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Research Article

CREATING SAFE SPACES: WOMEN'S SAFETY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT FOR ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received 15.12.2024 Accepted 10.03.2025 Published 15.03.2025 Keywords: women's safety, gender-sensitive urban planning, public spaces, safe spaces	<i>This research paper delves into the critical issue of women's safety in the built environment, within the broader context of promoting gender equality. Through an interdisciplinary approach drawing on urban planning, architecture, sociology, and gender studies, this study explores the multifaceted challenges women face in navigating public spaces and the implications for their rights and freedoms. Using a mix of qualitative research methods including interviews, surveys, and spatial analysis, the paper investigates the factors contributing to women's experiences of insecurity in urban environments. It examines the role of urban design, transportation systems, lighting, and public infrastructure in either perpetuating or mitigating risks to women's safety. The study also explores the social norms, cultural attitudes, and power dynamics that shape perceptions of safety and influence women's access to and use of public spaces. Key findings highlight the need for gender-sensitive urban planning policies, community engagement strategies, and innovative design solutions to create safer and more inclusive built environments for all. The paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, architects, and community stakeholders to prioritize women's safety as a fundamental component of gender equality and social justice in urban development.</i>

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1. Introduction

The safety of women within the built environment is not only a fundamental human right but also a cornerstone for achieving gender equality in urban spaces (UN-Habitat, 2020). As cities grow and evolve, ensuring the safety of women in public spaces becomes increasingly crucial for their full participation in social, economic, and political life (Whitzman et al., 2013). Women's safety encompasses freedom from harassment, violence, and fear of victimization in various urban settings, including streets, parks, public transportation, and workplaces (Ceccato, 2016). Studies have shown that women often alter their behaviors, such as avoiding certain routes or spaces, due to safety concerns, limiting their mobility and access to opportunities (Koskela, 1999; Loukaitou-

Sideris, 2014). Therefore, addressing women's safety in the built environment is essential for creating inclusive and equitable cities that uphold the rights and dignity of all residents (UN Women, 2017).

1.1 History of Women Safety

The historical context of urban planning and architecture reveals how gender biases and inequalities have been embedded in the design and organization of urban spaces, shaping women's experiences and limiting their freedoms (Madan & Nalla, 2016). Traditional urban planning practices have often prioritized the needs and experiences of men, resulting in environments that are not conducive to women's safety and well-being (Kern, 2020). For example, poorly lit streets, lack of safe public transportation options, and inadequate access to public facilities disproportionately affect women and contribute to their vulnerability to violence and harassment (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014). Moreover, historical and cultural norms have perpetuated gender-based stereotypes and perceptions of public spaces as male-dominated, further marginalizing women's presence and participation (Phadke, Khan, & Ranade, 2011).

The interaction between the user and the built environment is also influenced by time. Men are seen reading newspapers and drinking chai in the morning, while women are typically seen only passing through. As the day progresses, more women can be seen sitting, conversing, and shopping, indicating that they feel safer in active and populated spaces (Viswanath & Mehrotra, 2007). Women often avoid areas with a significant male presence, such as spaces around paan shops, which are commonly occupied by groups of men throughout the day. In contrast, women feel more comfortable in spaces with better shading, seating provisions, and diverse pedestrian activity. Poor lighting at night further exacerbates insecurity, making certain pathways unwelcoming and reinforcing gendered spatial inequalities (Ceccato, 2016).

Gender and space are not two distinct topics, but rather highly significant relationships that should be strengthened by creating social places that are considerate of all their users. To prevent the creation of certain unwanted settings and contribute to the development of a better neighbourhood, it is crucial for designers to recognise such patterns and the relative arrangement of a space. Today's cities are clearly not designed with women in mind, and crimes against women are steadily rising. Crimes against women climbed 15.3% between 2020 and 2021, according to

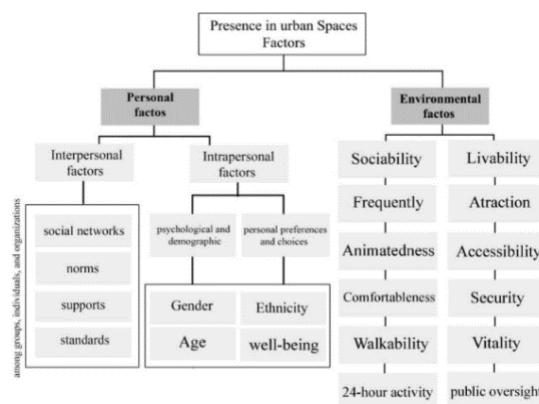


Figure 1 Components related to presence in urban spaces

Source:

<https://bmcmwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-023-02281-8>

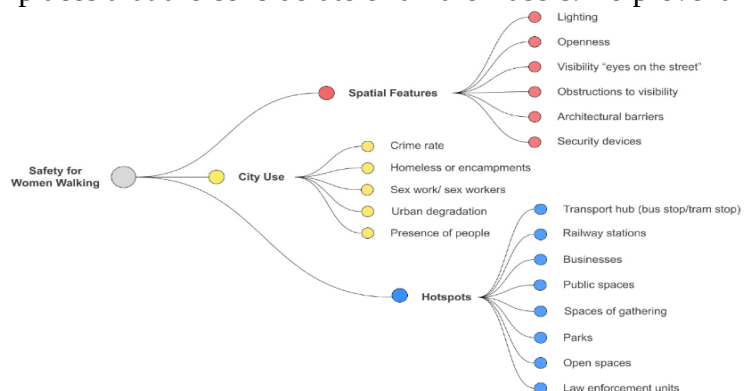


Figure 2 Safety for women walking factors

Source: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/21/15636>

the annual "Crime in India" report from the National Crime Record Bureau.

