

GENDER EQUITY IN PLANNING REHABILITATED /REDEVELOPED COLONIES

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ABSTRACT:

Gender sensitive planning starts with the needs of people in communities. If policies to improve and enhance places are to address gender inequality, they must also take into account the issues and needs of both men and women. The design of places and spaces needs to reflect the socio-cultural needs of women as well as men, girls as well as boys. Existing policies and programmes need to be scrutinized to see how they can be adapted to become more gender aware and bring about genuine gender equality. The paper presented below is therefore an attempt to understand design considerations, plans, policies and programmes to promote gender equality in redeveloped and disaster struck colonies

KEYWORDS:

Gender-sensitive, Sex-disaggregation of data, Women's empowerment, Gender mainstreaming, Gender impact assessment

INTRODUCTION:

It was once said, and very rightly by Helen Clark “*Any serious shift towards more sustainable societies has to include gender equality*”. Urban planning affects the sustainability, accessibility, usability, design and quality of places. Since the way women and men live their lives differs, urban planning may well deepen inequalities if gender differences are not recognised and taken into account in plans and projects. And since gender cuts across other equality groupings such as disability, age and religion, a need exists to ensure that planning addresses diverse groups of women and men.

AIM:

To understand design considerations, plans, policies and programmes to promote gender equality in redeveloped and disaster struck areas colonies.

OBJECTIVES:

- To integrate gender perspectives in a renewed approach to design human settlements and infrastructure development of any urban/rural setting.
- To acknowledge the key principles for gender based planning in rehabilitated/redeveloped colonies that can be perceived as helpful to women, children, government, developers and practitioners.
- To formulate and strengthen policies and practices to promote the full and equal participation by women in municipal decision making by ensuring necessary provisions for an equitable distribution of power and authority.
- To accord every opportunity for full access and participation by women

SCOPE:

- To understand the importance of gender in the process of planning rehabilitated colonies (housing typology, street design and street activities, recreational areas, religious points etc).
- To do a gender sensitive analysis and gender impact assessment to recognise and make visible the unremunerated work of women and conscious effort made by them to improve the living condition of their ghetto.
- Study the role of NGO's and other state agencies to accord every opportunity for full access and participation by women in municipal decision making .

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- To examine the number of female headed households in these colonies and then analyse if they shoulder the burden of poverty other than other households.
- To underline the gap between policy and practice in these colonies that enhance gender inequality.
- Study of the impact of culture and traditions resulting in a barrier to enhance women's productivity, growth and income in a society.

LIMITATIONS:

- The research doesn't include broad spectrum of general literature on women rights theory and practices.

THE DIFFERENT NEEDS OF WOMEN AND MEN

Having outlined the international commitment to gender equality, this section goes on to examine the different needs of women and men in relation to employment, livelihoods, land and housing, social and physical infrastructure and everyday life. It is important for planners to keep asking how proposed plans and projects will alleviate gender inequality and disadvantage and promote equity. Significant global variations in inequality and disadvantage exist, not only between men and women, but among different groups of each. This examination is not exhaustive. Instead, Sex-disaggregation of data in this report draws on research to provide snapshots of situations in developing and developed countries.

EMPLOYMENT

The regeneration of existing settlements and the creation of new settlements provide opportunities for gender to be considered early on with no added costs and considerable benefits. By treating everyone the same and assuming that the position and needs of women and men are similar, plans may unwittingly reinforce inequalities. The employment status of men and women varies greatly around the world. Women are more likely to earn less than men for doing the same type of work and are less likely to have a regular income or salaried position than men¹.

According to a report by The Hindu updated on May 18, 2016 00:15 IST 'Amid a raging debate over gender pay gap globally, a new report shows the figure for India stands as high as 27 per cent, where men earned a median gross hourly salary of Rs. 288.68, while women earned Rs, 207.85 per hour'. Women continue to be under-represented in areas such as public sector governance and the built environment professions, and over-represented in areas such as service industry employment and unpaid roles in family businesses.

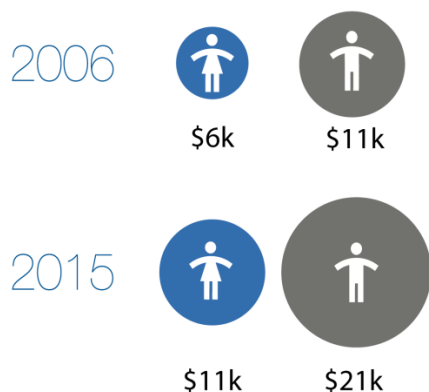
Analysis of global employment data shows that women are more likely than men to find employment in the informal sector. Women represent a higher share of vulnerable workers in every region and are more at risk of experiencing vulnerable employment situations. Women in the informal sector are often self-employed home-based workers or street traders. They also work in many other high-risk sectors, for example as waste-pickers, porters or construction

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workers. Informal employment poses a number of risks for women and children in developing countries. In Caribbean countries and India, women street vendors are regularly harassed by police who question their legal status. Women earn very low incomes, often much less than their male counterparts. In informal settlements, without cooperative childcare networks, lack of available childcare means that children are often left at home alone or go with their mothers to work and are exposed to hazardous situations. Lack of available water, sanitation and shelter while working also pose significant threats to some women, particularly travelling vendors.

