakhapatnam

Visakhapatnam Smart City developed a 2156 sq.m. all abilities park to provide a public space that was accessible and could be enjoyed by all families and children. The park provided innovative and stimulating play spaces and dedicated zones for different age groups for various activities.

Figure 8: Overall Park with age-specific play spaces in Visakhapatnam

Figure 9: Sensory stimulation incorporated in play equipment at the all abilities park

Image Source : https://iflaapr.org/news/corporate-member-showcase-aecom-india-pvt-ltd

Public Space for Children in Vulnerable Communities – Case of Rourkela

Under the Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge, Rourkela Smart City limited attempted to provide inclusive play opportunities for the children of leprosy affected people. A new formal play space of 200 sq.m. was created in each slum by repurposing residual areas, adding simple play opportunities, and seating areas for caregivers. The city leveraged the existing local women groups working in nutrition and health related programs to ensure monitoring and upkeep of the place. Looking at this success, the city is now scaling up to plan 81 play spaces in slums.

Figure 10: Public play space at Rourkela slum. Image Source: WRI India

Gender sensitive public spaces – Case of New Delhi

In New Delhi, the women and children of Nizamuddin Basti and its female pilgrim tourists were in dire need of a safe and clean open space. The parks in Nizamuddin Basti were inhabited by drug peddlers and rag-pickers or were used as parking spaces and waste dumping grounds. Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) helped to create an independent, secure, semi-open gathering space for women and a safe play space for school children of the community. Local women from the neighbourhood are responsible for the management and maintenance of the park. This has helped to create a replicable model of public space in the city.[25]

Figure 11: Figure 4: Gender and children-friendly public space at Nizamuddin Basti
Image Source: Development-of-DDA-Parks-In-Hazrat-Nizamuddin-Basti-By-Aga-Khan-Trust-For-Culture.pdf (nizamuddinrenewal.org)

Streets as a Public Space for Children – Case of Pune

The street development on the ITI Road in Aundh, Pune has seamlessly integrated people friendly public spaces with street design. The street affords an equitable distribution of road width for vehicles and for pedestrians and cyclists. The pedestrian pathway has been designed keeping in mind safety, universal accessibility, and engagement for people from all age groups. Naturally shaded seating spaces allow for

Figure 12: People-friendly public space integrated with street design at ITI Road, Pune
Image Source : http://www.lajournal.in/61-6.asp

---

[25] *Development of DDA parks in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti by Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative. Retrieved from https://www.nizamuddinrenewal.org/urban-planning/images/Development-of-DDA-Parks-In-Hazrat-Nizamuddin-Basti-By-Aga-Khan-Trust-For-Culture.pdf*

people to pause and interact. At several junctions of the street, play areas have been created for children with floor mounted board games.

Reclamation of Public Spaces from Residual Areas – Case of Vadodara and Mumbai

Our cities are full of under-utilized, residual spaces which lie abandoned. In Vadodara, an anganwadi below a city flyover was long neglected, encroached by parking and had become a space for anti-social activities at night. The city transformed this underutilized area into a vibrant public space, this was done by providing a variety of sensory play opportunities for children and multipurpose community space. The 390 sq.m. of reclaimed public space now serves around 130 children from the surrounding areas.

In the high-density locality of Mumbai, the underutilized space below the flyover at Senapati Bapat Marg has been converted into a vibrant, accessible, and safe public space consisting of play opportunities, seating, amphitheatre with greenery, adequate lighting, cycling track and pedestrian crossing.

Figure 13: Transformation of neglected spaces such flyover under spaces in Vadodara and Mumbai
Image Source: Vadodara – SMAID University
Image Source: Mumbai - https://www.mvrdv.nl/projects/787/one-green-mile

9. Co-creation of public spaces – case of Kochi and Kohima

A neighbourhood park in Eraveli, Kochi was largely unused by women and children due to the occurrence of anti-social activities in the park. The community therefore decided to break down the

Figure 14: Community- led reclaiming of space for young children at Kohima & Community-led reclaiming of space for the neighbourhood at Kochi
Image Source: Kohima – Kohima Smart City Development Limited
Image Source: Kochi – Cochin Smart Mission LimitedImage Source: Vadodara – SMAID University

high compound wall of the park thus making the park transparent with multiple entries. Seating spaces and informal play opportunities were also added transforming 260 sq.m. of park. It now has around 100 users including 30 children, especially girl children, and women.

