



## **Exploring the Model of Multipurpose Community Centres: A Technical report by Main Bhi Dilli Campaign**



*Source: WIEGO*

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Main Bhi Dilli is a people’s campaign aiming to envision and enable a more inclusive city. It is a collective of civil society organisations, activists, researchers and others who work on diverse issues of housing, livelihood, gender and other rights. Visit [www.mainbhidilli.com](http://www.mainbhidilli.com) for more information on the campaign.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

| <b>S No.</b> | <b>Heading</b>                            | <b>Page no.</b> |
|--------------|---|-----------------|
| I            | Introduction                              | 3               |
| II           | Envisioning the Model: Functions & Scales | 4               |
| III          | Governance                                | 7               |
| IV           | Conclusion                                | 8               |
| V            | Annexure                                  | 9               |

## I. INTRODUCTION

As compared to the national average, Delhi fares well in terms of average income levels and some indicators like access to education, health and other services. However, many studies have noted that there are great disparities in this based on a range of factors like gender, caste, religious identity and spatial location. Vulnerable groups still face great difficulties and fall behind on crucial human development indicators (DHDR 2013). Therefore, ***there is a clear case for the extension of social protection by the state, which should be reflected in the Master Plan through an increased focus on social infrastructure.***

***This report argues for the constitution of a new category of ‘multipurpose community centre’ in the Delhi Master Plan 2021-41 to augment the provision of certain key socio-economic functions for citizens. A crucial component of accessibility is spatial proximity and so the model being explored here is one that is decentralised ranging from the community to neighbourhood, sub-ward and ward levels.*** The aim is to suggest possible sets of functions that can be combined at each scale though the exact mixture would be best determined locally through community participation and involvement of local public authorities who are best positioned to understand local priorities, identify target groups or beneficiaries and effectively conduct last-mile delivery of services and schemes. This finds firm legal backing in urban areas through the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act which is based on the principle of subsidiarity that social and political issues are best dealt with at the most immediate level which is consistent with their resolution.

The advantages of integrating multiple functions in a single centre are also many. It benefits citizens as they are able to access a basket of services at a single location. This could also potentially increase efficiency and synergy between various discrete departments whose functions impact on one another. An integrated centre is also beneficial for the state in terms of finding adequate land, infrastructure and personnel. It would also aid last-mile delivery as governments would be able to reach beneficiaries for multiple schemes and services, thus allowing for convergence. ***It is important to stress that such a centre is in no way meant to replace other plan level allocations for the same functions, rather the idea is to expand spatial allocation to supplement these.***

The idea for such a centre emerged from the community meetings organised by the Main Bhi Dilli campaign in many urban poor settlements in the city wherein people, largely women, identified proximity to be a key factor in their ability to approach and make use of public services. People had clear articulations of their needs from public social infrastructure which varied across areas and between user groups in the same area. This report aims to list out composite categories of various functions which were spoken of that can be provided in an integrated centre. It also examines the spatial implications for this and suggests governance mechanisms for its

implementation and operation. There are numerous examples of such initiatives both globally as well as locally from which we have drawn insights.

## II. ENVISIONING THE MODEL: FUNCTIONS AND SCALES

The main sets of functions that are being envisioned at the centre are given below along with the expected user base. Each set of functions has also been color-coded to later indicate at which scales these functions could ideally be present. The list of activities provided is only indicative as the exact mix would depend on local needs and priorities.

| S No. | Function set                               | User groups                    | Color code | Examples of these activities   |
|-------|--|--------------------------------|------------|--|
| 1     | Facilitating linkage to government schemes | Adult members of the community |            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness building and information about social welfare and other government schemes</li> <li>- Assistance to complete and submit government forms including access to online portals</li> <li>- Common service centre for citizens to apply or register for documents, avail other services from the government and grievance redressal</li> </ul> |
| 2     | Enabling women's livelihood                | Adult women                    |            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating skill development and livelihood training</li> <li>- Encouraging SHG/micro-enterprise formation through space and establishing required linkages</li> <li>- Community-level spaces of women workers for common work stations, meetings, storage etc.</li> </ul>  |
| 3     | Livelihood support for informal workers    | Adult members of the community |            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating informal workers' access to livelihood schemes, linkages and trainings</li> <li>- Community-level spaces for common work-related needs of informal workers</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| 4 | Supplementary services for child care   | Children (0-14), mothers and local child care workers         |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supplementing better provision of child care services through support and training to local childcare workers (e.g.- Balwadi &amp; Anganwadi workers)</li> <li>- Building awareness and information outreach of programs for early childhood development and support to mothers</li> </ul>   |
| 5 | Supplementary services for health care  | Adult members of the community and primary healthcare workers |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mohalla clinic</li> <li>- Facilitating better health access through regular camps, referral services and training support to local health workers (e.g.-ASHAs)</li> <li>- Awareness building and information on basic health and nutrition</li> <li>- Basic infrastructure to implement need-based testing, isolation or other medical protocols for disease prevention and control (e.g.- COVID care centre)</li> </ul> |
| 6 | Supplementary services for legal care   | Adult members of the community and legal service providers    |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information dissemination and awareness building</li> <li>- Legal counselling services and link to legal aid groups</li> </ul>   |
| 7 | Support and resource services for youth | Adolescent and young adults                                   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender sensitisation workshops</li> <li>- Information on SRHR access and counselling</li> <li>- Facilitation of libraries, and student or youth club formation</li> <li>- Information on educational and career opportunities</li> </ul>   |
| 8 | Public meetings                         | Adult members of the community                                |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating local democracy through space for regular community meeting for local issues</li> <li>- Improving citizens access to local government officials for participatory decision-making and grievance redressal</li> </ul>  |