Global average, annual earnings



Source: The Global Gender Gap Report 2015

Source: The Global Gender Report 2015

India has a 27% pay gap.

Source: Gender pay gap in India
Why would women settle for less? By Sudipto Roy
Posted On : May 18, 2016

Gender differences also exist in paid and unpaid work. Women are more likely than men to act as the main caregivers in households, looking after children and elderly, ill or disabled family members, as well as undertaking the majority of other domestic duties. The way the burden of unpaid care work is distributed across different individuals has important implications for people's well-being and needs to be understood in the context of different countries. As primary caregivers, women are responsible for ensuring children go to school and accessing medical treatment for family members, which can pose an extra burden in countries with high rates of communicable diseases and poor access to facilities. A study undertaken in Cordoba, Argentina, for example, found that women spend nearly three times more time on domestic tasks than men. Although men and women spent about the same amount of time working, women's contributions went unpaid and unrecognised because household tasks were considered their traditional role. The impact of all these issues on the location of facilities and services and the design of cities and urban/rural areas needs to be understood in the context of different places.

LIVELIHOODS

The ability to create a livelihood is affected not only by lack of income, but also by exclusion in the form of inadequate transport systems, lack of access to services, health care and education, limited political voice, and poor-quality housing and infrastructure. Inequalities in access to education for girls result in women accounting for two-thirds of adults who are unable to read or write.

Urban planners, working with government officials, land owners, developers and other officials, can create plans that set aside land for the household production of food and ensure that it is

serviced with water and appropriate transport networks. Good planning and community development can ensure that women in informal sectors are able to take their produce to a safe place for sale or exchange. Research shows that female-headed households are more likely to shoulder the burden of poverty than other households. In both developed and developing countries, women-headed households are increasingly common, although the causes vary. Reliance on one income makes these households extremely vulnerable. Domestic work, self-employment and casual or part-time labour offer little legal protection or security. If this income is lost, household members in some places may turn to prostitution, credit debt or illegal work to make ends meet.

Rural poverty often leads to urban migration, and rural-to urban migrants often end up living in informal settlements. The need to earn livelihood may create a desire among some rural residents to live in or close to cities, where jobs are more plentiful, though living conditions can be worse than in poor rural areas. Poor urban living conditions, including a lack of clean and affordable water, poor sanitation, inadequate housing and overcrowding, all compromise the health of slum dwellers. Women, children, elderly and disabled people are all particularly vulnerable to these factors. Added to this, poor health leads to an inability to earn a living, and since women are often less likely than men to access healthcare for lack of financial resources, this highlights the relevance of urban/rural planning in attempting to change government and cultural attitudes that will lead to an improvement in the built environment and improve access to health facilities. Here planners can work with health providers to identify and zone land where appropriate in anticipation of needs.

LAND AND HOUSING

Secure tenure and equal property rights are critical issues for women, and these depend in large part on their ability to own land and housing. In patriarchal societies, women can be excluded from the purchase of property, inheritance and decisions about land and property resources. The death of a spouse can make women subject to eviction by relatives—a practice common throughout India and Africa. Many countries have limited legal protection for women's property rights, and where it does exist it is not always acted upon, owing to weak enforcement and acquiescence to patriarchal power.

In some cultures, a woman's right to property is related to her ability to fulfil cultural and religious expectations. Women who are divorced, single or in same-sex relationships can experience discrimination in accessing land and housing. For example, customary practice in some countries dictates that women may still require a male signatory to purchase a house.⁶¹ Accessing land and housing ownership is also difficult for women when they live in poverty, have unstable employment situations, are subject to an unregulated property market, suffer from domestic violence or encounter other barriers. The right to adequate housing is an integral part of women's human rights. Housing issues and barriers are experienced differently by men and women, especially affordability and access, location, quality and design, homelessness, emergency housing and eviction. A lack of adequate housing and security of tenure has been shown to make women more vulnerable to violence. Housing is inextricably linked to safety, income generation and health, and it provides a safe place for cultural and religious practices. Increasing women's property rights and addressing financial limitations is a key tool in fighting poverty and improving women's access to housing. When women have access to affordable, adequate housing, their households tend to be more stable, leading to increased children's attendance rates at school.

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The experiences of homelessness differ between men and women. Based on research in India, it was found that proportionally, more men than women live on the streets. There are a growing number of street children in many places, the majority of whom are boys aged 10 to 14. Women are more likely to experience '*hidden homelessness*' than men. There is more impetus for women to put up with unsafe or unhealthy living conditions in order to avoid losing children to government officials and to protect them from further poverty and distress. Alternatives are needed for those affected by domestic violence, the majority of whom are still women and children.