Similarly, in Kohima, the community helped to develop the pocket park in the forest colony successfully transforming the street side dumping space. The community helped in the implementation through crowdfunding and by helping in the maintenance of the space.

Public Spaces Around Children-Oriented Government Institutions – Case of Anganwadis, Public Health Centres, Schools

Jabalpur pioneered the idea of a children friendly vaccination centre as a response to Covid-19. They converted an existing public health centre into a dedicated children's' vaccination centre. The vacant land of about 260 sq.m. had playful waiting spaces, a diaper vending machine, and a changing station.

Figure 15: Reclaiming public space for children at a health centre in Jabalpur

Figure 16: Reclamation of public space at anganwadi in Indore
Image Source: WEEW Consultants, WRI India

In Indore, the Machhi bazaar anganwadi and its premises, of about 600 sq.m. had become a dump yard, encroached by various activities, hampering its functioning were revamped with a community led reclamation of the public space, influencing change in attitude towards the anganwadi.

Pop-up Public Spaces for Children – Case of Neighbourhood Raahgiri

A pop-up public space helps provide temporary play spaces for children in dense settlements with limited opportunities for play. Raahgiri day is India's first sustained car-free citizen initiative that reclaims city streets and public spaces to promote pedestrian and cyclist's safety and healthy living. It

has spread to over 70 cities across 18 states with a collective footfall of over 13 million since November 2013[26].

Neighbourhood Raahgiri is an extension of the Raahgiri day at a community level, where temporal street closure model is being tried for a single neighbourhood at a time. Recently, Neighbourhood Raahgiri are being conducted to enhance community level public spaces closer to children and their families. 4 In Udaipur, the city organizes a Kids' festival in collaboration with city schools and civic groups to provide 2 days of

Figure 17: Cyclists and pedestrians of all ages take over the streets in Raahgiri
Image Source: Sarika Panda Bhatt

play and other activities that are focused on the physical, mental, emotional, and creative well-being of children.[27]

Amenities in Public Spaces for Children

Figure 18: Lactation pods in Rourkela
Image Source: Rourkela Smart City Limited

Women often find it inconvenient to feed their babies in public spaces, which leads to reduced time spent out of home. To change the scenario, Jabalpur introduced lactation pods in public spaces which receive high footfalls of children and families. Many cities such as Hubbali-Dharwad, Rourkela, Kohima, Jabalpur etc have implemented lactation pods at public spaces such as bus terminals, in public parks, markets and at early childhood services. This has encouraged women to travel with their babies and raised awareness among the community regarding healthy breastfeeding practices.

In recent years, more and more attention has been paid to designing child-friendly cities; designing a city from the perspective of a child. The aim is clear: how can we design public spaces and streets so that children can use these spaces for travel and play, independently and without fear (Helleman, 2021).

---

[26] *Our Initiatives – Raahgiri Foundation. (n.d.). Our Initiatives – Raahgiri Foundation. Retrieved from https://raahgirifoundation.org/our-initiatives/*
[27] *@UdaipurBlog, G. A. (2022, March 4). Urban95 Udaipur Kids Festival to be held this weekend - UdaipurBlog. UdaipurBlog - the Blog of Udaipur. Retrieved October 12, 2022, from https://www.udaipurblog.com/urban95-udaipur-kids-festival.html*

The most important aspect of providing safe public spaces is design. Most major metropolitan cities in India have, for the most part, prioritised vehicle movement. There are several proven ways to shift the priority back to the people. A few examples include: providing lots of green and vibrant space, accessible to everyone, ensuring safe walking and cycling infrastructure, designing so that vehicles are not allowed to speed & more (Luke et al., 2020). The case studies above show us that initiative and investment into the creation of child-friendly spaces inevitably yields positive results. Indian cities must use these examples of a blueprint to making their cities safer, more resilient and sustainable in the long term – for all residents, with a focus on the next generation.

The case studies above demonstrate various models of co-creation of public spaces, with involvement of the government, along with community members, civic groups, NGOs, corporates and so on. These examples highlight a people-centric model of urban planning and design along with a special emphasis on scaling up and sustaining the young children and caregiver friendly lens.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Jane Jacobs book 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' published in 1961, one of the most influential works ever published in urban studies, highlighted the ignorance of human perspective in planning. Jane argued that urban renewal did not respect the needs of most city-dwellers, a concept alien to most urban planners at the time. Jane led resistance against the wholesale replacement of urban communities with high rise buildings. She also resisted the loss of communities to newly planned expressways. She saw cities as ecosystems taking a systematic look at various elements in a city not individually but as parts of an interconnected system[28]. She emphasized "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody".

