



Butterflies –  
Program with  
Street Children

*“Government should get fields created for children. Parks should be set up by the government that are eco- friendly and safe along with being entertaining for children to play. The state authorities must appoint qualified games teachers in schools for training children in different sports.”* **Children on the eve of a consultation on children’s “Right to Play”** (sic)

# [CONDITIONS, ATTITUDES AND RESOURCES – RIGHT TO PLAY – NEW DELHI]

A study collating information pertaining to state of ‘play’ in the city of Delhi.

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### List of abbreviations

<b>CPWD</b>	<b>Central Public Works Department</b>
<b>DCRC</b>	<b>Delhi Child Rights Club</b>
<b>DDA</b>	<b>Delhi Development Authority</b>
<b>MCD</b>	<b>Municipal Corporation of Delhi</b>
<b>NDMC</b>	<b>New Delhi Municipal Authority</b>
<b>PWD</b>	<b>Public Works Department</b>
<b>RWA</b>	<b>Resident's Welfare Association</b>
<b>UNCRC</b>	<b>United Nation Convention on Rights of the Child</b>
<b>Unicef</b>	<b>United nations children's fund</b>
<b>NCPCR</b>	<b>National commission for protection of child rights</b>



Girls in Action at the Children's Commonwealth Games - 2010

## Executive summary

### Importance of 'Play' and route map of Butterflies Campaign on right to Play

Play has been recognised by educationists as an integral part of education, it has been in many cases accorded importance equal to academics, educationists have also agreed that the benefits of play are most seen in young children, playing stimulates mental, physical, emotional and social development.<sup>1</sup> Butterflies for the last one year has been leading a campaign to promote right to 'play' in Delhi. The campaign started with the children's common wealth games held in the month of February 2010. Following the successful conduct of the games a need was felt to explore children's perception on the state of 'play', a consultation of children spread across the city of Delhi was conducted after the games. During the consultation children stressed on the importance of play and expressed the desire to participate in play and leisure. They also listed many hindrances to play, most listed adults disinterest and lack of infrastructure as the most important hindrances. They were also asked to draft a list of resources which they felt were needed in play grounds. It is disappointing to note that none of the essentials listed by children (Coach, First Aid, Paved Zones, Gym, Pool, swings, slides) are available.

### Children's common wealth Games

"Children's Common Wealth Games- 2010" were conceptualised and planned over a two year span, the need for such games was felt to increase interaction between children, to bring to light shrinking urban spaces for safe play and to highlight children's right to play. The mega sports event was also aimed at civil society members to encourage children playing and to make resources available to them. During the common wealth more than 1000 children from all walks of the society participated. These games included many competitive individual and group games. Ms. Sheila Dikshit (Chief Minister- Delhi) presided over the flag off ceremony, Mr. Vijendra Singh (Olympic Bronze medallist – Boxing) motivated the participants with his inspirational messages during the closing ceremony.<sup>2</sup>

### First round table consultation on right to play

The significance of the event and the joy on the faces of children during the event was evident and it was felt that more must be done for 'play'. The first step in this direction was a consultation with children, during the consultation children expressed their desire to play, defined play, identified games and resources needed to play and spoke of ways in which government, adults could be made responsible for play. Following the consultation with children a round table consultation of eminent educationists, child rights specialists, they identified amongst other issues<sup>3</sup>

- Need to define 'Play'

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<sup>1</sup> Ms. Geeta Menon " Delhi Colloquium on Children's Right to Play"

<sup>2</sup> Report available on the butterflies website

<sup>3</sup> Report available on the butterflies website

- Need to broaden the scope of right to 'Play'
- Need to focus on all children with special emphasis on the underprivileged children and girls
- Integration of play into school curriculum
- Infrastructural facilities for play
- Traditional toys and games
- Assessment of Play
- Play for out of school children
- Public spaces for play
- Improving parental interest in 'play'
- Wide spread awareness of government schemes and project promoting 'play'
- Integration of 'play' into Right to Education Act.

Organising a colloquium on the right to play was mooted by many eminent speakers during the round table discussion. It was also suggested to call for speakers of eminence who could deliver lectures on the state role and perception of play, essence of play and also call upon members from the civil society, development professionals to participate and engage in robust discussions. The concept of a working group emerging from the colloquium was also mooted during the round table discussion.

### **Delhi Colloquium on right to play**

The Delhi colloquium started as a full day seminar where speakers of eminence spoke, following the lectures there was time for an open discussion and at the end of the lectures all of the participants got together and developed a charter on the right to play. A working group was also nominated to take the charter forward. These served as the guidelines for the **Delhi Colloquium on Right to Play**.

During the colloquium Mr. Sikri Secretary, *Ministry of Women and Child Development* (MWCD) echoed the thoughts of everyone in the colloquium and asked the participants "why there was need to discuss right to play?" He mentioned a plethora of reasons varying from encroachment of public places by builder's lobbies to exclusion of children from accessing public spaces. Speaking on the Article 31 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Mr. Sikri mentioned, we are under an obligation as signatories of the CRC to help children play. He also mentioned the National policy for children, 1974 and National charter on children 2004 which had promised suitable arrangements for promotion of 'play'.

Other prominent speakers in the Delhi colloquium such as Mr. Amod Kant Chairperson, *Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights(DCPCR)*, spoke of an interesting case related to a park in Anand Parbat, Delhi handled by the DCPCR. The park was used by children to play field games such as cricket and football. Some adults living in the area took offence and filed a case restraining them from playing. The issue of children being stopped from playing was taken cognizance by the *Ministry of Women and Child Development* and a petition was filed on behalf of the children to *Delhi*

*Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR)*. The unfortunate conclusion of the case was the victory of the adults over the right of children to play.

Mr. S.K Sagar, Chief Technical Advisor, *Ministry of Sports and Physical Education*, spoke of Delhi's reluctance in applying and implementing Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA). Delhi has not identified any villages or Panchayats for implementation of this unique project which is training the largest contingent of community based master trainers in the field of sports and games. PYKKA is training more than 600 master trainers each year who in turn train more than 24,000 krida shrees each year. They have a plan for covering all Panchayats in India by the year 2015.

### **Working group on Right to play**

Following the Delhi Colloquium a working group was constituted and amongst their first recommendations was an objective analysis of the "State of Play" in Delhi. The working group observed a complete lack of information on the state of 'play' in Delhi and recommended that an objective analysis of 'state of play' in Delhi should be carried out. Members of the working group reiterated their commitment to taking the campaign on right to play forward and agreed to meet bi monthly for a status update.

### **Members of the working group on right to play**

Prof. Sudarshan Khanna, Educator, Author, Designer (ex NID)

Dr Amita Govinda, Consultant Early child hood education

Mr Gerry Pinto, Advisor, Butterflies (ex Unicef staff)

Mr Kevin Dsouza , UNICEF

Mr. Indu Prakash, Indo Global Social Service Society

Mr Sagar, Ministry of youth affairs and sports

Ms Rita Panicker, Director - Butterflies

Dr Suman Sachdeva, Development Manager, Children's Development Khazana Project

Dr. Vasanti Raman – Consultant

Ms. Geeta Menon – Consultant

## **Origins of the study**

This study was conceived as a rapid assessment survey of perceptions and conditions of playing areas. The first part of the study involved collection of information on parks, open places and grounds from both primary as well as secondary sources. 100 respondents representing all five zones in Delhi took part in the study. Most respondents were from south Delhi. There was an equal participation of respondents from north and east Delhi.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the study are twofold- the study seeks to look at the existing facilities for play in the city of Delhi and study their accessibility and suitability for children. It recognises a loss in motivation amongst parents and guardians in promoting 'play' and tries to describe popular perceptions on 'play' especially at perceptions of play with respect to children not in schools and girls.

## **Efforts made by the state and an assessment of Delhi's child population and available resources**

It was revealed that although Delhi boasts of 20 per cent green cover and all the civic bodies claim to have contributed in increasing the green cover, there isn't enough space available for children to play. The city is home to more than 29 lakh children of whom about 1,618,420 children are enrolled in government schools and 822,826 in private schools. Records of schools available with us say that more than 4100 schools are functioning in Delhi, making it the metro with highest concentration of schools. More than 400 schools have been given land at concessional or rebated rates.

However, a study conducted by the *National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)* states that as many as 400 schools in Delhi do not have a play grounds in a usable state. What is of special interest to us is the other 3500 schools which do have playgrounds. Gates of most of these schools are closed after school hours and the grounds cannot be accessed by children living in the neighbourhood.

There are more than 15,000 parks in the city maintained by different civic bodies. Citizens complain that most of the parks are in a deplorable condition. The open spaces available are encroached, used for dumping garbage or have become a haunt of illegal activities. By DDA's own admission more than 80% of Delhi population cannot access many of the magnificent sports complexes constructed by them.

## **Responses, perceptions of Delhi's children**

Information on perceptions was collected by children from NGOs in the city of Delhi. More than 55 children responded directly to a pre coded questionnaire. The children also conducted interviews and helped in collection of information from more than 40 adults. All children and adults participating in the survey were members of Delhi Child Rights Club (DCRC).

The respondents were asked to choose from a list of possibilities for good community living. Most of them rated schools, toilets and parks as the most important; the least important aspects were parking place, stores and bus stops. Responding to "Where do children play" most respondents claimed children either played in their homes or on the streets. Children enrolled in schools played

most in school. It was also mentioned that the schools grounds are not accessible for playing once the school is closed in the evenings. This reaffirms our belief that play should be made an integral part of education and schools are best equipped to promote play.

It is also important to note the difference in adult and child responses. More adults claim children play at home and more children claim they play on the streets, bringing to light children's dilemma of adults not understanding them. Children continue to play on the streets while their parents believe that they are home, safe and sound.

