

# CRAMMED IN OR SHUT OUT: DELHI SHELTERS' SPACE SHORTAGES

Ashwin Parulkar, Senior Research Specialist, HELP USA (New York City)

## THE SHELTER CAPACITY PROBLEM

- Delhi's 220 shelters *officially* accommodated ~17,000 people between March '19-'20 - far below the estimated 47,000 to 180,000 homeless population.
- Only 7,300 people used these spaces nightly.
- Only 18 sq ft/person is allotted across all shelters ('official area').
- National policy guideline earmarks 50 sq ft/person.
- At actual utilization (7300 people), shelters provided 45 sq ft/person (true area), indicating that the system operated at or over capacity.

## 'SHELTER-DEFICIT' DISTRICTS (SDD)= PLANNING FAILURE

- South Delhi was the major SDD among the city's 11 administrative districts.
- SDD = a region in which (i) # of homeless for whom the city built shelters < official homeless population (*coverage deficit*) & (ii) average true shelter area < 50 sq ft/person (*space deficit*).

## YET, SURPLUS SHELTER SPACE EXISTED IN HIGH-DENSITY HOMELESS DISTRICTS

- 32% of Delhi shelters provided more than 50 sq ft/person to residents.
- More than half of all shelters that provided 100 sq ft/person were in highly populated Central district