After half a decade Jan Gehl, an urban planner came up with ways and methods to include human perspective in urban planning. Jan Gehl recognised four themes to work on such as the lively, safe, healthy and sustainable to work towards creating a sustainable, equitable urban space. Jan emphasised the concept of eyes on the street which was initially coined by Jane Jacobs, this ensures safety of children in the streets without imposing much restrictions on them.

In 1989 the International General Assembly recognised the rights of a child as a rightful citizen and published the United Nations Convention of Rights of a Child. UNICEF and UN-Habitat founded the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) in 1996 at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) to make cities liveable places for all[29]. The UN Conference declared that the wellbeing of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and of good governance.

The UNICEF-led Child Friendly Cities Initiative supports municipal governments in realizing the rights of children at the local level using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as its foundation. CFCI recognises the importance of children and believes that child friendly cities reflect good governance, urban health etc. CFCI is also a network that brings together government and other stakeholders such as civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, media and, importantly, children themselves who wish to make their cities and communities more child-friendly.

United Nations Convention of Rights of a Child has been the basis for various initiatives happening in different parts of the world. New Zealand is often known as a great space for children in terms of education and all the things around them which cater to their overall development. In 2022 New Zealand published an Agenda for children, focusing on children of 0-17 years of age inclusive of all genders, race, class and differently abled children as well, where they consider children as "adults in the making" and through this initiative the government gave children a voice of their own in all matters concerning them and society. The program was created by involving children, asking them of difficulties they face, their aspirations and imaginations to design and develop policies for the better growth of the

---

[28] *https://interestingengineering.com/culture/the-woman-who-thought-cities-should-be-fun-jane-jacobs-and-her-revolution-in-urban-planning*

[29] *https://childfriendlycities.org/what-is-the-child-friendly-cities-initiative/*

city and its people, adults and children alike. The agenda has recognised seven action areas ranging from the welfare of the children, children participation in governance, planning for children at a community level to research in this arena.

A study by Mitchell in 2005 explains how various urban factors have made children dependent on cars for public transport, faces fear of strangers and socially awkward people and as people who are unfamiliar with their own local neighbourhood[30] (Stevenson, 2007). A very recent discussion paper published by UNICEF in 2021 titled "The Necessity of Urban Green spaces for Children's optimal
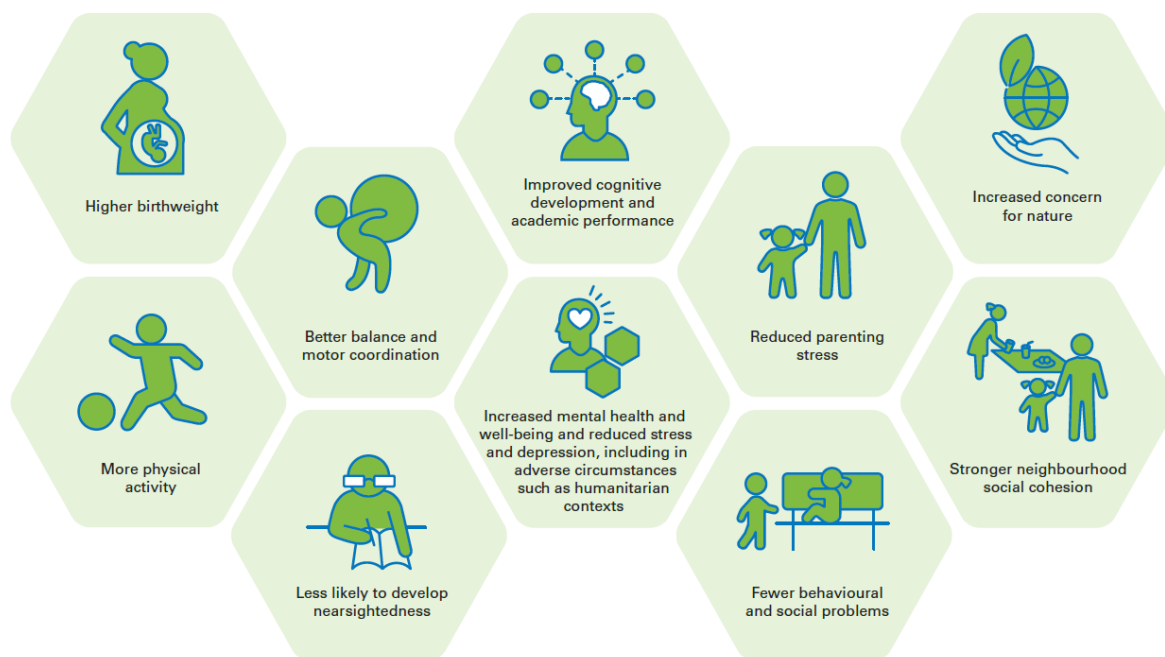

