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## Fostering A Child-Centered Approach

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### Abstract

The concept of the neighbourhood, with the elementary school at its core, plays a critical role in shaping children's perception of their surroundings. This research explores the built environment of neighbourhoods from a child's perspective, focusing on how space and scale influence children's daily lives and overall well-being. By adopting the child-friendly city model, the study addresses key questions: What are the primary issues facing children in urban environments? How does the built environment impact their activities? And how can children's perceptions contribute to the creation of more inclusive, accessible spaces for all?

Through a review of child-friendly city concepts, this research highlights various approaches to understanding and implementing this framework in contemporary urban contexts. Drawing from literature and case studies, the study identifies critical parameters—such as safety, green spaces, accessibility, playfulness, and inclusivity—that contribute to a child-friendly environment. The thesis concludes that fostering a child centered approach within neighbourhoods, with an emphasis on the evolving needs of young children, is essential in promoting the development of child-friendly cities. By prioritizing children's needs, we can create urban spaces that nurture both individual and community well-being.

**Keywords:** Child-Friendly City, Children Safety, Safe school zone, Safe, Playful, Green, Accessible, Inclusive, Built Environment

### Introduction

Concept of neighbourhood is derived from the school (Elementary school) as the core and how the perception of neighbourhood changes with perspective of school. This research aims to study the built environment of children as an approachable "neighbourhood", with a significant angle shaping children's lives within the space. Exploring the child-friendly cities as an approach in building the neighbourhood the aim of the research follows around the questions, what led to the issues of children, how the built environment effects the children's daily activities and how child's perception helps to build an inclusive environment for everyone. children are the future hence there is a need to consider them as an important character of the city. Broadly focusing on the children, they are majorly found at home, school, and playgrounds. Children spend almost 6 hour a day in school, also major time is spent struggling on the way to school as these areas are not being designed with the consideration of them. Which lead to state the research questions:

## Literature Review

### Barriers need to be overcome to make Indian cities child friendly

An Urban Space is the foundation for creating a better place for children and families. Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch theory gives a positive impact on city planning. However, there is no proper assessment of a positive impact on children. To design a city around kids means that it is not just about building more playgrounds, but it is critical that such spaces are needed. Children fall under the vulnerable group of smaller humans towards vehicle collision due to their inability to judge speed and evaluation of traffic danger.

Children activities need is that each different age group of children need different activities to be provided. At the ages 3-5, kids usually play to explore the senses and creativity and the imagination, opportunities to awaken the curiosity of any toddler and support early development and skills. Children develop the abilities and understanding of concepts to grow once they are grown up to go to the school environment. Hence, they engage more in physical activities and may progress at different rates here.

### Effects of different Environment on children

#### 1. Child with his mother moving in the Neighbourhood.

A day out with mother walking on the street, A boy observed lots of cars (traffic) moving on the road. He also faced a lot of black smoke moving in front of him. A full speed public bus came in front of him. They got into the bus but while getting in he lost his shoes. He says that, "Big people never see the problem of small ones."

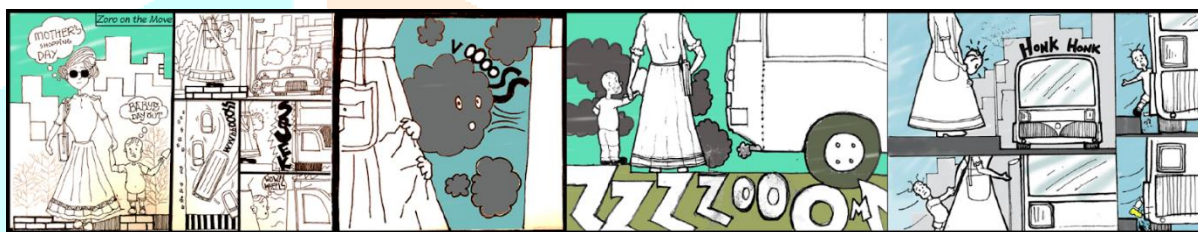


Figure 1: Child Moving in the Neighbourhood (Source: NIUA- Child in the City)

#### 2. Child moving to the park in the Neighbourhood.

One day a child thought of going to the park. There was only one playground in the city where he lives, which is a little far from his residence. Such places (Playgrounds) cannot be visited all alone. Therefore, a child has to wait until their parents get free from their busy schedule and ride them towards that playground. As this is the only play ground in the city, all ages of kids came to play over there. However, the elders don't allow younger kids to play. Here the younger child asked, "If this is the playground, why can't we play here? Why is there no place which is designated just for children like me?"

