ASSESSMENT OF SECURITY, CRIME & BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS IN DELHI SCHOOLS *: a proposal*

<u>*for*</u> voluntary contribution to the Delhi Government project on 'GRADING OF DELHI SCHOOLS'

The Delhi Government's step towards a more constant and non-discriminatory infrastructure for education is not just a welcome approach but also a necessity today with special reference to the rise in crimes and mounting security concerns in our society. We are all aware that security is a mindset issue which is not only **a vital pre-requisite to learning and education but also a valuable goal and projected outcome.** And yet we see a lot of our educational environment becoming breeding grounds for social neglect and future crime of varying magnitudes, varying from the private school domains to the underprivileged sections.

Govt to grade all Delhi schools on infra, academics, inclusion

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NEW DELHI: For the first time ever, the Delhi government has decided to grade around 5,600 schools in the city on the basis of the infrastructure they possess and academic facilities they offer.

The government has enlisted the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) to assess each government, private, and municipal school on three primary criteria — safety, teaching-learning facilities, community engagement in case of government and municipal schools and social inclusion in case of private schools.

DCPCR is the statutory body to monitor implementation of rights of children and the Right To Education Act, 2009 in the city. The evaluation and grading framework will be ready by May-end.

Report card for schools

5,600 Schools, including 1,100 run by govt, will be graded in all

KEY CRITERIA

Safety: Fire safety, sexual safety, structural safety, medical safety, hygiene

Status of teaching-learning: Number of teachers, number of classrooms, teacher-student ratio, number of books in library, laboratory facilities, and adequacy of all these facilities

Community participation: Parent-teacher meeting and school management committee), social inclusion

It is also in the process of developing software to conduct the exercise. The evaluation process will begin in August and the grades of the schools will be announced on Children's Day, November 14, which parents will be able to access on a website.

The exercise, which was announced by deputy chief minister and education minister Manish Sisodia in the Delhi government's budget, will help parents choose a school for their wards based on hard information and not merely rely on public perception of an institute. Delhi has 5,800 recognised schools, but 200 of them are minority schools which will not be graded as they do not fall under the RTE.

There are many theories and approaches to security in educational environments being practiced very efficiently across the world. **The infrastructure of a school** including the building, the grounds, the various facilities therein comprising the entire environment **are today known to be principle factors in the control of security and behviour in an educational environment.** Add to that the variance in challenges and threats across socio-economics of the Indian populace which make the subject even more relevant to the Indian education facilities.

<u>Qualifications and expertise:</u>

Manjari Khanna Kapoor (a practicing Architect and academician) is in the final stages of completing her doctorate on the subject from the esteemed School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi (*please refer her detailed resume attached*). She feels very passionately on the subject and is an avid speaker, blogger and teacher on the subject. She feels this is a great opportunity to make our schools, our neighborhoods and thereby our society more secure.

She is uniquely poised as the first known expert in the subject combining aspects of architectural design, structure, fire & life safety, psychology and socio-economics with security not just as the obvious components of mechanical devices or personnel but at a more deep-seeded level of design, ambience and its impact on behavior-current and future. Her research establishes and underlines, **the role of the physical environment in security in all its manifestations.** Being an academician with a cursory knowledge of educating the under-privileged and the over-privileged she feels especially motivated to apply the knowledge to where our future is carved.

She is currently heading the efforts to set-up an Indian chapter for the propagation and implementation of CPTED principles in the Indian architectural and urban design domains. These principles are very **popular in the west for securing schools** and other administrative purposes. Her research shows the same principles embedded in the Indian tradition and she sees a very clear case for revitalizing those Indian roots for benefit to the society at large.

Methodology proposed:

The initial information on the subject shows the following aspects which need immediate attention:

- Gender sensitivity and security.
- Tendency towards violence and bullying.
- Drugs and substance abuse on school campus or thereafter.
- Petty thefts and vandalism
- Disregard of authorities and subscription to corruption as a way of life.
- Apathy of the administration towards the security of the marginalized sections.
- Safety for all ages and all participants in a school from fire and life safety aspects.
- Fearsome environments- not conducive to learning
- Security perceptions and pre-requisites
- Creation of future generations of secure individuals.

1. Contributions to and participation in the audit of the schools' physical environment from perspectives listed above and creation of secure environments without terror. For the same the use of a unique assessment tool developed by the doctoral research should be ideal. The objective grading system developed can clearly assign a score for the security aspects which can easily be combined with the other factors to derive the final grade.

2. The initial couple of pilot projects may include volunteers from architectural schools of Delhi (members of the Indian chapter of ICA- international CPTED Association), to not only audit but also suggest remedial measures. These can then be reviewed based upon the budgetary implications and results. Learnings from these may be applied to masses in a phased manner.

3. Finally all government schools to be upgraded to the security levels desirable and feasible.

4. Recommendations or development of 'school relevant codes' or 'guidelines for best practices' for enforcement in government and private schools in Delhi .

GRADING OF DELHI SCHOOLS: SECURITY ASPECTS