In describing play areas (parks, open spaces, streets) more than half of the respondents claim there are no parks within walking distance. About the same percentage claims that the number of parks is insufficient. Only 10% of respondents, most of them coming from east Delhi, claim that parks and open spaces are in abundance. This figure reveals the glaring dearth of play areas in a city where children constitute 45% of the population.

Respondents have noted that most parks are slowly turning into dumping grounds for garbage. They mentioned that parks are used sparingly by children and senior citizen. There are restrictions on their usage by all legitimate users but there seem to be no such restrictions on vendors, hooligans and substance users.

**Some major observations coming from the study include:**

- Feeling of insecurity while using parks and open spaces.
- Girls are not being allowed to play
- Lack of structural facilities for children to play
- Academics given prominence and play not being promoted
- Free play turning into competitive sports.
- Fear of physical injury while using grounds and streets to play
- Most children do not mind sharing their grounds with children from poorer socio economic classes, however, their parents do mind entry of children from poorer sections.

Findings from the study have been included in drafting a charter on "right to Play". The Charter has been adopted by a working group on right to 'play' working to ensure children's right to Play. The Charter shall become the forbearer for action in the coming days.

## Butterflies

**The study has been conducted by Butterflies – Program with Street and Working Children.**

*Butterflies is a registered voluntary organisation working with the street and working children in Delhi since 1989. With the belief in the right of every child to have a full-fledged childhood where s/he has the right to protection, respect, opportunities and participation in his/her growth and development, Butterflies has been abiding by the principle of democracy and children's participation in decision making as part of its programme planning, monitoring and evaluation. It is an example of an adult-facilitated, but very much child-centered initiative, helping street and working children in Delhi to help themselves. Butterflies' approach is characterised by focusing on the needs of the children, allowing the children to define their own priorities and concerns, come up with their own solutions and implement their own programmes.*

*Butterflies runs various programmes for street and working children viz. Education, Health, Children's Development Bank, Alternate Media (comprising radio, newspaper and theatre), Community Kitchen, Childline (24 hour helpline for children in distress: 1098), Alliance Building, Advocacy and Research. Sports and cultural events are also organized regularly for these children.*

*Today, Butterflies has its field based interventions in 12 contact points and 3 night shelters. This way Butterflies reaches out to more than 2000 street and working children on a daily basis. In addition, two of its projects, in partnership with other organizations, are being implemented in the South Asian region: Children's Development Bank and the newspaper-- South Asian Children's Times in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, Srilanka, India (Delhi, Kolkata in West Bengal, Leh in JandK, Chennai in Tamil Nadu, Mujaffarpur in Bihar).*

*Responding to the Tsunami relief and rehabilitation efforts, Butterflies also started a Child Protection Project in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, covering 83 intermediate shelters and villages, and directly working with 70 panchayats (local government at village level) in AandN islands.*

## Background

*“Play not only helps in mental and physical wellbeing of an individual but also erodes the boundaries of caste, colour, religion and gender. Also in the current scenario when addiction to drugs and substance abuse is becoming a matter of grave concern engagement in sports can help to overcome it. Nowadays parental pressure, excessive emphasis on academic performance has diverted children’s attention from play and due to pressure of performance in schools children have involuntarily withdrawn into their shells. The situation has worsened because of the reduction in number of playgrounds and unavailability of play areas and equipments. Children hardly receive any encouragement from the family or the school to play or excel in sports. Now technology and media has also invaded our lives and children remain glued to television and computers and hardly take part in physical sport or activity. Hence there is need to create more space for play and ensure policies and proper facilities to promote sports in schools and communities.”* **Rita Panicker, Children’s Consultation on Right to ‘Play’**

*Butterflies*, since its inception, has been successfully using sport to productively engage with street and working children. Children are regularly engaged in sports such as football, cricket, carom, ludo, chess, badminton at all contact points. Play is also an essential part of *Butterflies*’ system of education and over the years there has been successful inclusion of play in education. Children Like playing and the sports teachers is amongst the most popular teachers in *Butterflies*.

### Children’s consultation on right to play

A consultation held on the 4<sup>th</sup> February at the **Indian Social Institute** looked at issues concerning children’s “Right to Play”. The consultation was between children who were representing 13 NGOs and 2 municipal schools in Delhi. With the help of staff and adults from *Butterflies* and other organisations children over the day explored issues concerning their rights. The participants looked into

1. What is play?
2. Why children should play?
3. What are the benefits of play?
4. What are the different kinds of games children play?
5. And resources required to play these games

For most of the participants Play was **“A physical activity giving fitness and acting as a source of entertainment”**<sup>4</sup> (sic). They further looked into why children should play and came up with: *“Playing is important because human body may become dull and tired by working all the time. For the body to work efficiently it is important to maintain the physical energy that can be obtained by playing”*<sup>5</sup> (sic). Perceptual benefits of playing for children are *“Playing increases the mental, psychological and physical wellbeing of children and it is an important source of entertainment.”*

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<sup>4</sup> Report Children’s consultation on Right to play

<sup>5</sup> Report Children’s consultation on Right to play

When asked to list kinds of games they listed all popular games such as football, kho kho, cricket, carroms, seven stones, marbles, hop scotch, skipping, ludo.

During the second part of the consultation children looked into **obstacles/difficulties/ compulsions that come in the way and prevent children from playing**. Most children had listed

1. Non Cooperative parents
2. Education not promoting sports and games
3. Non availability of play fields
4. Special restrictions on girls
5. Absence of nutritious food and diet supportive of sports
6. Fear of injuries
7. Some children have the responsibility of taking care of their households and do not get any time for playing.

As suggestions to improve the present conditions children opined that interventions can be made both at the state and community level. For example, *the government should keep a check on the rampant construction of religious buildings on the space allotted for playing and ensure proper maintenance of sport complexes. Schools should focus on physical education and appoint qualified coaches to train the students.* An interesting point that came up was that children belonging to socially disadvantaged groups should be supported with facilities and resources so that they can also pursue a career in sports. Children themselves can actively take part in bringing about a change through advocacy and participation in policy planning. Special emphasis was made on encouraging girls to participate in sports. Other measures like community efforts to ensure that the places are not littered and dumped with garbage were also suggested.

Taking some of the comments made by children into consideration, “Children’s Common Wealth Games – 2010” were conducted.

### **Children’s common wealth games – 2010**

With the belief ‘Children are our Common Wealth’ *Butterflies* organized Children’s Common Wealth Games, a 4 day event from 16th to 19th February 2010. When the entire city is getting revamped and ready for the Common Wealth Games the idea behind this was to generate awareness about children’s right to play and the unavailability of space and resources for their recreation. The event also gave an opportunity to the street and working children, deprived of their right to play to take part in various games and sport activities. Children from different organizations and schools came together and exuberantly participated in the games.

The event was modelled on Commonwealth Games 2010 scheduled to be held in October in Delhi. Sports competitions and games were organized along with cultural performances for the opening and closing ceremony. Children from 13 organizations, members of DCRC and 10 schools (private and public) participated in the event. 23 teams of children were formed and each team represented one commonwealth nation during the event. Delhi’s Chief Minister, Ms Sheila Dikshit, was present as the chief guest to inaugurate the games. Mr. Gerry Pinto, Advisor, *Butterflies* also announced the launch of the Children’s Sports Foundation of India (CSFI), which is committed to promoting sports for the all round development of children within the spirit of “Every Child has a Right to Play”.

During these four days several games were conducted. The children were divided into two groups according to their age, 8-12 and 13-16. Games like tug of war, sack race, spoon race, 50 m race were kept for children below 12 years of age. High jump, cricket, football, hurdles race were conducted for the older children.

On the last day winners were awarded with gold, silver and bronze medals. Mr Vijender Singh (Olympic Bronze medallist – Boxing) was the honourable chief guest for the closing ceremony. Sandhya Bajaj, Member of *National Commission for Protection of Child Rights* and Mr. Sudhir Yadav, Joint Commissioner of Police and Mr. Jeff, High Commission, Guyana cheered the winners and gave them the trophies. In the end both the adults and children took an oath with a promise that they would do make every effort to ensure that Children's Right to Play is fulfilled in true terms.

### Round table discussion on Right to 'play'

A round table discussion on 'Right to play' was organized at Butterflies as a precursor to fine-tune the themes for a larger adult consultation. The discussion was chaired by Mr. Gerry Pinto, Prof. Sudarshan Khanna, Dr. Vineeta Kaul, Mr. D.K. Ansal, Dr. Asha Singh, Prof. Vasanthi Raman, Ms. Geeta Menon, Mr. Kevin, Ms Rita Panicker and other members of Butterflies were present as panelists. Mr Pinto stressed upon a pressing need to improve the sport infrastructure and facilities. He further emphasized *"government has begun to show interest in promoting sports via various schemes and has plans to build and revamp the sport infrastructure. However, these plans have to be implemented."* Several topics were discussed during this session and the paucity of space and resources was a major concern expressed by all participants. Adding to this Dr. Kansal and Prof. Khanna pointed out the absence of physical education in the schools and colleges and opined that *"as many as 340 universities in India do not have a formal physical education program"*. There was also a discussion on the need to understand play and distinguish between play, game and sport. Play should not be seen only as a recreational activity but also as an essential tool for overall development of a child.

Dr. Suman (Development Manager, Butterflies)said that *"sports needs to be integrated into school curriculum adding to this many of the participants felt that integration was the only way of ensuring holistic development of children"*. However, it was also noticed that there is a need to pay attention to children who do not go to schools but have the desire to play. Another important suggestion made was that these days the behavior of children is affected by the aggressive nature of toys hence focus should be on promoting cost effective, indigenous toys. All the participants agreed that children should be encouraged both at home and school to actively participate in sport activities for their physical and mental fitness. The session culminated after all the panellists underscored five broad themes to be discussed in the adult consultation:

1. Urban planning and space,
2. Integration of sports into education,
3. Taking traditional resources and games to children,
4. Early childhood development,
5. Play for children not enrolled in schools.