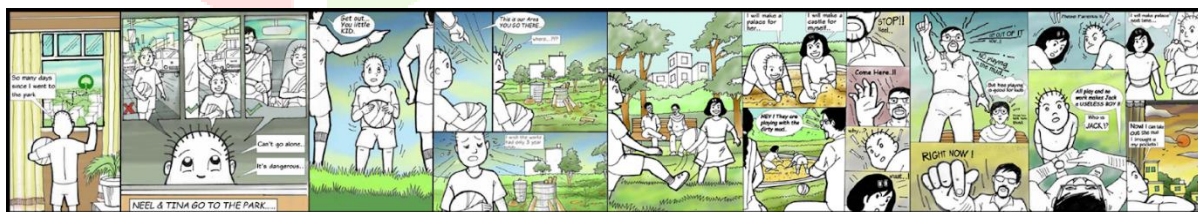


Figure 2: Child Moving to the park in the Neighbourhood (Source: NIUA- Child in the City)

#### 3. Children in their own School

Some younger children go to school by walking with their parents. It is one of the experiences where they can learn about their neighbourhood or sometimes about how the outer world behaves. Such children cannot go to school all alone, due to school precincts not designed as children friendly. Generally, they face issues such as traffic congestion just outside the school, all necessary equipment is designed with the consideration of adults. Here the younger child asked, "If the school is in our area, why is it not as per our needs?"



Figure 3: Child in the School (Source: NIUA- Child in the City)

It is being observed that children felt lots of issues as the space is not designed with the consideration of them. A study of NIUA stated that if the spaces are designed for children, then they are designed for everyone. Yes, there is the need to create such spaces.

### Key factors for making the neighbourhoods or cities child friendly

The concept set by Clarence Perry in 1900 stated that Neighbourhood which need to make the people socialize with one and another. But if we need an independent neighbourhood the initial start or the core should be the elementary school.

The concept could shape the neighbourhood to initiate child friendly spaces which will help children to have independent mobility to the school, parks and other destinations within the defined area.

Child-friendly city (CFC) is a city, town, community or any system of local governance committed to improving the lives of children it is a city, town or community where children are protected from exploitation, violence and abuse. They give an ethical and ideological dimension to the convention to the neighbourhood

**Child Friendly City** Children are disregarded in urban planning and design. It's assessed that up to 500 children die daily in road crashes around the world. Whether on the streets or in public spaces, feeling unsafe or uncomfortable in outdoor spaces also discourages children from physical exercise. "Child-friendly" city It is more than providing playgrounds. It is being observed that child friendly spaces could help, not only for the physical safety but also enhance the living condition of the children through the environmental space that is not designed with the consideration of them

Children under many circumstances meet to be in the crime. The basis of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is that if an area is properly designed and use effectively it can reduce the incidence and fear of crime in the built environment. which can lead to improve the quality of life of any individual. The approach of addressing CPTED is not only concerned for the by implementing visually affronting security or target hardening measures for today but also considering the need of future. This theory helps to promotes high quality and visually pleasing solutions which are corresponding to intent of the thesis in responses that aim to enhance the child friendly space with safety in the neighbourhood.

The concept of "eyes on the street" is visually surveillance which is created by the activity taking place in city streets that keeps the movement and security of the street intact. The theory stated that where there is a crowd of people, our streets are safer to use. It helps to assist and protect form danger someone is in need. Also, it states that people present in a public space such as city streets, it helps to strengthens the space and lead to social interaction. Considering through the lens of children it led to focus on mixed-use neighbourhoods where there are a range of activities taking place on the street. People considering the children avoid the use of streets/ public space that are unsafe or unused, however, there is a need to bring in people and make it safe rather than avoiding them.

### Usage of public space be applied in the city while contributing to a vibrant and attractive environment for children

The first case is based on the example of the school which focuses on the safety criteria with the background of current situation, future upcoming and principle set by UNICEF and WRI to encourage safe school zones. Safe School Zone provided at the school area using signages, road markings, providing areas for walking and waiting, including pick-up and drop-off zones, child-friendly spaces with playful elements and a pleasant pedestrian crossing. The pilot project using low-cost material will considering the feedback from the neighbourhood, before making it permanent on-ground.