Figure 19: Benefits of green space (UNICEF)
Image Source: UNICEF Discussion Paper 2021 "The Necessity of Urban Green spaces for Children's optimal development"

development" emphasises the importance of green spaces, the advantages and concludes with certain recommendations to be executed on various levels. The study states that green spaces aid in physical, social and mental development of children in all age categories.

Given this background recent years have seen a considerable interest in making cities child friendly. All of it being triggered to a large extent by the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) that was launched as a global program by UNICEF and UN-Habitat at the Habitat II conference in Istanbul.

Policy, programs and initiatives at the global level have put the spotlight on making cities and not just public spaces inclusive and enjoyable for children and have a lot to offer in terms of enabling frameworks for implementation of child friendly programs and initiatives as well as practices for bringing about a systemic change in the thought process for inclusive designing through informed decision making and stakeholder participation.

---

[30] *Stevenson, A. (2007). What We Know About How Urban Design Affects Children and Young People: The Interaction Between Health Outcomes and the Built Environment [Ebook]. Retrieved 27 August 2022. https://www.cph.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/children-and-urban-design.pdf*

CHILDREN FRIENDLY SPACES VERSUS A CITY FOR CHILDREN

The growing up years of children right from birth to adolescence are very impressionable wherein their personality blossoms and finds expression. Their attitude, behaviour, skills and choices are shaped by a number of environmental factors. As elaborated in the earlier sections and corroborated by domain-specific scientific research, it is not just people but also the physical environment that contributes to physical growth and psychological development of children.

Children constantly learn from their surroundings to form opinions and judgements about things happening around them, which shapes their cognitive development as well. According to Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget's Developmental Stage theory there are four stages to describe the development process of children: sensorimotor stage, pre-operational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage. Each stage corresponds to a specific age group. In each stage, he described how children develop their cognitive skills, construct an understanding of the world around them, experience discrepancies between what they already know and what they discover in their environment, then adjust their ideas accordingly[31].

Children are naive, honest and also vulnerable. It is important that the children are nurtured in the right surroundings, exposed to the good opportunities and situations that will make them a good citizen of the future who is empathic and respectful to the people and entities around them. It is also therefore critical that exposure to negative stimuli from the built environment especially in their growing up years be eliminated. Public spaces along with activities that they nurture and sustain are an inseparable component of built environment in urban settlements and greatly contribute to shaping the personalities of children their behavioral responses, creative energies and skills. Public spaces should possess the qualities wherein children can actively be involved, enjoy themselves, interact socially and feel free to move without fear, without danger, and without any hesitation.

In last couple of decades, significant headway has been made globally in the direction of securing the rights of children and facilitating creation of child friendly cities however back home much ground needs to be covered despite some very interesting programs and initiatives being implemented on ground. Indian cities and towns need to be relooked at through the lens of inclusiveness. Learnings from programs and initiatives implemented in a number of cities by various government departments, organizations and institutions hold a lot of promise in developing the agenda of 'A City for Children'. However, there is a greater need to develop a contiguous child-friendly environment beginning right from the threshold of the home extending to the streets, sidewalks, squares, parks and other incidental public spaces in cities and towns as a connecting tissue that facilitates free, safe, interactive and accessible movement of both children and their caregivers. This approach will ensure not only a safe and sociable environment for children but also empower other vulnerable groups such as women, senior citizens and specially-abled persons.

---

[31] *McLeod, S. A. (2022). Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development Background and Key Concepts of Piaget's Theory. Simply Psychology. Retrieved 18 November 2022.*

There is immense scope of improvement in the policy regime related to the aspects of the built environment for the children and institutionalising them to integrate into Urban Local Bodies' day-to-day working. In the recent past, initiatives such as Urban 95, child-friendly cities and ITCN policy documents along with national challenges such as nurturing neighbourhoods have been instrumental in pushing the agenda of improving the quality of built-environment to be more child-friendly in nature.