## Delhi colloquium on Right to Play

6th of April saw an assembly of concerned citizen, officials, bureaucrats and members from civil society to deliberate upon children's right to play. The consultation was organized by *Butterflies* and attended by dignitaries such as Mr. D.K. Sikri Secretary (MWCD), Mr. Amod Kanth Chairperson – DCPCR, Mr. V.P Singh SSA Director and others. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Gerry Pinto, Child Rights Advisor – ex -UNICEF

Mr. Sikri set tone for the consultation by asking the audience if there was a need to deliberate upon "The right to play". He recounted his younger days when play was unrestricted and brought numerous benefits in the areas of health, cognition, personality and character building. He also added that change in mindsets and erosion of spaces is responsible for children not being able to play. He expressed great concern over sedentary life style of the present generation. Land grabbing and regulation of public parks by bodies such as RWAs limiting access to play areas was also of serious concern. Closing his address he said that a plethora of policies and frameworks like Art 31 UNCRC, National policy of children 1971, National charter for children 2003, JJ Act, slaying down minimum standards of recreational activity do exist but none of the acts or frameworks are implemented in true spirit.

Echoing Ms. Panickers thoughts Mr. Sikri spoke of the manner in which children were getting addicted to internet and video games, such games have resulted in cases of childhood obesity and India has seen an upswing in Diabetes and over nourishment related illnesses.

Mr. Amod Kanth spoke of adults as guardians of children's right to play. He showed the panel a couple of court rulings which were in contravention to the Art 31 (Children's right to Play) of UNCRC. He elaborated on the role of *Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR)*, which is to ensure that laws related to children are implemented and represents children or any interested part in cases of violation.

There were inputs from other panellists like Ms. Geeta Menon, Mr. S.K. Sagar, Prof Sudarshan Khanna, Prof Vinita Kaul on the need for play in early childhood care. There were also discussions on gender and play.

The consultation on "Children's Right to Play" resulted in the formulation of a charter and constitution of a Working Group. Taking ahead the agenda the first working group meeting was organized on July 25<sup>th</sup> in Delhi wherein eight members participated.<sup>6</sup>

Ms Rita Panicker (Director, Butterflies) suggested a few steps that can be taken in Delhi and NCR region to set the ball rolling and then move on to other states. Firstly, an audit of public places in Delhi should be done to assess the condition of play areas. The audit will look at the parks and playgrounds maintained by the civic agencies and the rules regulating these parks. The objective will be to find out how much play area is available for children to play and whether they are accessible or not. In addition to this, children's groups should be created within RWA so that children can be consulted on issues concerning their neighbourhood. An assessment of physical education

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<sup>6</sup> Report, The First Working Group Meeting Minutes on Children's Right to Play, 2010

programme in schools can also help to find the status of sports and PT teachers. She also suggested that a national consultation on promotion of right to play should be organized after conducting a preliminary study in rural/urban areas to understand what already exists and what more needs to be done.

Next Kevin D'Souza from *UNICEF* shared that last year the govt tried to form "**National Play Field Association**" based on UK model to protect the play areas. The govt had asked state's national play field associations to form their own chapters. However, nothing much has been done in his regard with exception of a few states that have formed chapters and branches. He suggested that the working group should find out if something has been done in Delhi. He also suggested that one or two persons from 15-20 NGOs working with children in Delhi can be trained to become a Sports Development Coach and UNICEF can help to get trainers from Magic Bus. He also shared with everyone that *"with the world Cup in March 2011, an organisation known as Cricket for Change under the International Cricket Council which started Street Cricket 20 wants to launch a sustainable programme in Delhi engaging street children in 20-20 format using tennis balls and soft bats for 20-20 matches."*<sup>7</sup>

Professor Khanna (Ex-NID) supported the idea of conducting a survey of the play areas. He opined that some exemplary positive cases can guide us to come up with solutions. School of Planning and Architecture can also be involved in the study. Dr Amita Govinda (Consultant) emphasized on a need to convince the school authorities to open their school grounds for children to play. Adding to this Ms Rita Panicker said that all the MCD/NDMC and private schools and colleges should be requested to do so.

Indu Prakash, (IGSSS) came up with two important suggestions. She opined that children should be involved in the assessment of public places. Secondly, under the Bhagidari schemes a number of RWAs are maintaining the neighbourhood parks. Hence, the study should also try to find out if these RWAs are giving the children access to these parks or not. Ms Panicker, Mr Pinto and Prof Khanna gave some examples of schools and colleges that allow children to use their ground after school hours. Dr Suman remarked *'it is a question of attitudinal change for school management on this issue of allowing the community and children to use spaces.'*

Mr Sagar from *Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports* informed everyone about the Delhi govt's PYKKA scheme under which 15 crores have been sanctioned for the development of sports facilities like basket ball and tennis courts, swimming pools etc in schools and colleges. Mr Sagar said *"we need to develop a culture of sports for nation building. It inculcates in us the value of sacrifice, teamwork, confidence building and the spirit of cooperation. It also builds healthy mind and body."*

All the members agreed that the space that is available is either unutilized or underutilized. The meeting culminated with some more suggestions like having a competition at regional, state or national level programme.

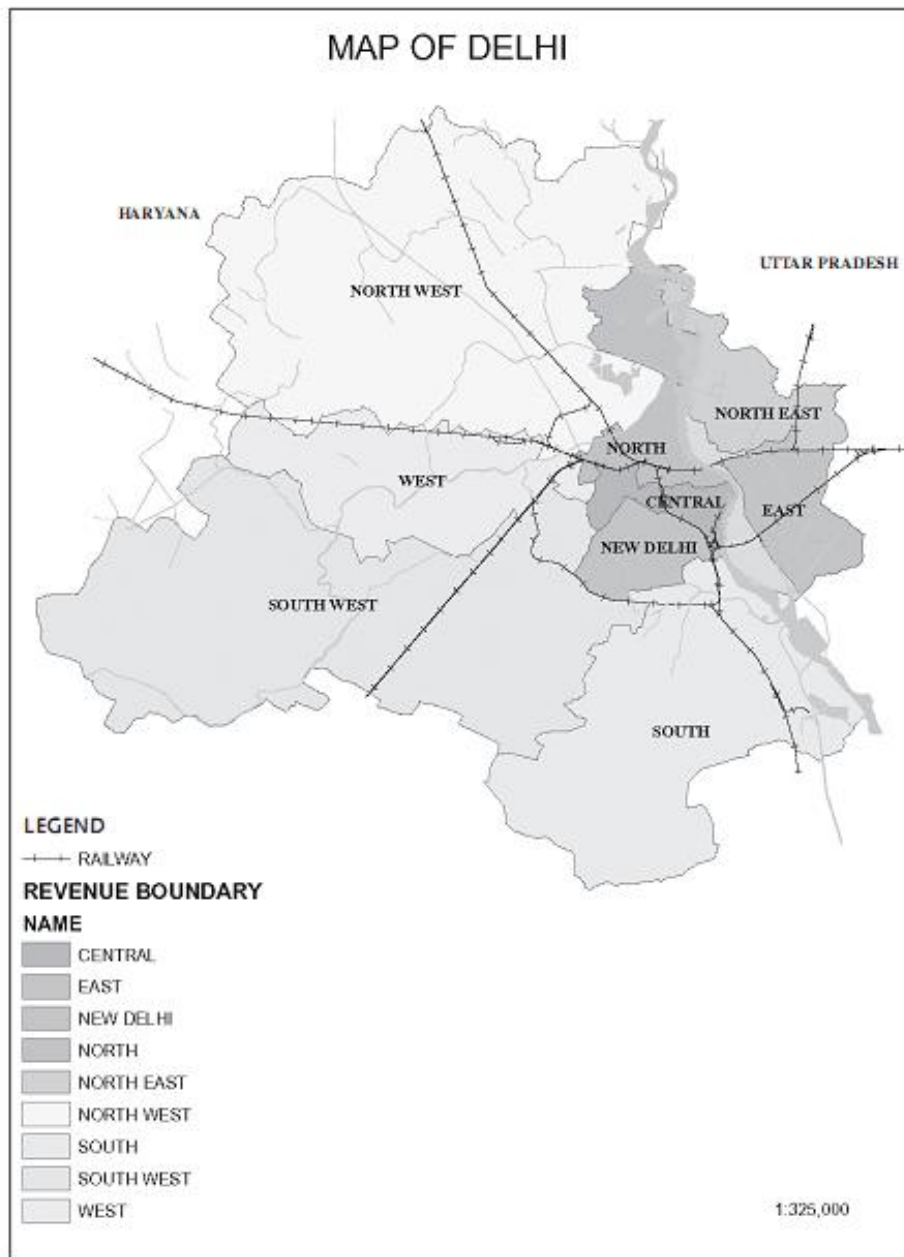
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<sup>7</sup> Report, The First Working Group Meeting Minutes on Children's Right to Play, 2010

## **First working group - Right to 'Play' – Need to collect empirical data on the state of 'play' in Delhi.**

The first working group on right to play met in the month of August. During the meeting the WG deliberated on many of the suggestions received during the consultation and decided to identify and work on few thrust areas. Some such areas are mentioned below.

- Working Group on Children's Right to Play decided to conduct an audit of public spaces available and accessible to children to play in the state of Delhi. The audit will also document positive cases of public and private spaces being used by children who may not necessarily belong to the same neighbourhood. School of Architecture and Planning and Universities as well as children of Delhi Child Rights Club will be involved in the audit.
- Share the findings of the audit with government and other stakeholders.
- Butterflies children can be trained to be sports trainers. Children are best to coach other children. Mr Sagar can facilitate. Children who regularly participate in sports day could be the core group.
- Some advocacy material-comic book can be developed and shared on the importance of Play.



