

FEMALE FRIENDLY CITYAr. Soumyashree Pattnaik¹¹*Department of Architecture, Lovely Professional University Phagwara, Punjab, India*soumyashreepattnaik@gmail.com**Abstract**

Designing cities cannot be linked with gender. In spite of years of autonomy, rights are still gender biased. There is a complex urban field in which rights are arranged. The article discusses about the same contemporary city, and its experiences invoking inhabitants of the society that are related with gender biased. These enable the need of undertaking more inclusive form of intervention in urban space. The article is explaining the fact about to know how a woman-friendly city can be made more porous, more focusing on feminist friendly development in the city.

Keywords

Form and space, Feminism, Diversity, Sense of security

1. Introduction

A city which belongs to all is made up of visible and invisible boundaries, that further affect our way of living, our way of being and our pattern of moving in the city. A Feminist City is an ideal city which illustrates the power of ideas, imaginations, representations and even visions of both men and women which all together make it an organized and liveable city. It provides same platform men, women and others without any disparity in gender while providing a safe and secured environment to the inhabitants of the society that promotes feminist friendly development. In this article we will talk about certain parameters that promote women friendly development in the city. One of the most crucial issues contributing to the persistence of gender inequality is the lack in design [1,3]. Gender still remains a neglected factor in shaping cities both in terms of theory and practice. As women are raised distinctively in our society we have different experiences and needs in relation to the built environment of the city which are rarely expressed by the women. A home is a place where a person lives is one of the important principle of architectural design and urban planning. Cities are designed for homebound women that has further constrained women socially, physically and economically [2]. To transform the current scenario of the society, planning should be done by emphasizing on the importance of engaging with the citizens. We need to create a co-operative living space with mixed use public spaces, office spaces and special housing facilities for women making it a key to what a city should be while keeping in mind that these improvements in city planning will make a major difference in the life and livelihood of women. A woman-friendly city should be made more porous, by focusing on female friendly development in the city by looking at the neglected aspects of shaping a city. Female centred development means development done by keeping in mind the safety, security and well being of a woman that makes her socially and economically strong. This paper mainly focuses on the everyday experience of the inhabitants that empowers organizers and policy makers to embrace form of interventions that are more inclusive while planning urban spaces that can add to give a safer and protective city for women.

2. Nonsexist city

Designing a non sexist environment that serves equally for men and women has become a major concern as the existing cities are primarily suited to the needs of men. A city can be called male centred through the various experiences and actions of the inhabitants of the city. These inequalities in rights of gender relations show an unequal position of women in the society [3]. Firstly, there is less exposure for women in political and leadership roles. Secondly, there are no spaces designed to provide a sense of security to women. Thirdly, there is economic inequality in the market, with the continuation of disparity in the payment for the same amount of work done by men and women. In areas where resources are limited to the inhabitants, the disparities between people become more intense, making women more vulnerable in terms of movement, income and safety. Therefore, there are few target areas where improvements can make a huge difference in women's lives and livelihoods. Therefore planning should be done that mediates development decisions and articulate vision for future development process. Planning a space should be done by keeping in mind the inclusivity, accessibility and safety of its inhabitants. Understanding the complexity of gender and dynamic nature of space can enable a stronger linkage to female friendly development. In the "Non-Sexist City" Hayden proposes "a co-operative living in which resources are held in common and men and women equally participate in work such as childcare and cooking. This would undermine the role of the traditional housewife and give women the opportunity to be in the workforce on more equal ground as well as providing easier access to many of the social and material needs of being a parent [1,6]." By keeping in mind the different needs and uses of public structure and system for the inhabitants of the society, improving transportation and basic urban facilities (such as adding street lights) can create a sense of safety and security to women in the society. In this paper we talk about how a gender equal city could work as a tool for change of the society. The aim is to create a non sexist city by that has accessible public spaces which is achieved by emphasizing more on mobility and the improvement of the city infrastructure. Making women as representative in political issues and promoting leadership quality which provides them a platform to share with men and hence removing the barrier of disparity while making them socially strong. To make women economically strong, secured and independent there is a need to remove pay inequality barrier in society. To promote safety for women rethinking of urban infrastructure is required. If we talk about Vienna, the planners have adapted the proposals of transportation projects prioritizing the needs of women. The proposals included addition of street lights and widening of sidewalks so that the users felt safer while using the streets any time of the day irrespective of the fact that whether they are men, women, walkers, strollers or are on wheelchairs. Similarly in cities of Bangladesh, women were served more equitably in infrastructure development. They have access to separate toilet facilities at public places like markets and transportation hubs across the country. Such interventions were taken in many parts of the world that promoted women safety and hence worked towards women friendly city. UN safety campaign which was started in 2009, aimed to promote infrastructure development in Delhi which promoted more street lights and improving roadside toilets. Cities around the world have made progress and are working towards incorporating the needs of both men and women in infrastructure planning. As a first step towards female friendly development, there is a need to understand how men and women experience public spaces individually. In the female friendly city, a woman can use public spaces alone at any time of the day. To create a women friendly environment, there is a need to provide hawker zones for road side hawkers and street vendors as these extra eyes and people on streets help women feel safe and secure. For example, in the city of Mathura the safest place for women are the areas where there is life on street. Krishna Nagar is a suburb in West Bengal, where there is a commercial

shopfacing the streets and housing at the back side of it. Therefore, liveliness on the streets provide a safer environment for women whereas the areas where there is no street activity and are dead after 7 at night, like the areas with housing communities like MayurVihar and Dampier Nagar create an unsafe environment for women as there are no eyes on streets and no last mile connectivity to these places. Second step towards a female friendly development is to provide an accessible mobility network that promotes a safer environment for women. Priority can be given to mobility which in turn will help in making women feel safer [3,4,5]. As mobility is a major factor for the development of the city, many questions arise related to women safety such as - "How does a woman walk in a city in the daytime and at night? Does she walk with her head held up high? Does she think her hair is showing through her headscarf, her knee-length skirt too short? Will that be commented on by someone on the street?"[5]. Women's mobility in urban spaces is more complex than that of men. Everyone wants the fastest and most convenient last mile connectivity that will promote women to step outside home and work till late night. Developing an efficient transportation network shall help in removing the gender segregation in the society. Doing so will go a long way towards making cities work for all. Third step towards a female friendly development is to provide better lighting in train stations, bus shelters and underpasses. Proper construction of toilets at public spaces is also an important step in the development of the city. These steps towards a city growth will promote feminist friendly development [4,6].

3. Conclusion

To provide a healthy, liveable and secured environment for the people that will help in eradicating gender and urban inequalities, and will also help in the transformation of the city the mentioned provisions and changes will be instrumental in bringing the change. Therefore, these opportunities will promote the transformation of cities that shall reflect its inhabitants' better and healthy lifestyle and reclaim their rights to public spaces.

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