At the municipality level, ULBs can create a dedicated designation as a Chief-Child Development Officer (CCDO) in the department of town planning. Also, separate budget should be allocated for the children related initiative in ULB annual plan and Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) annual plan. There is need to integrate children related aspects in existing policies. ULBs need to establish a system for maintenance with local resident participation for parks and open spaces. Public open spaces, parks and playgrounds can be developed/retrofitted with ITC Neighbourhood Guidelines under the AMRUT scheme and can be replicated in city areas.

Road safety (or a lack thereof) in India is nothing short of an epidemic, one that is devastating the next generation of children around the world. In 2021, over 150,000 Indian lives were lost on our roads, a number that has remained relatively consistent over the last half decade (Gogia IPS et al., 2022). According to a report by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, over 11,000 children died in 2019, and whilst we don't have the exact number of child deaths due to road crashes since then, it's safe to assume that number has remained consistent as well. In a survey done by Safe Kids Worldwide (an NGO) in 2014, it was seen that 66% of parents in India believe their child could get seriously injured due to a car crash, and 92% believe there is a need to improve road safety for children. Additionally, the massive levels of air pollution due to vehicular emissions is cutting years off children's lives, on average, shortening lifespans in the country by at least 5 years (BBC, 2022).

Children naturally will be more likely to meet with grievous injuries or worse post an accident. To protect children in India's road and public spaces, infrastructure in the country needs to reflect the needs and patterns of the most vulnerable road user. Making our streets and public spaces safer, more inclusive and resilient is the way to build child friendly streets, and subsequently, cities. By committing to make these spaces safer for children, everyone will be better off.

Moving beyond enabling policy frameworks there is a greater need to incorporate standards for 'Child Friendly Cities' within the statutory Local Development Plans and set a methodology for the audit and quality assessment of these spaces. Practically this seems to be the major challenge but if development authorities and regulatory planning authorities form suitable guidelines, incorporating child-friendly parameters, it can be easily achieved. Other big challenge is to create sensitivity among various designers so that they can start thinking through the lens of 'inclusiveness' while designing spaces. Where possible, a participatory mechanism should be devised to make children a part of the design process. A campaign should be launched related to issues faced by the children in urban area, so that designer, architects, planners and various other stakeholders can come forward to achieve child friendliness in every public space.

Though this paper by no means is a comprehensive documentation of the challenges and possibilities that the urban environment offers for making cities child friendly it captures the significant trends globally and brings together an understanding of policy, programs and initiatives in the Indian context. The White paper lays down the outlines and prepares the ground for a more comprehensive and informed research work in future. The paper attempts to highlight some critical features to be considered for developing a more informed and holistic framework for 'A Child Friendly City'. Some important aspect to be considered are as enumerated below:

Establishing demand for children-oriented public spaces: It is crucial to give voice to the needs of children and families in the decision-making process. Local champions such as elected representatives, self-help groups, resident welfare associations (RWAs), community leaders, civic groups can play a major role in voicing the needs of children to the government.

Institutionalizing development of public spaces for children: Every city government needs to institutionalize public space creation and management setup which are focused on children development, this would mean skill development, engaging partnerships, access to local expertise and champions, and funding support.

Community Partnerships: Ensuring that community has a stake in design, development and management of public space can go a long way in enabling their ownership. This could be enabled by engaging with citizen groups, NGOs and entering formal/informal means of partnerships.

Financial sustenance: The projects developed for children oriented public spaces tend to have a common objective under various programmes, it needs innovative mechanisms to generate funding and enable private players to participate. Financial models such as convergence of funds, involvement of private entities, crowdfunded interventions in public spaces are some of the emerging models of achieving financial sustainability for scaling up. It is also crucial for civic authorities to earmark a dedicated percentage of funds in the annual budget for the development of young children and caregiver friendly public spaces in cities.

Way Forward

Public spaces will form urban structure of the expanding city and their quality will determine to what extent the city is child friendly and inclusive. With predominance of high-rise housing in the coming years children's access to public open spaces is likely to decline, thus affecting the quality and extent of their interaction with the built environment and the outdoor natural world. Children have an inborn impulse to play. Play spurs their health and well-being as well as develops their motor and cognitive skills. Children play anywhere and everywhere, and the kind of play they can indulge in is significantly impacted by the environment they inhabit. For urban environments in cities to become inclusive it needs to offer ample opportunities to children to explore, discover and innovate.