## About Delhi

Delhi, known locally as Dilli, and by the official name National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT), is the largest metropolis by area and the second-largest metropolis by population in India. It is the eighth largest metropolis in the world by population with more than 1.225Crore inhabitants in the territory and with nearly 2.22Crore residents in the National Capital Region urban area (which also includes Noida, Gurgaon, Greater Noida, Faridabad and Ghaziabad). [2] The name Delhi is often also used to include some urban areas near the NCT, as well as to refer to New Delhi, the capital of India, which lies within the metropolis. The NCT is a federally administered union territory. Delhi is home to more than 30 Lakh children in the school going age. Most of these children are not able to exercise their right to play for reasons ranging from non-cooperative parents to lack and restrictions on use of resources.

## Introduction to the Study

### Introduction

*“Sports needs to be integrated into school curriculum, integration of sports into education is the only way of ensuring holistic child development”* Dr. Suman Sachdeva, *Development Manager, Children’s Development Khazana.*

A study titled **“Conditions, attitudes and resources – Right to play”** was conceived to look into the state of play grounds in the city of Delhi. The study also looked into popular perceptions regarding play, designed as a small 10 point closed ended questionnaire. A rapid assessment, 100 respondents from all walks of life including children, adults, and internet participants were involved in the study.

The study while looking at participants perception of a good community and the space provided in such a community for playing, also describes places where children play in the communities, resources present in community playing fields in the localities, who uses the localities and some of their perceptions on Play and state of Play.

The questionnaires were translated into very easy Hindi for children to answer; they were also advised to take a walk in their locality and reflect on the merits and demerits of their locality before answering the questionnaire.

### Brief Methodology

#### Geography

The study is concentrating only in the Metropolis of Delhi. Adjoining places such as Gurgaon, Noida have not been covered in the city.

#### Design

The study is descriptive in nature. It seeks to develop an understanding of the conditions of parks and open spaces in Delhi.

#### Data Collection & Sampling

The study involved analysis of data collected from secondary as well as empirical sources. Most secondary data involved collection of information pertaining to conditions, accessibility and spread of open spaces, parks, and stadium from *Delhi Development Authority (DDA)*, the apex planning and implementation body developing Delhi. Field visits were conducted in offices of DDA and select parks and open spaces of Delhi to collect factual information.

The survey was pre tested and translated into easily understood Hindi to facilitate correct responses from children. Children were also trained to conduct interviews from adult.

Primary information reflecting respondents' impression of the state of open spaces, parks was collected from children who are associated to organisations with membership to DCRC. DCRC has pan Delhi presence and a representative sample was obtained. Children from these organisations collected information from adults through interviews. Most adults interviewed were staff and affiliate members of DCRC.

### Definitions of terms used in the study

**Parks:** A park is a protected area, in its natural or semi-natural state, or planted, and set aside for human recreation and enjoyment, or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats. It may consist of rocks, soil, water, flora and fauna and grass areas.

**Manicured lawns:** A meticulously mowed and maintained lawn.

**Ridge:** A long narrow range of hills or mountains

**Open space:** The unoccupied portion of a lot or building site that is open to the sky and which may or may not contain landscaping, landscaping structures, or garden facilities.

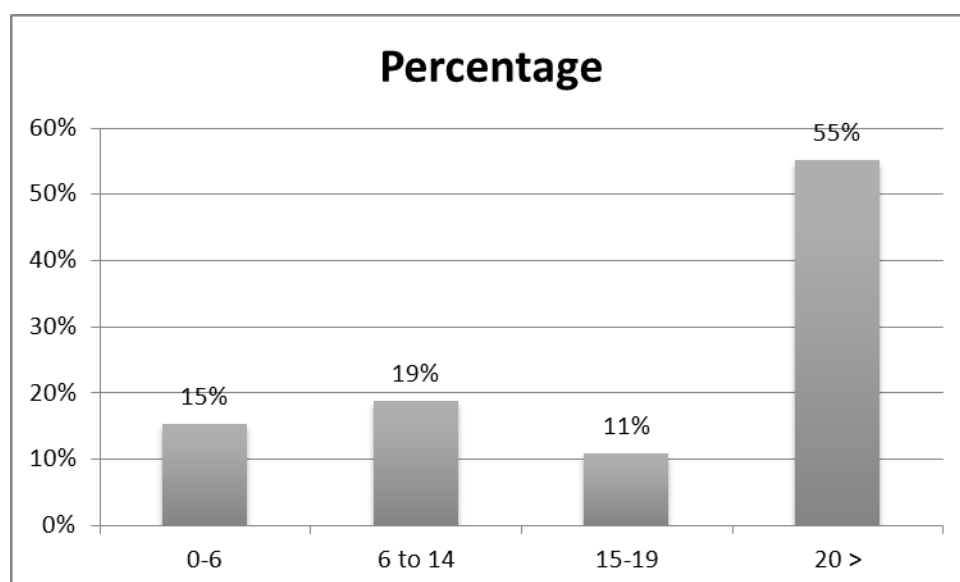
## Section 1: - Parks, open spaces, stadiums and play areas in Delhi

Most information in this section has been collected from the DDA, RWA and horticulture departments of MCD and NDMC. The section gives an overview of the condition of parks, open spaces and juxtaposes this information against children living in Delhi.

### Children in Delhi

Delhi is populated by more than 1.3 crore people. If we take NCR the total population exceeds 2 crores making it the largest urban conglomerate in India.<sup>8</sup> Children (Citizen less than 16 years of age) account for 45% of the population. The graph below illustrates that a sizeable 30% of population is in the school going age. It is this large chunk of children who can benefit most from Play.

#### *Distribution of children in Age groups.*



### Children and schools in Delhi

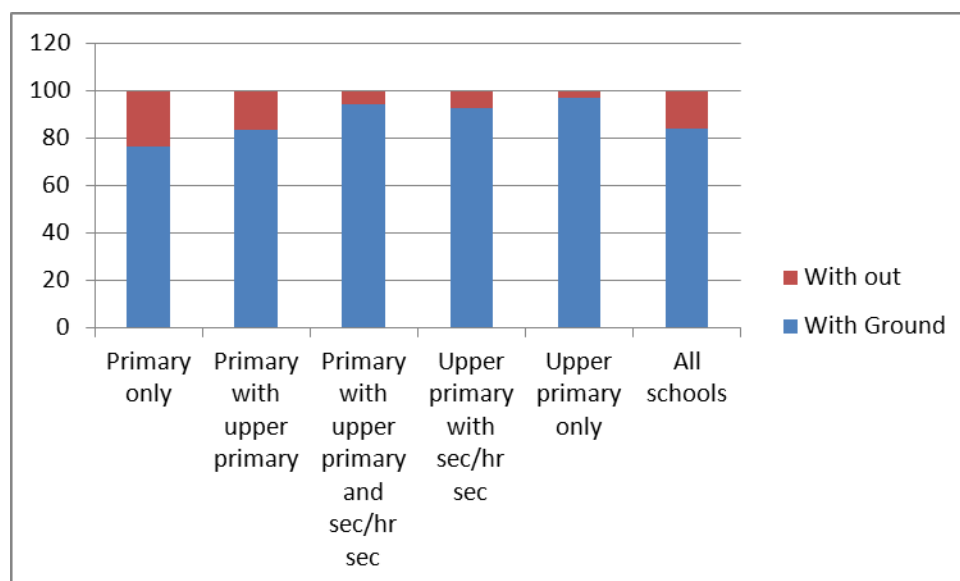
Existing reports state that there are over **4000** schools in Delhi of these **2,982** are government and the rest **1,769** are privately run. There are an estimated **1,618,420** children enrolled in government schools and **822,826** children in private schools.

Schooling is, however, not yet universal. There are an estimated 103,643 out-of-school children in Delhi. A break-up of out-of-school children tells us that 6.4 per cent are in the 6–10 years age group. Of these, 49.5 per cent are girls. Similarly, there are an estimated 83,971 out-of-school children (7 per cent) in the 11–14 years age group. Of these, 48 per cent are girls.<sup>9</sup> It is important to note here that the debate on integration of sports into school curriculum should also consider this large section of children who are out of school and their right to play. More than 14% children in Delhi are not in educational institutions and have no programmed method of sports induction.

<sup>8</sup> Human Development Report – Delhi 2006

<sup>9</sup> Human Development Report – Delhi 2006

### ***Distribution of school playgrounds***

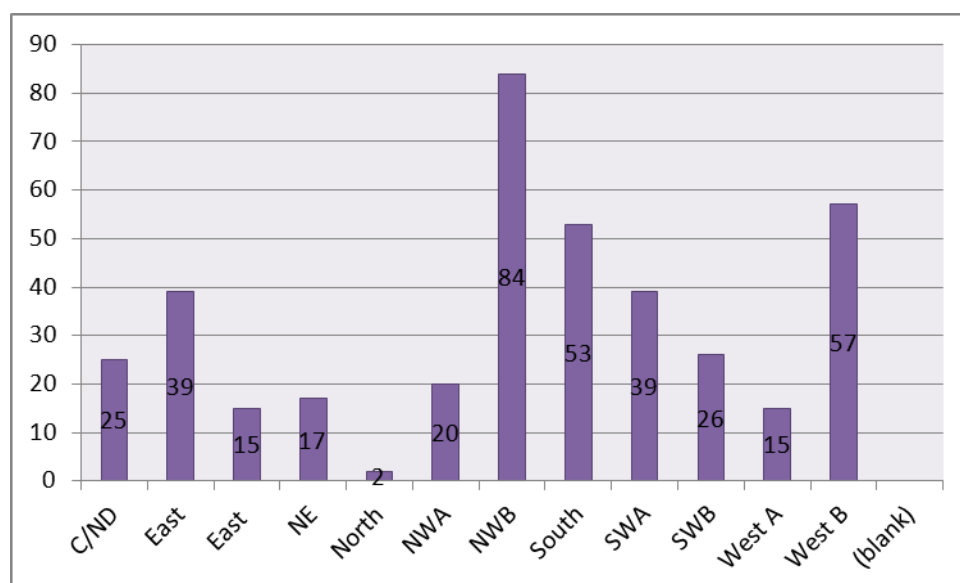


The graph above gives us a distribution of play grounds in the state of Delhi. About 80% schools in Delhi have playgrounds of which the upper primary schools have the highest number of playgrounds. However, what remains to be explored is how many of these are in usable condition at present. Data available from the year 1986 states “Of the 1466 primary schools in Delhi, merely 1130 schools have playgrounds in usable condition”.