## Activities and Scale Mixing

The eight function-sets given above can be combined in various ways with the mix of activities being different for different scales. This is based on both the nature of functions which determines the space and other infrastructural requirements, as well as the target user and the ideal distance and accessibility parameters for them. While some activities can happen at all scales, some are better suited to one scale rather than the other. The size of the centre thus varies in proportion to the expected footfall/jurisdiction as well as the complexity of functions. At the Master Plan level, the kinds of activities should be indicated but not completely specified or fixed. They should, however, be limited to social, livelihood related, or community development public activities.

| Scales  | Community<br>(0-5000)  | Neighbourhood<br>(5000-10,000)   | Sub-Ward<br>(10,000-50,000)   | Ward<br>(50,000-1,00,000)   |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Function<br>-mix<br><br><i>*Weightage of functions as per detailed listing of activities under each, which can be found in annexure 1</i> |  |  |                  |                 |
| Suggested size and FAR  | 250-400 sq. m<br>(Ground coverage of 50% and FAR 120)                              | 1000-1200 sq. m<br>(Ground coverage of 50% and FAR 120)                            | Minimum 1500 sq. m<br>(Ground coverage of 50% and FAR 120)  | Minimum 2000 sq. m<br>(Ground coverage of 50% and FAR 120)  |
| Distance or accessibility parameters  | Walkable distance of 400-800m or 5-10 minutes by foot                              | Walkable distance of 400-800m or 5-10 minutes by foot                              | Accessible by frequent bus-based public transport stop (atleast 12 schedules per hour) / Accessible | Accessible by frequent bus-based public transport stop (atleast 12 schedules per hour) / Accessible |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  | by cycle or e-rickshaw of approximately 10 min ride (1500-2000 metres) | by cycle or e-rickshaw of approximately 10 min ride (1500-2000 metres) |
|--|--|--|--|--|

**Notes on key spatial pointers:**

- i. The centre should be spatially proximate and accessible to the target population.
- ii. The centres must be permitted in public, semi-public, and residential zoning categories.
- iii. The size measurements are based on existing allocations in the MPD. E.g.- For Anganwadi (community), banquet hall (neighbourhood) and multi-purpose hall (ward level). These are scaled up by about 25% to accommodate more functions which would be present in an integrated centre. Hence, more ground cover and FAR is suggested in order to build structures that can hold the activities better. These are additional facilities to what exists already.
- iv. It is preferred that centres are built around or near existing institutions which are in use by the community. Involvement of community is crucial when selecting locations and spatial design of centres. Some examples of existing structures which are used extensively may be Anganwadis, Mohalla clinics, community halls and primary schools. If the functions of the community centre are convergent with them, these structures can be expanded or modified without affecting their prior functioning.
- v. In already developed areas with dense built form (like UACs, urban villages, special areas and JJ Clusters), where finding new land will be difficult, more ground coverage and higher FAR could be proposed to achieve desirable or appropriate built-up space for MPCC. As many of the functions in the integrated centre are coterminous with the responsibilities of different government agencies, the redevelopment of existing assets held by government departments may be an important strategy.

**III. GOVERNANCE**

The many functions which are being envisioned in the centre come under the purview of a variety of government departments and stakeholders. For such a centre to function well, involving local

government officials (e.g.-ward councilor) can be key as they feel a sense of ownership and accountability to people. This is also important to ensure that the services like state welfare schemes being facilitated at the centre are carried forward to be processed and delivered, and for redressal of grievances that arise.