The provision of *emergency housing* is often inadequately planned for, thereby inadvertently increasing forms of homelessness and violence against women. Emergency housing is a key concern in hazard planning related to climate change and in conflict situations. In post-disaster management situations, urban planning has a key role to play in ensuring the protection of communities from future disasters. Urban planning can also play a role in achieving better rebuilding after disasters. Given that emergency relief camps often become longer-term settlements accommodating many thousands of people, better planning early on could help ensure better sanitation and the provision of services. Women and men need to be involved in these planning processes to ensure that their cultural needs are met. Women are more vulnerable to violence in temporary shelter. Where they do not own the homes destroyed, women are often excluded from the benefits of reconstruction and may have to live in temporary settlements for extended periods of time.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Physical and social infrastructure is essential for communities to function properly. Transportation, water and sanitation, electricity, information technology and other services are all aspects of physical infrastructure that not only shape the spatial structure of cities, but can also reinforce inequalities. Traditionally, physical infrastructure has been associated with mega projects, such as large-scale engineering projects and hightech solutions. Too often, the way in which physical infrastructure is defined excludes consideration of the solutions with which women identify. Physical infrastructure needs to be more broadly defined to include appropriate sanitation for women and girls, as well as men and boys, and to take account of waste disposal and recycling of household rubbish. Facilities such as schools and hospitals are important components of social infrastructure. Both physical and social infrastructure need to be coordinated as part of the urban planning and development process to ensure all residents access to livelihoods and services. Planners need to work closely with communities and representative groups working in these areas. Planning for social infrastructure has often lacked consideration of the specific needs of women, for example childcare and day centres, shelters and refugees for women escaping violence. This has resulted from women having less say in the planning of municipal services and reflects a lack of equitable political and professional representation.

WATER AND SANITATION

Lack of adequate sanitation and water facilities are two of the defining characteristics of urban slums; the other three relate to the durability and size of shelter and secure tenure.

Water scarcity and water quality for drinking, along with the treatment of wastewater and sanitation, are interrelated, and both sets of issues have gendered dimensions.

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Cities rely on their rural hinterlands for resources such as water. Problems with water in rural areas often have an impact on urban areas. Over the past century, water use for drinking and urban agriculture has grown more than twice the rate of population growth. Although the number of urban residents living without access to improved drinking water is significantly less than for rural areas, the figure is increasing as urbanisation increases. Studies show that women still share the burden of collecting water. Women are more than twice as likely as men to collect water, while children are the main water collectors in 11 per cent of households. Issues of water scarcity will become more acute as a result of climate change and population growth. This in turn impacts the ability to deal with wastewater and sanitation.

In urban areas in developing countries, improved sanitation has failed to keep pace with population growth. Not only this, but where facilities have been provided they often fail to take account of gender issues. Where slum upgrading programmes focus on the provision of communal toilets, issues of privacy often mean the facilities are not suitable for and accessible to women.

WASTE DISPOSAL

The physical and social infrastructure for waste disposal is often not considered part of infrastructure planning. Yet without it, cities can grind to a halt.

Resources for the provision of waste management and disposal management are particularly important for women in developing countries because they often take on the role of waste disposal. Yet, women are rarely involved in the design of waste disposal and recycling facilities. There is little provision for the social infrastructure to ensure that communities understand the health hazards associated with handling particular types of waste and the implications of this for the health of women and children. Planning for infrastructure is about equity of roles in the household. Where societies are marginalized to start with, women will experience multiple disadvantages.

TRANSPORT

A person's ability to access local facilities and employment depends on her mobility and the choices that are available. Transport infrastructure provides a network for movement, communication and exchange. It is only within the last decade that policy-makers and practitioners in developing countries have recognised gender differences in the way women and men travel. After walking, mass transit is the most common form of transport for women and men in much of the world. Women tend to use mass transit at off-peak times and make shorter trips at more varied times. Transport researchers Kunieda and Gauthere stated, 'Poor women and men do not travel less; they travel under more duress and in worse conditions' than higher-income residents. Studies around the world show that gender determines what form of transport is used and the way users view transport, and that some universal concerns prevail. In some countries, owing to cultural or religious traditions, women are restricted from using public transport or bicycles.

Women have also been found to forgo the opportunity to work outside their neighbourhoods if transport fares and services are expensive and unreliable. Transport accounts for between 10 and 30 per cent of a household's total expenditure. Surveys in Delhi show that households spend 20-25 per cent of daily earnings on transport. When 700,000 squatters resettled on the periphery of Delhi, male employment increased by 5 per cent, while female employment fell 27 per cent because their travel time increased threefold.

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Cities in developing countries have been following this trend, including cities in China, with men taking up car ownership and driving in higher numbers than women overall.

SUMMARY

Clearly, urban planning, or lack thereof, can enable or impede women's and men's access to jobs, homes, transport and essential services. Urban planning has the potential to affect the sustainability, accessibility, usability, design and quality of places. Since the way women and men live their lives differs, the accessibility and usability of places are therefore gendered.

Contemporary urban planning processes, particularly in developing countries, have tended not to distinguish among the specific needs of women, men, boys and girls, and as a result, they have not adequately addressed gender equality.

When gender is placed at the centre of planning for infrastructure, housing, employment, livelihoods and health, education, gender inequality can start to be tackled.

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