### ***Schools which have been granted land by the government***

Delhi government has granted land to many schools. All of these schools do not pay commercial taxes and commercial rents to the government for the land allotted by them. It has been verified during a survey that many of them do not give open access to children after school hours.

### ***Zone wise distribution of schools granted land by the government***



A total of 392 schools which have the potential of reaching out to atleast 4 lakh children have been given land by the government. Children in these schools do enjoy play during definite periods set

aside by the school but it would be very encouraging for the schools to open their doors to children after schools for greater participation of children in 'Play activities'.

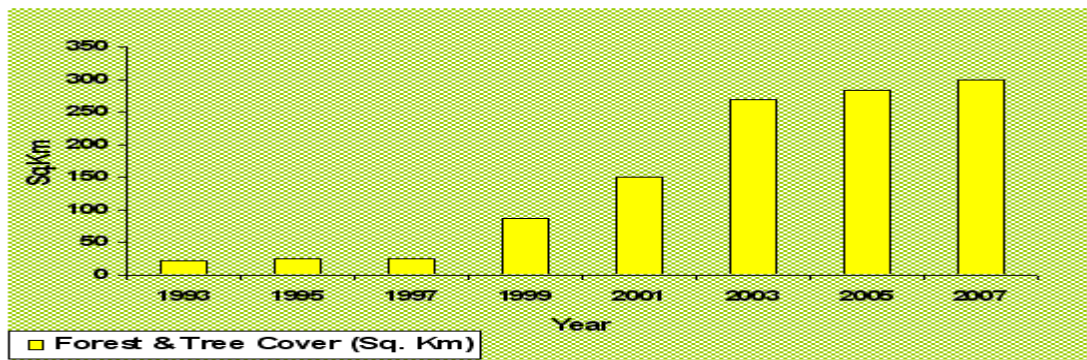
## Area covered in Delhi which can be accessed for 'Play'.

### Green Cover in Delhi

According to *State of Environment Report for Delhi, 2010*, published by Department of Forest and Environment **1804 acres** of land in Delhi is currently under parks and open spaces and there is a proposal for bringing **775 acres** under it to make Delhi greener. As per DDA estimates the green cover in Delhi is **19 percent (8,722 hectares)** of the total area (44,777 hectares). This is slightly lower than the green cover in India, which stands at 19.49%.<sup>10</sup>

Green cover becomes an important area to discuss the issues of right to 'play' as green zones are often used as spaces which can be accessed by one and all without the restrictions of entry fee and membership. These green zones have also been known to inspire fondness for outdoor activity and health right from early ages of child development. Some of the claims made by DDA in this regard are noteworthy.

### Increase in green cover over the years



DDA claims an increase of more than 18% in its green cover from the year 1993. Massive greening operations were conducted from the year 1997 and the results have been showing from the year 2001 onwards.<sup>11</sup>

The total ridge land in Delhi is **7777 ha** in which southern ridge spread over **6200 ha** is the largest. Presently, these areas are managed by various agencies like MCD, DDA, NDMC, PWD, CPWD etc.

### Distribution of Parks in Delhi

There are more than **15000** parks and gardens of which around **14000** are maintained by **Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)** and **1,100** by **New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)**. **Delhi Development Authority (DDA)** has **4 regional parks, 111 district parks, 255 neighbourhood parks, 25 city forests, 26 playgrounds** and **2 bio-diversity parks** and other green areas under its jurisdiction. Below is a classification of parks that exist in Delhi

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/node/22583>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.environment.delhigovt.nic.in/Achievement\\_plantation.asp](http://www.environment.delhigovt.nic.in/Achievement_plantation.asp)

### Types of Parks:

**Neighbourhood parks:** A neighbourhood park is surrounded by residential colonies and provides space and recreation for the immediate neighbourhood in which it is located. There are play areas, walkways and ornamental plants and trees.

**Regional parks:** As mentioned before, the total ridge land of the city is 7777 ha and DDA is gradually converting the ridge area into regional parks with indigenous trees, flora and fauna and aquatic life.

**District Park:** According to DDA a district park in the urban limit has to be 9.7 sq.mt. per person. These parks have lush gardens, picnic huts, musical fountains, playfields and children's parks.

**Ornamental parks:** Ornamental parks are the ones where artificial landscaping and beautification is done and are not usually available for playing. MCD had plans to develop about 500 ornamental parks as a part of Delhi's beautification drive for Commonwealth Games 2010.

**Children's parks:** Children's parks have play areas and swings and slides for children. The famous children's park in Delhi sprawls on a 10 acre land. Along with swings and slides it also has a library, an amphitheater, musical fountain and a nature center.

### Resident Welfare associations

According to the *Delhi Human Development Report 2006* more than 500 parks are maintained by Resident Welfare Associations (RWA) in different colonies of Delhi. The civic agencies have roped in many RWAs for upkeep of the parks and formal agreements have been signed. To oversee the management of parks and gardens in Delhi State Govt. formed a Society namely '**Delhi Parks and Garden Society**'<sup>12</sup> in 2008 which is registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860. The society aims at increasing the green cover of Delhi from **19** per cent to **25** per cent. It started with an initial fund of Rs.3 crore to maintain and refurbish the parks.

Technically the RWA's have no authority in restricting access to the parks. Our survey with children and adults in Delhi has brought to light some RWAs which are restricting access to children. We also have some RWAs which have petitioned to the government of India for protection of a child's right to play and of the MCD's responsibility for maintenance of parks and gardens. The pseudo encroachment of parks and public spaces by RWAs was also highlighted by Mr. D.K Sikri (Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development) during the Delhi Colloquium on "Right to Play".

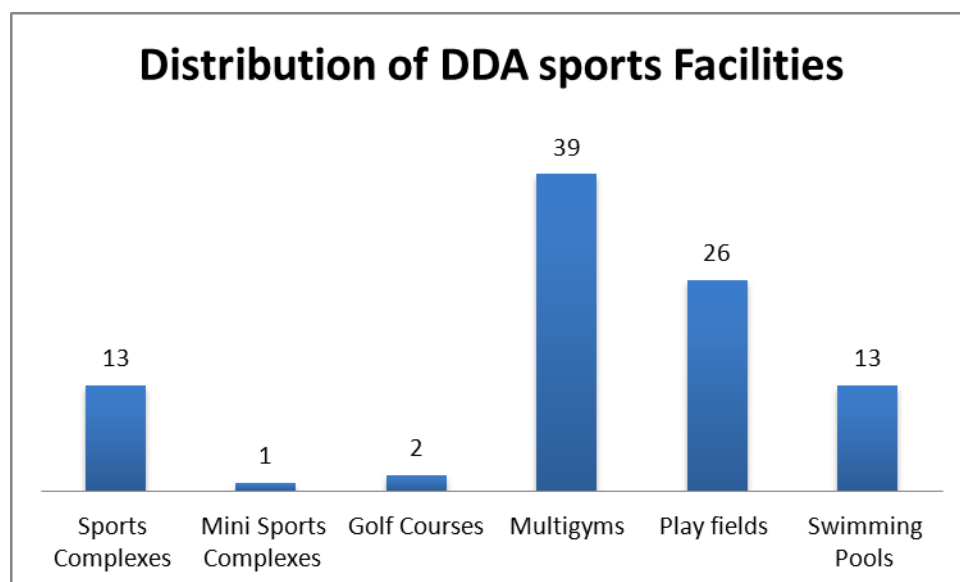
We have also found in our study that RWA in the richer districts of Delhi (Jor Bagh, Defence Colony, Vasant Kunj to name a few) have improved the parks and have made them very child friendly, with slides and swings, however these parks are gated and they have employed private guards to ensure children living only within the block are allowed to play, such actions of the RWA are unethical and encourage creation of artificial social barriers. Parks are public property and such trends are leading to creation class consciousness amongst children are detrimental to national good.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.environment.delhigovt.nic.in/Greening\\_DPGS.asp](http://www.environment.delhigovt.nic.in/Greening_DPGS.asp)

### Facilities for sports maintained by Delhi Development Authority

To provide space for playing and recreation as well as to promote sports in the city the three municipalities are also building and maintaining sports complexes, stadiums, gyms, swimming pools and recreational parks. Below is a table listing the sports infrastructure build by Delhi Development Authority



- Multi Gyms - 26 in green areas, 13 in sports complexes including 2 ladies multigyms
- These are in green areas and are looked after by Horticulture Wing of DDA

### Facilities available in these stadiums

All these complexes have facilities available for tennis, badminton, squash, chess, and basketball billiards/snooker, yoga, taekwondo, horse riding etc. Coaching facilities are also available; **however, according to DDA's own assessment these facilities are not affordable to 70 per cent of the population in Delhi.** Hence, it was decided to create playfields and currently there are 26 play fields under DDA. According to a senior DDA official, *"a playfield is a large plot of land with infrastructure for certain basic sports like cricket, and football among others. Unlike a sports complex, these playfields can be used by anyone, free of charge."*<sup>13</sup> In March 2010, due to shortage of staff DDA also requested MCD to take over the charge for revamping 1500 parks.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/lg-our-athletes-are-suffering-lets-have-more-playfields/634359/2>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/shortstaffed-dda-to-hand-over-upkeep-of-par/590264/>

## Booking and Membership

### *Pay and Play Scheme*

All the complexes are run on '*pay and play*' basis. Schools and colleges can book and avail the facilities at special rates on weekdays. Special discounts are given to government and government aided schools for daily and monthly booking. Senior citizens are also given concession in entry fee and in monthly subscription. For booking a park any organizing committee of the function can book for social, religious, political sports, exhibition purposes. Coaching facilities are available however as it has been mentioned above everyone cannot afford the coaching facilities and membership.