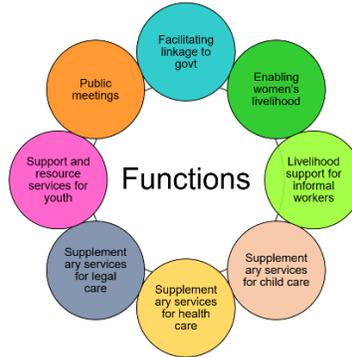
In terms of regular administration, community leadership and involvement would be the most sustainable approach. Starting with the building of such centres, local labour can be used so as to provide much needed employment opportunities for the urban poor. Later, community ownership can be operationalised through the vesting of powers with Anganwadi /ASHA and other community workers to take the lead role in management and administration of the centre. However, civil society involvement in the form of employing personnel, facilitating access and linkages, and running specialised programs would be required. This could take different forms like: an NGO partner being assigned by the state and given a budget for daily maintenance and functioning (for example like Shelter Management Agency) or joint management by government and NGO partner. There should also be the possibility to raise funds from the community and the routing of other resources like CSR.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Decentralisation of power and the presence of robust local governance structures are seen as pathways to improve accessibility, responsiveness, and effectiveness of the institutions of the state vis a vis citizens. We argue that land allocation for and the creation of a new category of ‘multi-purpose community centres’ under facilities for social infrastructure in MPD 2041 has the potential to contribute towards the following outcomes:

- Women empowerment and increased labour force participation through training and skilling
- Efficient last mile delivery of social protection to the urban poor
- Increased citizens access to government measures
- Improved health access and awareness
- Improved legal access and awareness
- Better development indicators for younger population
- Better community and civil society participation in urban life

V. Annexure 1: Suggested activity distribution of functions across scales



| 0-5000<br>(community )  | Time-use                     | 5-10,000(neighbourhood)   | Time-use                        | 10-50,000<br>(sub-ward)   | Time-use | 50,000-1,00,000<br>(ward)   | Time-use |
|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|----------|---|----------|
| Awareness drives to facilitate linkages with govt schemes                                 | Twice or thrice a year       | Helpdesk with personnel to provide information on govt schemes and processes                      | Regular                         | IEC material and helpdesk to provide information  | Regular  | Common Service Centre/ Citizen centre for registration of govt IDs and documents, allied services and grievance redressal | Regular  |
| IEC material on govt schemes and processes  | Regular                      | Periodic camps for registration of govt IDs and documents (eg-Aadhar, voter ID, ration card etc.) | Every few months                | Assistance to fill government forms and online facility   | Regular  | Skill development and livelihood training for men   | Periodic |
| Facilitation for SHG/micro-enterprise formation and space for regular meetings/activities | Regular with weekly meetings | Skill development and livelihood training for women   | Regular with periodic workshops | Services for supporting women's livelihood like bank linkages, assistance for schemes registration etc. | Regular  | Periodic camps for worker registration in partnership with ULBs and worker welfare boards                                 | Periodic |

|   |                               |   |                                 |  |                                   |   |                              |
|---|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Space for common work stations and related needs of women workers   | Regular                       | Support facilities for balwadi and anganwadi workers to fulfill their role including training and skill upgradation | Regular with periodic workshops | Space for common work needs of male workers  | Regular                           | Facility to evaluate and integrate livelihood development services in the ward        | Regular with monthly meeting |
| IEC material and awareness drives to provide key information on maternal and childrens needs, and the relevant schemes and benefits | Regular                       | Regular health camps and referral services to local hospitals   | Monthly camps                   | Basic facilities to set up needs-based camp for testing, isolation and other health protocol for COVID-19 or other epidemics | Regular and scaled up as per need | Facility to evaluate and integrate child development services in the ward             | Regular with monthly meeting |
| Space for regular meetings of child care workers and mothers  | Regular with monthly meetings | Facility for disseminating information and awareness about law and legal services                                   | Regular with periodic camps     | Counselling services and link to legal aid groups  | Regular                           | Information and helpdesk for educational and career counselling services              | Regular with periodic camps  |
| IEC material and awareness drives for basic health and nutrition  | Regular                       | Facility for counselling and gender sensitisation for youth   | Regular with periodic workshops | Supplementary education or computer centre facility  |                                   | Regular facility for public grievance redressal with various govt departments or ULBs | Regular                      |
| Information and awareness about disease prevention and control  | Every few months              | Facilitation of student or youth club formation   | Monthly                         |  |                                   | Ward committee meetings   | Periodic                     |
| IEC material and awareness  | Regular                       |   | Regular                         |  |                                   |   |                              |

|   |                   |   |          |  |  |  |  |
|---|-------------------|---|----------|--|--|--|--|
| drives for sexual and reproductive health and rights of youth |                   |   |          |  |  |  |  |
| Space for mahila panchayat and mohalla sabha meetings         | Weekly or monthly | Space for periodic community meetings with local government officials | Periodic |  |  |  |  |
|   |                   |   |          |  |  |  |  |