Multifunctional and flexible public spaces that can include children as contributors to creating the public realm in the city will help in making cities inclusive. Opportunities for children to casually hang out in

public spaces in a safe and secure environment will not only make public spaces enjoyable for children but also in the long run build trust and bonding in communities and make public spaces more humane. The gender imbalance so evident in public spaces in Indian cities also needs to be addressed to create a more equitable society. Issues of safety of girl child and women in public spaces are of utmost priority and are directly linked to the gender imbalance which is apparent in public spaces. A safe, secure and nurturing environment in public spaces will go a long way in empowering both the girl child and women giving them more independence.

In the densely built urban areas, 'left-over' spaces are premium spaces for children's play and need to be preserved. Inter-generational interaction and cultural exchange also needs to be facilitated in public spaces. Existing traditional threshold spaces that were a child's first stepping stone into the world of socialization need to be safeguarded and the concept needs to find new expression in contemporary planning and design respecting the critical need for such transition spaces for children. Extant features such as remnant tree groves, ponds, creeks, maidans, local shrines, building relics etc. on the urban periphery and in historic inner core areas need to be incorporated in planning as interesting and diverse play spaces for children promoting physically accessibility and economic inclusiveness.

Children's preference for the natural landscape especially un-curated experiences needs to be kept in mind in city planning. An accessible blue green network will bring children closer to nature and help mitigate the negative impacts of urbanization induced climate change. Nalas and creeks can be reclaimed to become blue greenways with trails connecting the city to the regional landscape of forest preserves and rivers. City level large parks and riverfront development can have ecological learning zones to observe and learn about local flora and fauna. Urban interstitial spaces, so called 'wastelands' can be developed for free play that children could use with their friends. Active engagement of children with public spaces especially the natural landscape will act as positive and constructive force in their growth and development and therefore the community and society at large.

Children as they learn to bike their activity range expands; bike paths and tree-lined footpaths can link home and school to public transit nodes from where teenagers can take the train/bus to safely travel on their own. Facilitating independent mobility in public spaces will go a long way in developing physical, social and creative skills of children. Public spaces accessible to children and teenagers can form the connecting ligament between urban districts separated by roadways with high-speed traffic.

Studies have shown that children are aware of the importance of the built environment, and they need more than just playgrounds to flourish. Opportunities for learning and healthy development both in and out of school need to be prioritized for child-friendly urban planning. The fact that public spaces play a very crucial role in shaping the personalities of young individuals cannot be denied. The biggest challenge now for policy makers, planners and designers is how to respond to this social process. Public space is not just a physical enclosure for activity but rather a dynamic and temporal phenomenon of creation of space and experience through the complex interplay of socio-cultural, political, economic and behavioral processes dependent on a multitude of actors at play in the physical space. Yet there is

no denying the criticality of the role that policy makers, planners and designers can play in facilitating healthy, safe and inclusive spaces for interaction for children.