### *Free Access*

All play fields developed by DDA are open for free access, these fields have minimal infrastructure and suited more for field games such as football and cricket.<sup>15</sup>

## Sport promotion schemes and tournaments

DDA organizes different sports events and tournaments at school, state and national level like DDA sports gala, open squash tournament, junior tennis tournament, roller skating championship. It also has sport promotion schemes like DDA Athletics Promotion Scheme and DDA Football Promotion Scheme to nurture the talent of athletes and also provide them a platform to exhibit it.

## New Delhi Municipal Corporation

NDMC is maintaining **1,100 acres** of green area which includes 7 big parks, 5 small gardens, 52 Roundabouts, 223 acres of roadside green strips, 3 nurseries, 4 rose gardens and one 38-acre urban forest. Now, NDMC maintains about 82 parks in residential areas (also in areas like Zor Bagh, Golf link to name a few). Parks are allowed to be used for functions and other activities.

Recently NDMC proposed a budget of **Rs 467.47** lakhs for maintaining the green cover in Delhi. According to senior NDMC official, recently **937 parks**, which were earlier being maintained by Central Public Work Department (CPWD), have been handed over to the council for maintenance.

## Infrastructure built and maintained by NDMC

- Yoga classes in all schools with free supply of yoga attire,
- Sports library at Shivaji Stadium to provide books on various games.

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<sup>15</sup> List of Play fields annexed.

- **Youth centres:** These youth centers provide space and facilities for play, exercise and recreation. The facilities available are weight lifting and exercise equipments, and table tennis, badminton at some places and these can be availed free of cost.
- NDMC also provides gymnasium facilities at Shivaji Stadium and Harijan Basti, Mandir Marg
- NDMC maintains 5 swimming pools in five places including two schools. Talkatora swimming pool with 6,000 seating capacity was constructed for the Asian Games in 1982.
- Community halls with inbuilt sports facilities in important colonies and financial grants to resident welfare associations for holding games.
- According to NDMC it has been maintaining playgrounds in almost all schools, an indoor stadium with modern facilities and a hockey ground.
- Talkatora indoor stadium has the capacity to accommodate 3000 people with facilities for electricity, water, air-conditioning, sound system, conference room/s available. Booking of the stadium is open to any organization/ Govt. department for Tournament/ Sports, functions other than Sports (Non commercial) and commercial programmes (Exhibition, Fashion shows, Cultural programmes). The booking charges vary with the type of event. As given on NDMC's website the charges for booking the stadium for tournament/ Sports is Rs. 5,000/- for first 8 hours and Rs. 800/- per additional hour beyond first 8 hours

### Municipal Corporation of Delhi

At present the horticulture department of Municipal Corporation of Delhi is managing **14636 parks** and gardens and green areas which are spread in the area of 5559.55 acres. Out of 14000 parks 4512 are ornamental parks, and the remaining are ordinary grassy park and children parks. In January 2010 MCD launched 'adopt-a-park' scheme where it intended to involve the RWAs and NGOs in maintenance of parks. Under this scheme it was decided that **Rs 6000 per acre** per month will be given to the RWAs for upkeep of parks. An amount of **Rs 4, 72,817** was given to 17 RWAs and two NGOs for maintenance of 132 parks which were earlier maintained by MCD.<sup>16</sup> MCD also proposed to create Sishu Vatikas for children below the age of 10 in all the municipal wards of Delhi. In 2009 MCD planned to convert the existing parks into Sishu Vatikas or create new ones.<sup>17</sup>

According to MCD, grounds like Ramlila Ground, Gandhi Parade Ground and Ambedkar Stadium under its maintenance are used for football and other activities in Delhi. It is also maintaining parks/green areas attached to various municipal buildings, institutions offices, hospitals community halls, school etc.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.mid-day.com/news/2010/jan/120110-local-park-MCD-RWA.htm>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.hindu.com/2009/05/01/stories/2009050159310300.htm>

## Section 2: - Survey by children on the state of play in Delhi

### Who Participated in the Study?

A total of 100 respondents participated in the study, 39 of them were adults, 49 children and the rest did not specify their age. 99 of the respondents were a part of a development organization and only 1 respondent was not connected to any NGO.<sup>13</sup> Organizations who are members of Delhi Child Rights Club (DCRC) helped in facilitating the survey and data collection. DCRC was formed in 1998 to provide a platform to the children to discuss, debate and create awareness about issues concerning child rights and protection and children's participation in this assumed significance. The organizations that are a part of DCRC are: Angaja Foundation, Anubhav, Ashadeep Foundation, Bal Sahyog, CASP-Delhi, Deepalaya, Delhi Brotherhood Society, Don Bosco Ashalayam, Indian Council for Child Welfare, NavJyoti India Foundation, Salaam Baalak Trust and YWCA. The members and children associated with the organizations also helped in taking pictures of parks in the city which gives a glimpse of the miserable state they are in. When the first Working Group was formed as an outcome of the adult consultation on 'Right to Play' and the first meeting was organized it was decided that an audit of spaces in Delhi will be conducted by DCRC members to assess the space and facilities available in the city for play.

### Which part of Delhi do they represent?

More than 42% of the respondents were from South Delhi, about 20% of the respondents from West Delhi, a similar number of respondents from northern and eastern parts of Delhi. The objective of the study was to assess the availability and condition of parks in the five zones of Delhi and resources available in them. Children as well as adults were considered for the study to map their perception of the parks in their surroundings. The aim was also to find out if these parks are accessible to children for playing; whether girls are encouraged to play and children belonging to poor sections have access to these parks.

Age classification and zones of Delhi have thrown up some interesting data. In two of the Zones (East and West), majority respondents have been adults. This data shall be taken into consideration shall be taken into consideration while analysing information on perceptions.

### Essentials of Community living

This section explored the importance respondents placed on objects which are necessary for community living. This section also looked at ways of ranking citizen's perception of parks and open spaces as essential components of city life. Citizens of Delhi rated schools as the most important part of a community. Dustbins are more important than libraries, parks and well lit roads. Respondents pointed out that due to shortage of dustbins all the garbage is dumped in parks or open spaces. The object of this study parks are placed at a third position in the wish list and open places which most people have actual access to are placed right at the bottom of the table.

Adults and children both think alike and they have placed parks and open spaces in similar locations on their wish list. There is though interesting information in the geographical stratification.

Respondents from all across Delhi seem to want parks; it is interesting to note that all respondents from central Delhi which has the highest per capita distribution of parks think it is essential to have parks.

Attitude of adults towards open spaces is more encouraging. A greater percentage of adults want open spaces than children and this could be attributed to many adults having played in vast open spaces in their childhood.

Item	NA	No	Yes	
School		1	6	93
Dustbins		1	8	91
Parks		1	9	90
Toilet		1	15	84
Library		1	26	73
Well Lit Roads		1	29	70
Community Hall		1	33	66
Open Spaces		1	33	66
Bus Stop		1	34	65
Stores		1	42	57
Parking		1	43	56

### Where do children play?

The respondents in the earlier section having illustrated their wish to have parks have in this section spoken of locations where children play. About 46% of the respondents believe that children play at home and about 56 % of the respondents believe that children play on streets.

A large 94 and 80% of the respondents believe that children are not able to play in either stadiums or grounds dedicated to schools. At the same time more than 93% of the respondents believe that children do play in schools. This reinforces our belief that schools should be promoted as the right mediums of spreading awareness and providing opportunities for play.

	At Home	Play Areas	Schools	School Ground	Stadiums	Streets
NA	1	1	1	1	1	1
No	53	89	6	80	94	43
Yes	46	10	93	19	5	56

### Play areas in residential areas?

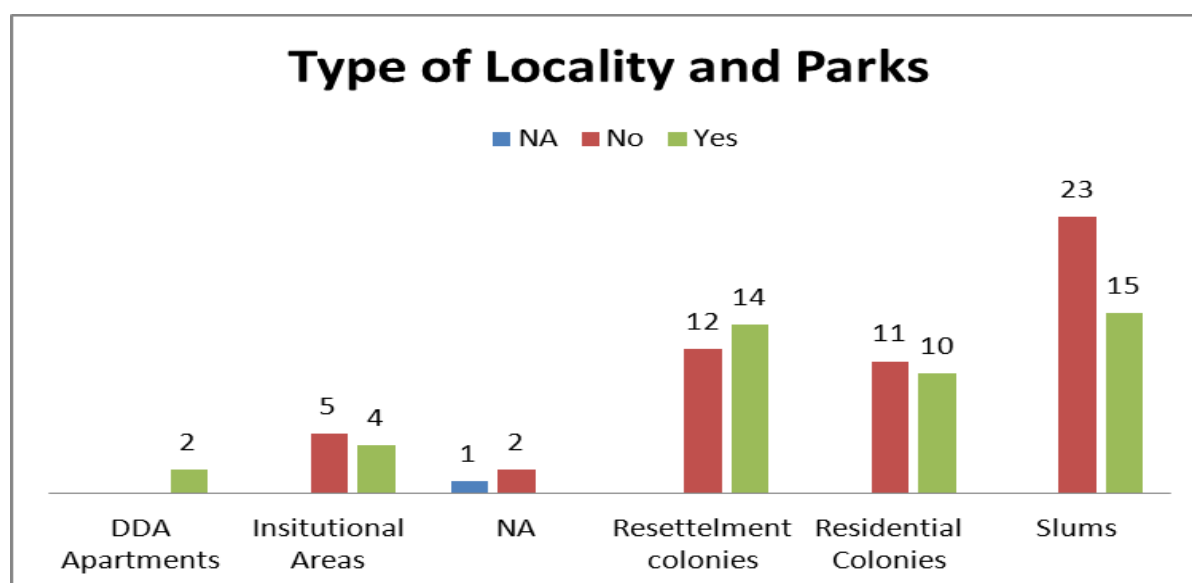
More than 55% of the respondents have reported that they do not have any designated play areas in their residential areas. A similar percentage of respondents have said that play areas are insufficient. Only 11 % of the respondents have mentioned that the play areas are “many”.