The second case is based on the example of school area as the which focuses on the safety criteria with the context the important interchanging nodes of current situation, future upcoming and principle to encourage safe school zones. The interactive program to improve some of the hazardous road conditions they observe



around the school. Installation of 3M's road safety elements such as diamond grade fluorescent reflective signages, raised pavement markers or road studs, flexible median markers and reflective bollards for pavements.

The case is based on the theory of neighbourhood unit by Clarence Perry which set the school as the community center of the neighbourhood which helps to develop the neighbourhood keeping the interest of the children as the first priority. Within higher-density neighbourhoods, the school provides an important asset for community use both from a spatial and a social perspective. Other areas within the school, these shared amenities have been located near the school entry to enable easy access by the community after-hours and allow for the more private areas of the school to remain secure. Hence the school has become the heart of the community, providing children with a sense of pride and belonging. Residents feel a shared sense of safety of the children in the school environment as a community asset.

Considering the school as the heart of the neighbourhood, the addition of UNICEF, WRI and NIUA of child friendly cities as the catalyst which will enhance the safety of the children. Also, eyes on street theory will make it a Safe School Neighbourhood.

## Research Methodology

This research aims to study the built environment of children as an approachable "neighbourhood", with a significant angle shaping children's lives considering the space and scale of children. Qualitative and quantitative research approach is being followed.

This research commences with a comparative study of the literature on children in the neighbourhood. This, extensive study of literature on the framework of child-friendly approach provide a base for understanding the relationship between children and neighbourhood. The literature will help to perceive the quality of the neighbourhood that shapes the narrative of children's experiences in the city. This will be achieved by analysing and exploring the articles of UNICEF, WRI, NIUA and Other articles in the context of children's well-being.

The literature is further supported by the case studies, to demonstrate the impact of interventions and applications of child-friendly approaches in the city. These case studies are selected on criteria that have been used in the development of the intervention.

The Parameter studied in literature and case studies, proceeds to examine the framework for the neighbourhood acting as a driver in the lives and well-being of children, drawing information for the condition of children's physical environment. To achieve the objectives, the research is structured accordingly to gather an actual understanding of the children's perception of the city which would create a great impact to develop it as a child-friendly approach.

The research concludes that the interrelation between Children to the School Neighbourhood, varying the needs of the younger kids which lead to the creation of Child-Friendly Cities.

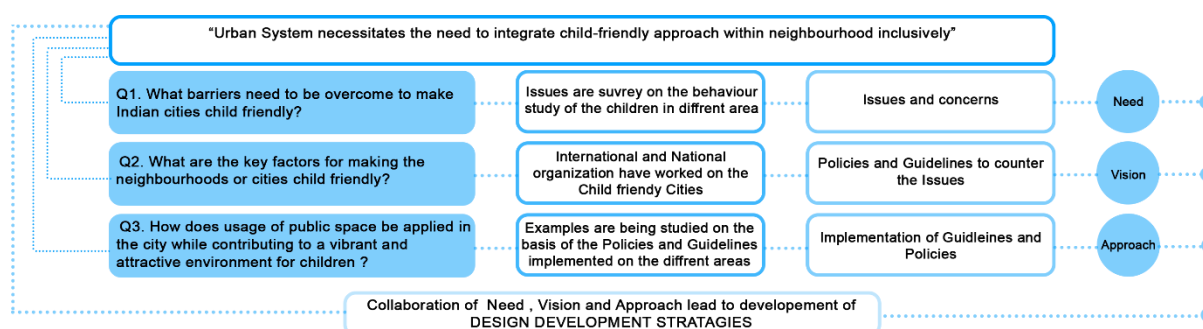


Figure 4: Research Methodology (Source: Author)

## Conclusion

This research aims to study the built environment of children as an approachable "neighbourhood", with a significant angle shaping children's lives considering the space and scale of children. Exploring the child-friendly cities as an approach in building the neighbourhood the aim of the research follows around the questions, what led to the issues of children, how the built environment effects the children's daily activities and how children perception can build an inclusive environment for everyone. Checking on the writing, it primarily centres on few parameters which offer assistance to create child inviting city that are Safe, Green,

Accessible, Playful and Inclusive environment for all. As Each open space has it possess characteristic meaning and utilize. Such spaces ought to be carefully made considering the sort of utilization children got to create way of life of neighbourhood inhabitants. This venture will attempt to communicate the esteem that children and their relationship with the encompassing environment which can hold nowadays needs and future recognition

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