## OFFICIAL VS 'TRUE' SHELTER AREA

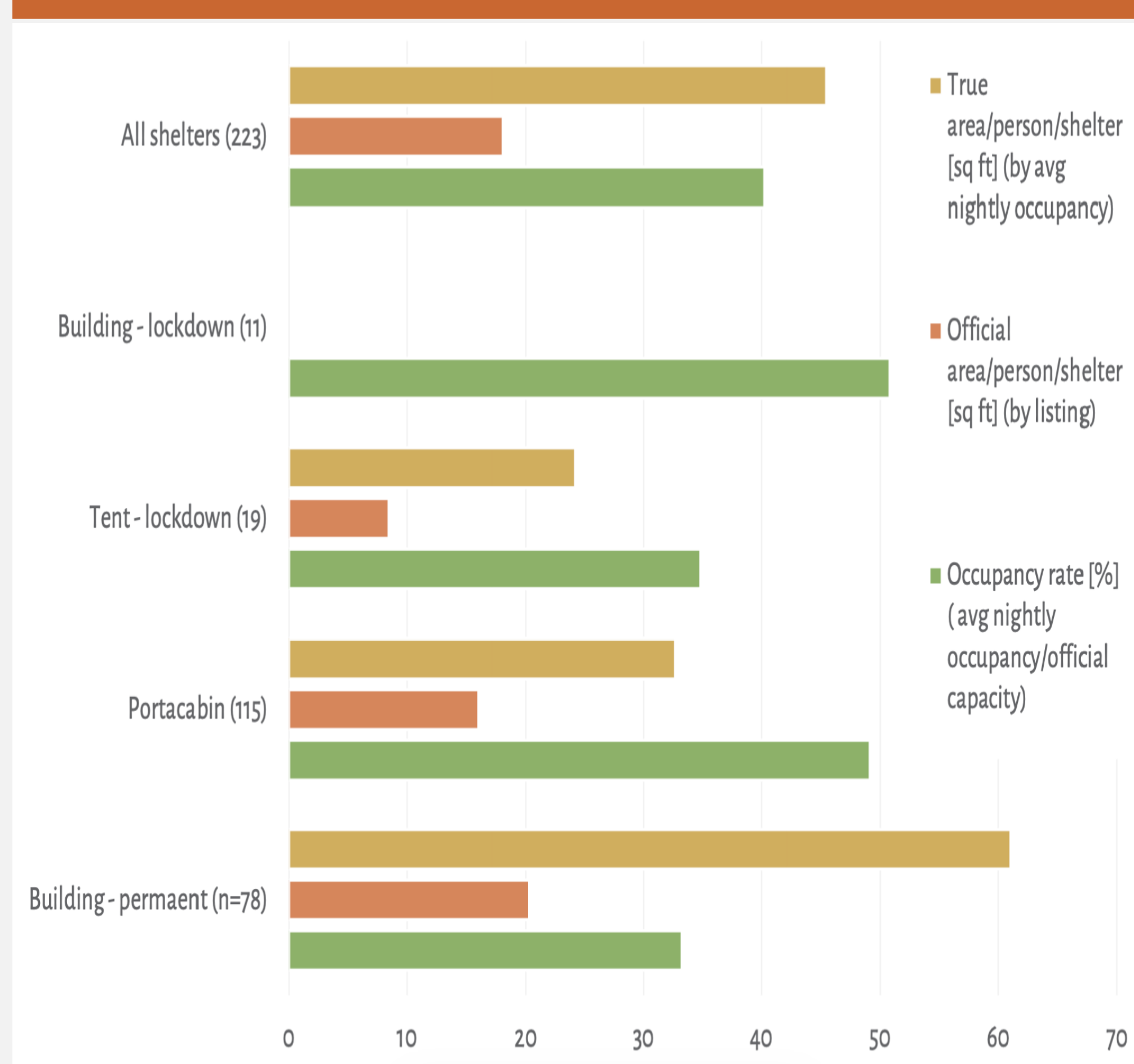


Figure 20: Shelter-deficit district(s) in focus: South Delhi

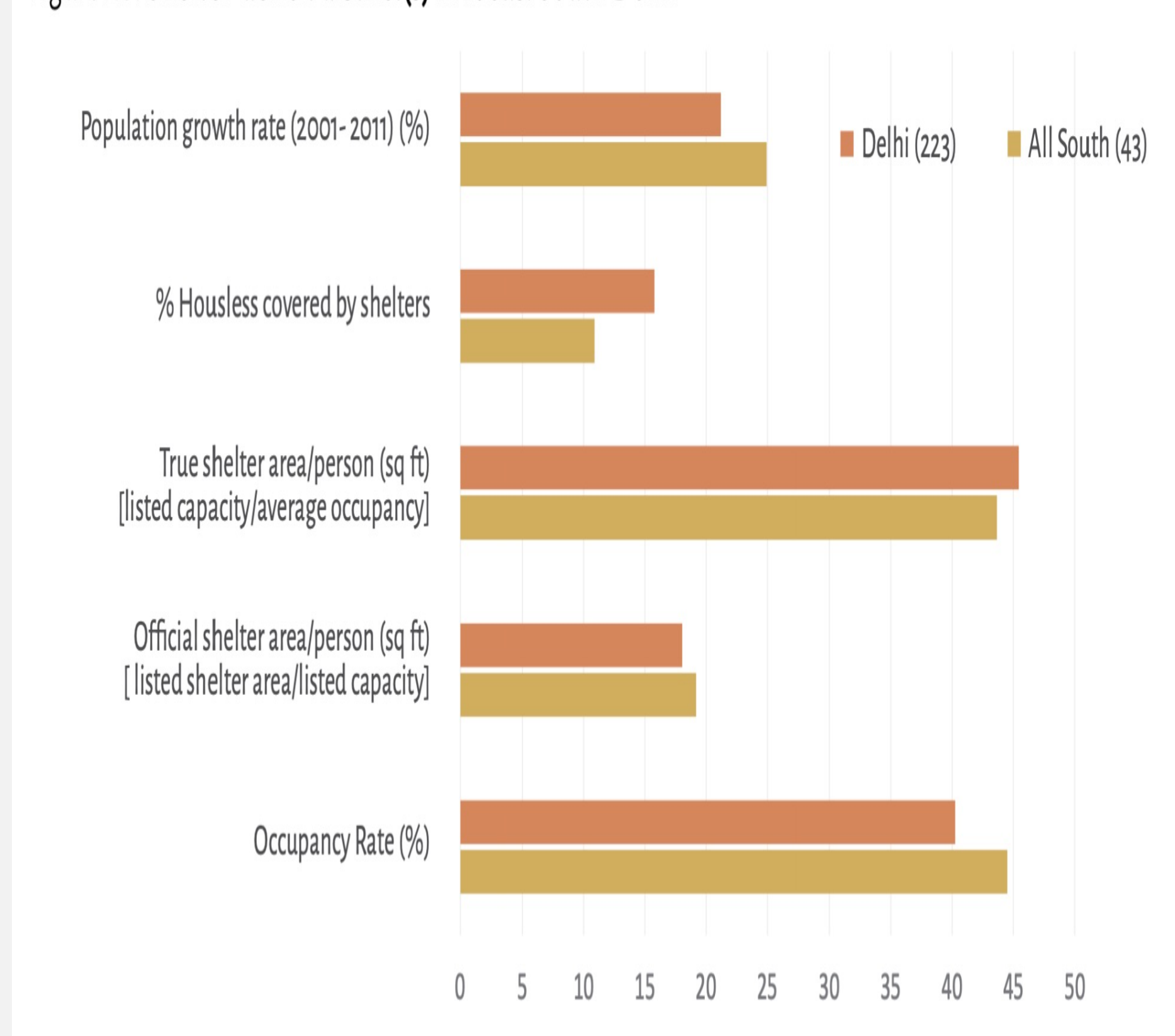


Figure 22: Shelters > 50sq ft (n=72): True area v Official area

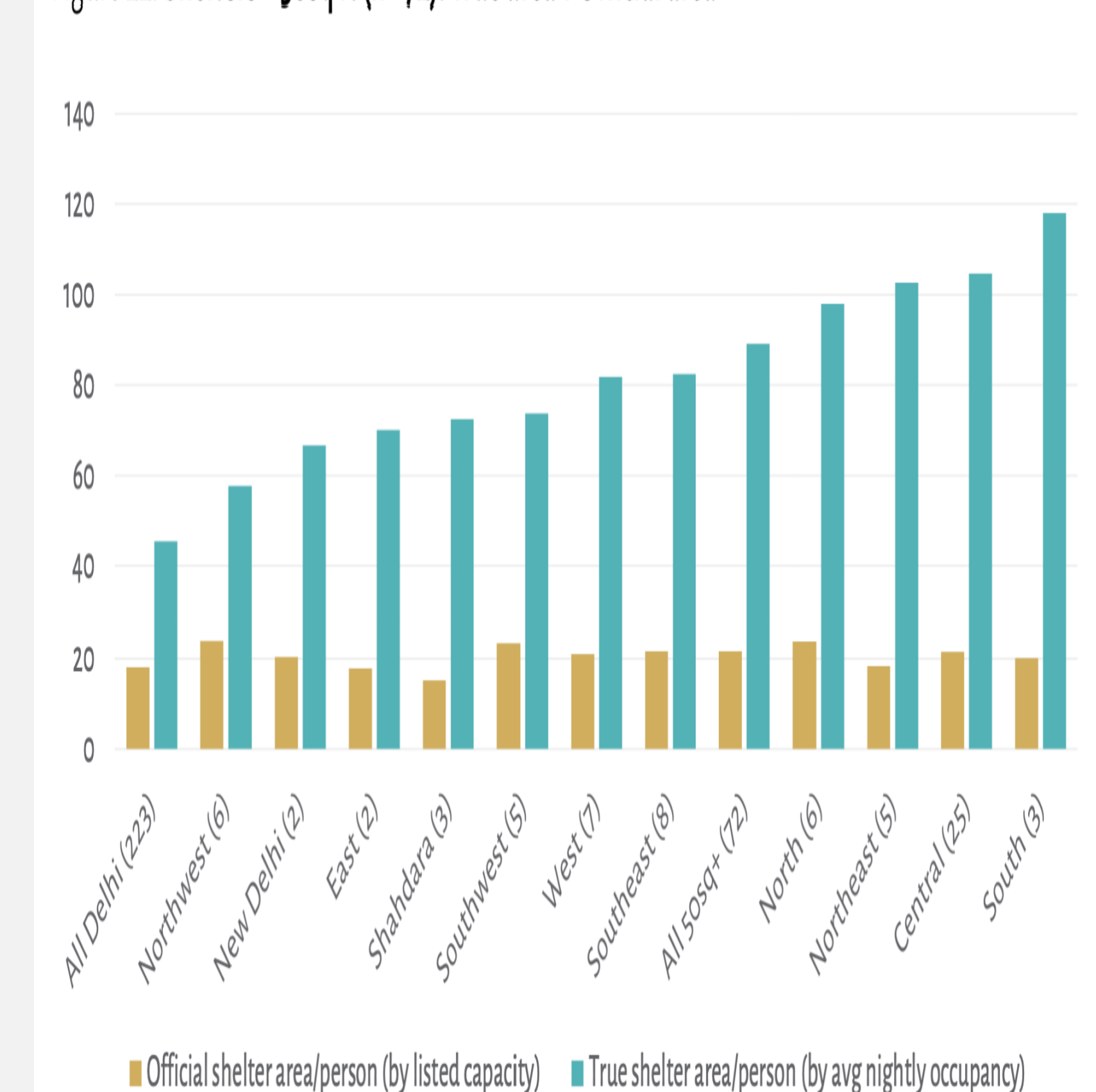


Figure 22: Shelters that provide more than 50 square feet of shelter space to residents (March 22 - May 14, 2020). A comparison between true shelter area and official shelter area, data sources: DUSIB Occupancy Index and DUSIB Nightly Occupancy Report

## SHELTER SPACE SHORTAGES AFFECT WOMEN & CHILDREN

- Official occupancy rate of women's & family shelters = 65% & 62%
- True shelter area for these shelters = 25 sq feet/person (half the national guideline)
- Low true shelter area indicated that actual occupancy rates > official occupancy rates

## CONCLUSION

Access to Delhi's shelter system is severely limited by the poor distribution of shelter space.

Unequal distribution of shelters is as a result of the failure of planners to earmark the number and size of shelters in proportion to official estimates of homeless people across the city's eleven districts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- This study recommended policymakers take the measure of 'true area' as evidence to expand the number and square footage of shelters across deficit-districts, and particularly for women and children