Inferring from data collected from websites of municipal corporations which are running Delhi, we get to know that NDMC has the greenest zones. This is followed by MCD and Delhi Cantonment Area. While answering this section most respondents spoke of parks which are accessible to them and not of manicured lawns which are at a great distance from their homes.

	No Play Areas	Insufficient	Many Play grounds
NA	1	1	1
No	55	57	88
Yes	44	42	11
Total	100	100	100

### Type of residence and availability of Parks

The respondents reside in different localities and the graph below gives a glimpse of the number of parks in these colonies. Only 15 respondents belonging to unauthorized/slums said that they have parks in their area whereas 23 respondents said that there are no parks available for children to play. It is evident from this data that most of the children living in slum clusters do not have any designated area to play. Neither do they have access to basic sport facilities. Unavailability of play area is not restricted to unauthorized colonies only. Out of 21 respondents living in residential colonies half of them claimed that they do not have parks. Similarly, out of 26 respondents from resettlement colonies 12 said there are no parks.



### What are available in play areas in their localities?

Before we started with the survey, during the consultation with children, we had asked them about their expectations in a park. They had mentioned all of the items listed below. Most of them really loved swimming pools and could never access them. They also loved the simple swings and having a coach around them.

It is however sad to note that very few of the respondents state that they have access to pools, coaching, first aid and gym equipment in their parks. They however do encounter garbage and adults who are using the facility.

A picture survey undertaken by members of DCRC (Delhi Child Rights Club) indicates the extent to which public parks are used as dumping grounds.

	Coach	First Aid	Garbage	Gym Equipment	More Adults	Paved Zones	Pool	Slides
NA	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
No	86	73	36	74	70	60	86	71
Yes	7	20	57	19	23	33	7	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

### Who uses the facilities the most?

Children, senior citizen and parks go hand in hand. In fact many of our cities have parks meant only for children and the elderly. About half of the respondents have mentioned that the parks are used by children and only 40% of the users are senior citizen. Some of the respondents have reported that the parks are used by troublesome gamblers, hooligans and vendors.

It has also been noted during personal interviews that children are sometimes not allowed access but vendors and all kinds of unwanted social elements are given easy access.

	Adults	CHILDREN	Gamblers	Hooligans	Senior Citizen	Substance Users	Vendors
NA	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
No	68	35	51	65	49	61	74
Yes	20	53	37	23	39	27	14

### Observations of the respondents on safety, security and freedom of access

***“Guards should not restrict children they should be turning addicts away from the parks”*** Mr. Sunil Dutt ,Adult Facilitator, Asha Deep Foundation

As many as 63% of the respondents feel that the parks are not secure. There are instances of street and working children being turned away from parks. Extrapolating from earlier tables it is revealed that all the respondents who reported presence of hooligans and substance users felt that the parks

were not safe. This is an issue of concern as it seen that parents are not encouraging children to play and the issue of security will deter many parents from sending their children especially girls for play.

Linked to the issue of security is the perception respondents have about children from poorer sections of the society playing alongside. Most children have responded saying that they do not mind children from the poorer sections playing alongside. 80% of the respondents do not mind any child playing in their parks. The ones who have expressed reservations are mostly adults from south Delhi.

Many eminent educationists have expressed that Play is considered to be a great mechanism for reducing gender disparity and a great too for confidence building; somehow this logic seems to be lost on citizens of Delhi. 80% of the respondent's state that play amongst girls is not promoted.

About 30% of the respondents feel that Playing destroys peace in the neighbourhood; thankfully less than 10% of the respondents feel that private security guards are needed to regulate access to these parks.

### List of suggestions emerging from the study

1. Dustbins should be provided in the colonies to prevent people from dumping garbage in the parks – Most common suggestion
2. There should be a park within walking distance – Places which do not have parks, Kalkaji Mandir.
3. The parks should be equipped with
  - a. Play Equipment
  - b. Coaches
4. Parks should not be used to park vehicles –East Delhi
5. School play grounds should be made available for children in the evenings
  - a. Free memberships in sports complexes
6. Parks should be green and maintained properly
  - a. Parks destroyed by the Delhi Metro Project should be redeveloped
7. Children especially girls should be made to feel secure
8. Children play with sand and stones. They should have proper material to play with.
9. Children should have a specific time and there should be no hindrance to play.
10. Parents should allow their children to play.

## What is the state of ‘Play’ in Delhi.

Delhi’s Department of Education declares on its website ***“Education holds the key to economic growth, social transformation, modernization and national integration. The National Policy on Education formulated in 1986 and modified in 1992 aims to provide education of a comparable quality up to a given level to all students.”***

Section 5.6 of the national policy speaks of ***“A warm welcoming approach, in which all concerned share solicitude for the welfare of the child, is the best motivation for the child to learn”***. The national policy also lists numerous attainments in physical, mental health which can and will be promoted in the schools. The Delhi govt has also listed numerous sports promotion schemes, sport awards and cash incentives for players. Such high ideals are reflected in each and every communication made by the Delhi government every year, however, one needs to explore whether these plans are implemented in true spirit. Department of Education of Delhi and independent studies confirm the presence of more than 4000 municipal and private schools in Delhi. Of these more than 500 do not have grounds in usable conditions and the rest 3,500 do not open their doors for others to play in. It is also important to note that more than 1 lakh children in Delhi are out of school and there are no facilities for them to play.

PYKKA is a scheme aimed at developing sports infrastructure including trained manpower. The scheme aims at pan India coverage by the year 2015. Infrastructural development to the tune of Rs 1 Lakh per school is also being awarded and one of the pre-conditions for such grants is permission to all children at all times after school hours to play. The state has not asked for any money from the PYKKA scheme, money which can easily provide sport facilities to children.

Most development programs in the field of sports are supported by large numbers. Delhi seems to be doing phenomenally well in terms of provision of grounds, development of green zones, granting grounds to schools. These numbers when verified by children have been telling us an entirely different story. The list of tall achievements claimed by MCD and NDMC include more than 15,000 gardens taken care of by them. They are further promoting more than 100 play fields in Delhi for open access. DDA runs many multi gyms and specialised stadium which have a lot of facilities. DDA has also given land to more than 400 schools at discounted rates. These figures do not cover green zones in residential areas which are governed by Resident welfare associations.

The study looked into subtle encroachment of parks by the RWAs and some other restrictive practices such as employment of guards to prevent access. While there is no legal credence to their actions, they continue to do so and the study has a mention of a case where the RWA has stopped children from playing in a local park through legal intervention. Most RWAs in Delhi belong to middle and high income groups and many children have complained of restrictions on their usage. If public places should have public access a lot of children covered in the study (street children, Rag pickers) should have access to all such public spaces.

Most respondents and members of the working group agree 'play' erodes social barriers and is a good mechanism for social inclusion. Such restrictive practices teach children exclusion and exclusivity from a very young age and are detrimental to national growth.

In a city which claims to have over 15000 parks, most respondents identifying open spaces as an essential requirement of community living, spoke of a lack of such places and more than half of the respondents claimed there were no parks within a mile of their homes. More than half of the respondents do not have a play area in their residential areas. Adding to this information, most respondents mentioned that they either play in their homes or on the streets both of which do not meet the prerequisites of 'holistic' play.

The parks are used by gamblers, hooligans, substance users and vendors while children and senior citizen who are the legitimate users of these parks have limitation on access.

Girls responding to the survey were especially unhappy with the manner in which sports were treated. They mentioned of fears (hooligans, drug users) in accessing play grounds. Greater number of girls played in their homes and felt that schools were not promoting sports amongst them.

The respondents came up with suggestions on ways to improve the conditions of parks and open spaces. All such recommendations have been included in the Charter on '*Right to Play*' and the working group constituted on right to play shall be using the charter as a guideline in helping children realize their right to play.

## Appendix

### Charter on “Right to Play”

*This charter on children’s Right to Play has been developed by concerned members of the civil society to promote children’s “Rights to Play”. It sets out a vision for sports and play, aims to be a catalyst for individuals and organisations to examine, review and improve their provision for children and young people’s play and informal recreation. This charter may serve as a guide and framework to all those involved in developing, revising and implementing play strategies, community plans and children and young people’s plans.*

*Organisations whose services impact on children’s play, such as local authorities, voluntary organisations, and health, education and social service providers, can formally adopt the charter in order to raise awareness on the importance of play.*

### Foundations / premise

*The charter is based on the premise that the right to play is essential, its roots are cross cutting and encompasses Freedom to play, Attitudinal change towards play and Gender sensitivity*

*The charter additionally recognises that Schools are the best agents for promotion of play, Schools need to have dedicated periods for play and Play in schools must be augmented through usage of low cost sports equipment and support from community centers.*

### Intent / outcome

*This charter brings to the notice of all competent authorities, a child’s Right to Play, emphasizing the need to include play as an integral part of education, create safe places for children to play, create opportunities of playing for out of school children by allowing public access to all public places and promote traditional games and play equipment.*

### Intended goals and objectives

Statements below reflect goals and points of actions for all actors in ensuring children’s right to play.