Rights of children need to be put on centre stage in policy, planning and programs to create children friendly cities. An evidence-based approach needs to be adopted to create children's preferred environments based on an understanding of Indian socio-cultural norms for socializing children. There is so much that the physical environment has to offer to children in terms of playful learning and inter-generational sharing of experience unconsciously shaping their personalities that otherwise cannot be facilitated. Public spaces hold much hope for a sustainable and humane urban living if they can be made inclusive for the most vulnerable ones in society.
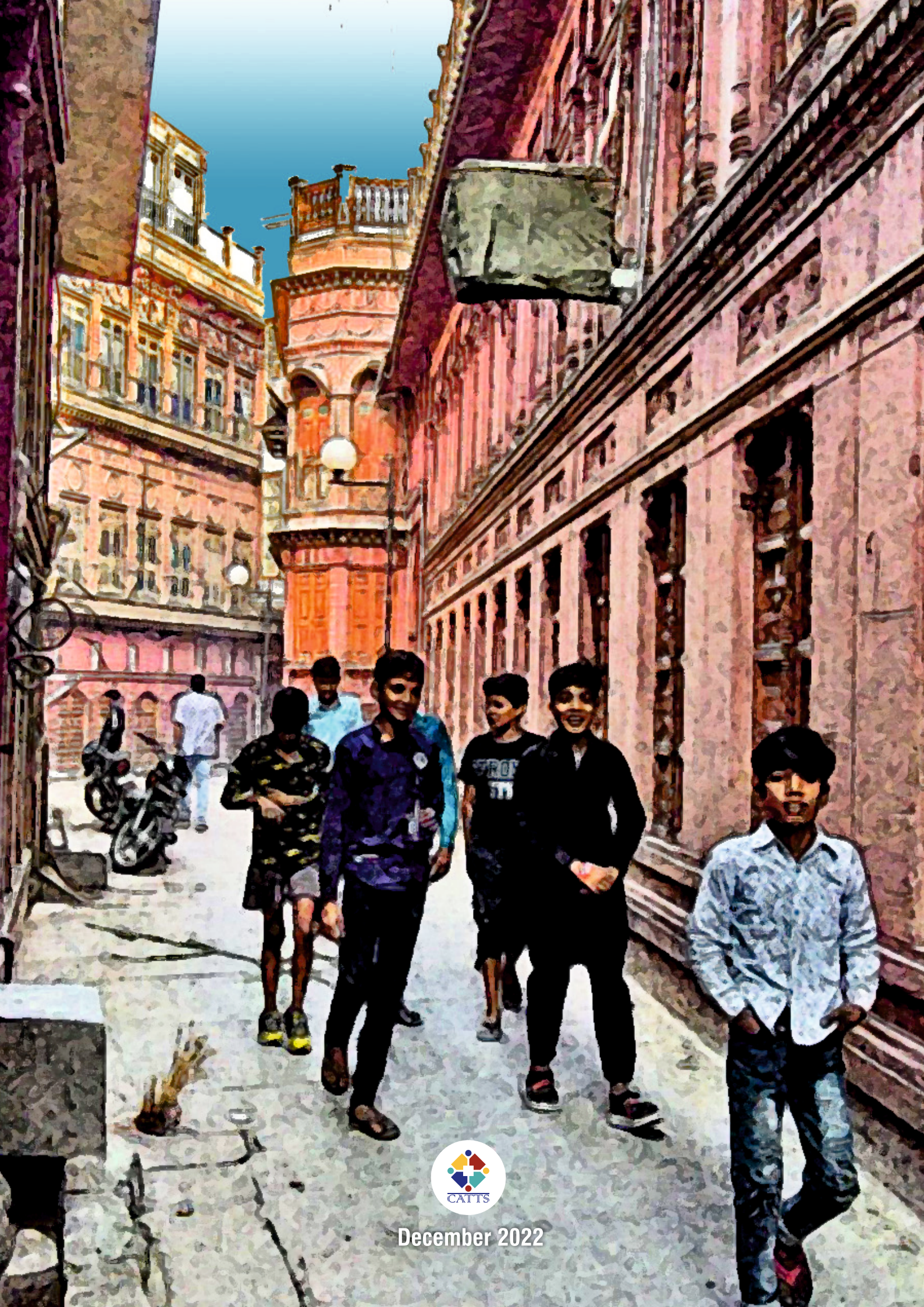
Thus, the City can be Child Friendly!

REFERENCES

Arjuna, A., Ghorpage, A., & Kumar, E. (2021). Tactical urbanism focused on children can help cities adapt to climate change – Early Childhood Matters. Earlychildhoodmatters.online. Retrieved from https://earlychildhoodmatters.online/2021/tactical-urbanism-focused-on-children-can-help-cities-adapt-to-climate-change/.

BBC. (2022). Air quality: Pollution shortening lives by almost 10 years in Delhi, says study. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-61793884.

Bhatt, A. (2019). Creating infra to provide safe commute for children will improve road safety for all. Hindustan Times. https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/creating-infra-to-provide-safe-commute-for-children-will-improve-road-safety-for-all/story-Q8DLAtx5PrMi8TELhSTQCN.html.

Bhatt, A. (2019). The Safer Commute for School Children – Rohtak, Haryana (pp. 4-18). Haryana: Urban Mobility.in. Retrieved from http://urbanmobilityindia.in/Upload/Conference/284af58e-5e2c-41e0-b8b6-d15361d61ddc.pdf

Bhattacharya, A. (2022). These Indian cities are attempting to create child-friendly urban spaces. Cityscope.media. Retrieved from https://www.cityscope.media/post/these-indian-cities-are-attempting-to-create-child-friendly-urban-spaces.

Chatterjee, S, (2006), Children's Friendship with Place: An Exploration of Environmental Child Friendliness of Children's Environments in Cities, Chapter 3.

Chawla. L. (2015). Benefits of Nature Contact for Children. Journal of Planning Literature, 30(4), 433-452.