1. **The charter demands recognition to Play in Early Childhood Development** (both at home, community and in pre schools)
  - a. Document the importance of play in early childhood development
  - b. Build capacity of stakeholders and demonstrate the strategy of ‘using play as the medium’
  - c. Develop a play friendly house to enable a child to play freely anytime and without any hesitation.
  - d. Include indoor, outdoor and free play in daily activities for children.

- e. Make the play material readily available In school as well at home to support free accessibility and independence to child in accessing play material.
- f. Consent the child freedom for creativity after their play time, wherein they express their experiences from play activities, through creative forms of expressions such as drawing or story-telling
- g. Introduce value education through play for better understanding and absorption
- h. Include play way method for daily transaction of curriculum for 0-6 yr age group-like teaching alphabets, numbers, etc.
- i. Provide children the freedom to play , where the teacher acts as a participant or non participant observer, and not a dictator who creates boundaries
- j. Organise different play corners within the class premises to allow the child to decide where and what to play, and later dialoguing with them on their experience.

**2. The charter believes in creation and modification to Urban spaces for better access to play areas.**

- a. The Urban development planners and policy makers should consider children as important stakeholders in the urban development plans. Providing and promoting playgrounds and open spaces where children can play safely should be one of the key non-negotiable guiding principles of urban planning.
- b. A public audit of all public spaces and their usage must be conducted, and the results should be made public. Such Audits must be an annual feature and improvements tracked, periodically.
- c. Public access must be given to all public places- gardens, sports facilities developed for the Common Wealth Games 2010 and parks made inaccessible by RWA's and other regulators. Creation of children's group in RWA must be made compulsory for integrating interest of children in RWA's agenda. Identify volunteers from the community, certain sports person to contribute in the whole effort of developing right to play for children
- d. Anganwadi's and primary schools in communities need to be strengthened with play equipment, and their functionaries trained to integrate play and sports in their programme schedules and curriculum.
- e. All children, young people and differently abled, whatever their age, culture, ethnicity or social and economic background, in school or out- of- school need time and space to play freely and confidently with their peers, free of charge, indoors and outdoors, somewhere they feel safe. Play provision should actively include the widest range of children and seek to engage with those from minority groups. Special schools nurturing young talent in the area of sports needs to be developed.

- f. Playgrounds and open spaces need to be accessible with ramps / wide gates so that wheel chairs users are able to use them easily. In addition, there can be tactile paths to support children with visual impairments in their mobility.

**3. The charter stresses on integration of sports into Education**

- a. The contribution of sports in development of a child needs to be identified and play should become an integral part of a child's education.
- b. Each school should have at least one teacher trained in psycho motor development. The physical education teacher must be given same grade and status as any other teacher in the school.
- c. School authorities and other specialists must be involved in the training of sports teacher.
- d. Each child must have access to safe playing areas in or around the school for at least 5 hours in a week.
- e. The PTA should have dedicated time for discussion on play activities in the school.
- f. Mechanisms for standardized evaluation of sports activity for children should be developed and they should be used in final assessment of children.
- g. The so-tagged Gender specific games should be promoted for both genders.

**4. The charter believes in promotion of traditional resources and games among children.**

- a. Creative and play resource centre to be developed that has examples, kits, raw materials for children (State Govt.)
- b. Museum like Doll museum etc. should be promoted (State govt. should also promote their local traditional games)
- c. Participatory approach: discussions with children, children talking to parents/ grandparents and coming up with traditional ideas; documentation
- d. Annual exhibitions of traditional games and awards to children must be promoted
- e. Linking with arts and design institutions to share examples of traditional games
- f. Video documentaries on play as important tool for development must be taken up.

**5. Play for out of school children**

- a. Play and sports for all children, particularly for those out of school, is a healthy engagement for physical and mental health and keeps them away from “ at risk” behaviour related to drug addiction HIV, etc. Sports or the opportunity to play is an incentive for children and can be leveraged to attract children to be a part of education programs.

- b. Public spaces (school playgrounds, school premises- government and private, dharamshalas, parks, flyovers, and any open or closed space) should be accessible to children and they should be allowed to play. Supervised community based sports activities need to be developed in community halls.
- c. Multiple use of existing centres/ building, under education department and various other departments (ITI's, etc.) unutilized government buildings for recreation/play for children.
- d. Develop master trainers.

## Tool for data collection

### **A SURVEY OF PLAY GROUNDS AND OPEN PUBLIC SPACES AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN TO PLAY**

Which Part of Delhi do you belong to (North, South, East, West, Central)

1. What best describes the area you live in ( Residential gated colony, DDA Apartment complex, Institutional areas, Resettlement colonies, Unauthorized colony (Jhuggi), others)

2. Is there a significant number of children and adolescents in your colony? Roughly what percentage would be children and adolescents in your neighborhood?

30 – 40 percent

3. Mark the following which you feel are very essential for good community living

- a. Parking place,
- b. Reading room and library
- c. Community Hall,
- d. School, Hospital,
- e. Grocery stores,
- f. Parks,
- g. Bus Stop,
- h. Public Toilet,
- i. Well Lit roads,
- j. Open public spaces
- k. Dustbins,
- l. Police station

4. Where do children play in you locality (Multiple selection)

- a. At home
- b. On the streets
- c. In specific play areas
- d. In parks
- e. Open public spaces
- f. Neighborhood School ground
- g. Designated Play grounds
- h. Neighborhood stadium

5. Select from the following what best describes play areas in your locality

- a. There are no play areas
- b. There are few and insufficient play areas
- c. There are many play areas

6. In the play areas what might one come across in your locality (Multiple selection)

- a. Gym equipment
- b. Slides and swings
- c. Open areas for cricket, football and other field games
- d. Paved zones for walkers
- e. A first aid kit for wounded children
- f. Swimming pool
- g. A Coach / Sports instructor
- h. Garbage and dirt
- i. More adults using the play areas.

7. Who uses the park facilities the most (Multiple selection)

- a. Children
- b. Adults
- c. Senior citizens
- d. Vendors
- e. Hooligans
- f. Substance users
- g. gamblers
- h. Any other Specify.....

8. Select from the below

- a. Children are safe in our playing areas
- b. Children who do not belong to the society/colony are not barred from playing in the neighborhood parks
- c. Girls are encouraged to play.

- d. Children from adjoining slums are not allowed access to the parks.
- e. The parks have private security guards to keep non resident children of the neighborhood from accessing the park.
- f. There is organized Games / Events
- g. There are common yoga / exercise sessions
- h. We do not mind our children mixing with street and slum children
- i. Our parks would not be safe with street and slum children playing in them
- j. Children have special timings for play
- k. Games which destroy peace in the neighborhood are not allowed
- l. A larger portion of the park is kept for adult/senior citizen use.

10. What would you like to be improved/established in your neighborhood which would give children space and security to play?

### Pictures of Parks



Pictures of playing fields in Seema Puri,



Photographs of Parks,



Photographs of Parks –

## List of Play fields

There are under the Horticulture Deptt. of DDA	
Locations	Area in Hectare
Hauz Khas	3.64
Masjid Moth	2.31
Kalkaji (Extension) A-14	1.41
Kalkaji, opposite (Nehru Place)	4.10
Ashok Vihar near Railway Line	3.72
Nand Nagri	5.25
Gulabi Bagh Distt. Park	15.00
Ismail Khan Park Distt. Park	6.40
Satya Park Nariana	13.20
Vijay Mandal Distt. Park	10.60
Rohini Sector-I	1.78
Rohini Sector-V	1.55
Rohini Sector-VII	1.55
Rohini Sector- XVIII	1.50
Vasant Kunj 'B' Block	2.61
Mini Stadium at Badarpur	0.96
Wrestling Ground at Badarpur	0.76
Cooperative Society area Mandawali Fazalpur - I	1.53
Cooperative Society area Mandawali Fazalpur -II (near Rajdhani Nikunj)	1.53
Cooperative Society area Mandawali Fazalpur-III	1.08
Vikaspuri 'C' Block	2.22
Janakpuri Park near Posangipur	3.00
Sunder Vihar G-17	3.269
Hastsal Distt. Park	1.937
Partap Nagar (Hari Nagar)	3.20
Kanti Nagar	2.00

### List of organisations participating in the study

Angaja Foundation,  
Anubhav,  
Ashadeep Foundation,  
Bal Sahyog,  
Butterflies,  
CASP-Delhi,  
Deepalaya,  
Delhi Brotherhood Society,  
Don Bosco Ashalayam,  
Indian Council for Child Welfare,  
NavJyoti India Foundation,  
Salaam Baalak Trust and YWCA-Delhi

### List of members of the 'Working Group'

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## List of Facilitators

Mr. Gerry Pinto and Mrs. Rita Panicker(Conceptualization), Mr. K.K. Tripathy and Mr. Zaved (Networking, Development of questionnaire, Support), Ms. Sriti (Coordination, Compilation of Data). Mr. Shashi (Data Analysis).

**Table of Delhi's Population with respect to age groups**

District	Population	0-6	6 to 14	15-19	20+
South	2,258,367	338755.1	429089.7	248420.4	1242102
South West	1,749,492	262423.8	332403.5	192444.1	962220.6
North	779,788	116968.2	148159.7	85776.68	428883.4
North East	1,763,712	264556.8	335105.3	194008.3	970041.6
North West	2,847,395	427109.3	541005.1	313213.5	1566067
East	1,448,770	217315.5	275266.3	159364.7	796823.5
Central	644,005	96600.75	122361	70840.55	354202.8
New Delhi	171,806	25770.9	32643.14	18898.66	94493.3
West	2,119,641	317946.2	402731.8	233160.5	1165803