Gogia IPS, V., Mathur IPS, S., Kumar Pandey ISS, V., Singh ISS, D., Kumar, N., Singh, P., & Kumar, A. (2022). Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (p. 98). National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs. Retrieved from https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/ADSI-2021/ADSI_2021_FULL_REPORT.pdf

Haider, J, Inclusive Design: Planning public urban spaces for children (2007), Municipal Engineer, June 2007, Issue ME2, Pages 83–88.

Hart, R. (1979). Children's Experience of Place. Irvington.

Helleman, G. (2021). Designing child-friendly streets [Blog]. https://urbanspringtime.blogspot.com/2021/06/designing-child-friendly-streets.html.

Kaplan, R. (1992). The psychological benefits of nearby nature. In D. Relf (ed.) The role of horticulture in human well-being and social development (125-133). Timber Press.

Kaplan, R. and S. Kaplan (1989). Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective. Cambridge University Press.

Loebach, J., Little, S., Cox, A., & Eubanks Owens, P. (Eds.). (2020). The Routledge Handbook of Designing Public Spaces for Young People: Processes, Practices and Policies for Youth Inclusion (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429505614

Louv, R. (2005). Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder. Algonquin Books.

Luke, Tak, Samios, Adriazola, N. (2020). What Makes a Child-Friendly City? Redesigning Safer and Healthier Urban Spaces for Young People [Blog]. Retrieved 14 October 2022, from https://thecityfix.com/blog/what-makes-a-child-friendly-city-redesigning-safer-and-healthier-urban-spaces-for-young-people-nikita-luke-rohit-tak-ariadne-samios-claudia-adriazola-steil/.

Lynch, K. (ed.) (1977). Growing Up in Cities: Studies of the Spatial Environment of Adolescence in Cracow, Melbourne, Mexico City, Salta, Toluca, and Warszawa. The MIT Press.

Marcus, C. C. (1992). Environmental Memories. In I. Altman and S. Lowe (eds.) Place Attachment (87-112). Plenum Press.

Marcus, C.C. (2003). Shared Outdoor Space and Community Life. Places, 15(2), 32-41.

Moore, R. C. (1986). Childhood's Domain. Croom Helm.

Nicholson, S. (1972). The Theory of Loose Parts. Studies in Design Education and Craft, 4(2), 5-14.

Oke, M. Kattar, A., Pant, P., and Saraswathi, T.S. (1999). A Profile of Children's Play in Urban India. Childhood, 6(2), 207-219.

O'Neill, A. (2022). India - age distribution 2021 | Statista. Statista. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/271315/age-distribution-in-india/

Piaget, J. and Inhelder, B. (1969). The Psychology of the Child. Translated from French by Helen Weaver. Basic Books.

Psychology, 30(1), 11–22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.07.001

Rabinowitz, Phil, Glinn, Andrea, Implementing Promising Community Intervention, Section 8 - Creating Good Places for Interaction, Chapter 26 - Changing the physical and social environment.

Sinha, A. (1989). Indian Children's Use of the Outdoors. Play Rights, XI (3), 7-11.

Sobel, D. (1990). A Place in the World: Adults' Memories of Childhood in Special Places. Children's Environments Quarterly, 7(4), 5-12.

Southworth, M. (1990). City Learning: Children, Maps, and Transit. Children's Environments Quarterly, 7(2), 35-48.

Stevenson, A. (2007). What We Know About How Urban Design Affects Children and Young People: The Interaction Between Health Outcomes and the Built Environment [Ebook]. Retrieved 27 August 2022. https://www.cph.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/children-and-urban-design.pdf

Storring, Nate, Co-Executive Director - Project for Public Spaces, Four takeaways on public space investment for placemakers [Blog] (2021). Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2021/08/20/four-takeaways-on-public-space-investment-for-placemakers/

Taylor, A.F. and Kuo, F. (2011). Could Exposure to Everyday Green Spaces Help Treat ADHD? Evidence from Children's Play Settings. Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 3(3), 281-303.

The Infant, Toddler and Caregiver Friendly Neighbourhoods Policy Workbook, 2019. Bernard Van Leer Foundation.

Ulrich, R. (1984). View through a Window May Influence Recovery from Surgery. Science 224(4647): 420-421.

Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp.407-423.

Windley, P.G., and Scheidt, R.J. (1980) Person-environment dialectics: Implications for competent functioning in old age, in Poon, L.W. (ed.) Aging in the 1980s: Psychological Issues.