According to a 2008 Indian Express survey, women in small towns experience significantly less insecurity than those in large cities or rural areas. The poll divides women into groups according to age, income level, whether they are single or have children, whether they work, and their community. It focuses on some of the most vulnerable groups of women that require special policy attention: poor women living in big cities are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence due to a lack of safe housing and inadequate shelters; single working women and young women under the age of 25 feel much more unsafe than the average in all kinds of localities; young Muslim women feel particularly unsafe despite the lack of a clear community pattern relating to their level of insecurity; and poor women who are Muslim themselves are among the most vulnerable groups of women.⁽¹⁾ The survey helps us to understand that there are various kinds of issues faced by females of different age groups related to planning of urban areas, accessibility to public spaces and lack of public toilets.

1.2 Objectives and Structure of the Paper

This paper aims to examine the importance of women's safety in the built environment for promoting gender equality, with a focus on urban planning and architecture. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, case studies, and best practices, the paper seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the significance of women's safety in urban spaces for advancing gender equality, emphasizing the intersectional nature of safety concerns and their implications for women's rights and freedoms.
2. Explore the historical context of urban planning and architecture's impact on women's safety and rights, tracing the evolution of gender biases and inequalities in urban design and development.
3. Analyze the current challenges and barriers to women's safety in the built environment, including physical, social, and institutional factors that contribute to women's experiences of insecurity and vulnerability.
4. Examine innovative strategies and interventions aimed at improving women's safety in urban environments, drawing insights from successful case studies and best practices from around the world.
5. Provide recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, architects, and community stakeholders to integrate women's safety considerations into urban planning processes, infrastructure development projects, and public policy frameworks.

By addressing these objectives, the paper aims to contribute to ongoing efforts to create safer, more inclusive, and gender-responsive cities that prioritize the well-being and rights of all residents, regardless of gender.

2. Understanding Women's Safety in the Built Environment:

Women encounter numerous challenges when accessing and navigating public spaces, which significantly impact their sense of safety and well-being. One of the most pervasive challenges is the prevalence of harassment, ranging from verbal harassment to physical assault, which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation for women in urban environments. The fear of harassment or violence often leads women to alter their behavior, such as avoiding certain routes, public transportation, or outdoor spaces, limiting their freedom of movement and access to essential services and opportunities.

Additionally, women's experiences of safety in the built environment are shaped by various spatial dynamics and design features. Poorly lit streets, isolated or unmonitored areas, lack of visibility, and inadequate public transportation infrastructure contribute to feelings of insecurity among women. Urban landscapes dominated by large, imposing structures or characterized by long, unbroken stretches without natural surveillance create opportunities for perpetrators to target women without fear of detection. Furthermore, the absence of safe and accessible public facilities, such as public restrooms or waiting areas, leaves women vulnerable to harassment or assault when seeking basic amenities.

Moreover, the design of public spaces often fails to consider the diverse needs and experiences of women, particularly those from marginalized communities. Women with disabilities, elderly women, pregnant women, and LGBTQ+ individuals may face additional barriers and risks due to inadequate infrastructure and discriminatory attitudes. For example, the lack of wheelchair ramps, tactile paving, or gender-neutral restroom facilities further limit their mobility and access to essential services, exacerbating their vulnerability to violence and harassment.

In conclusion, understanding the challenges women face in accessing and navigating public spaces is crucial for addressing gender-based inequalities and promoting women's safety in the built environment. By analyzing the spatial dynamics and design features that contribute to feelings of safety or insecurity, policymakers, urban planners, and designers can develop gender-responsive strategies to create safer, more inclusive, and equitable cities for all residents.

3. Intersectionality and Women's Safety

Intersectionality plays a crucial role in shaping women's experiences of safety and insecurity in the built environment, highlighting how various intersecting factors such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality compound and exacerbate gender-based inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989). Women from marginalized groups, including women of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and women with disabilities, face unique vulnerabilities that intersect with their gender to shape their interactions with and perceptions of urban spaces (Collins, 2000).

Women of color, for example, often experience heightened levels of surveillance, suspicion, and racial profiling in public spaces, significantly impacting their sense of safety and belonging (Browne, 2015). Historical and systemic racism intersect with gender to create environments where women of color are disproportionately targeted for harassment, violence, and discrimination (Hanhardt, 2013). Additionally, the lack of representation and inclusion in urban planning and design processes further marginalizes women of color, limiting their ability to voice their concerns and advocate for safer environments that reflect their needs and experiences (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2016).

LGBTQ+ individuals also face specific challenges related to safety and inclusion in the built environment due to pervasive heteronormative attitudes and discrimination (Doan, 2011). Public spaces may be unwelcoming or hostile environments for LGBTQ+ individuals, where they risk facing verbal and physical harassment, assault, and hate crimes (Moran & Skeggs, 2004). Transgender individuals, in particular, are vulnerable to violence and discrimination, often experiencing heightened levels of scrutiny and stigma when accessing public facilities such as restrooms or shelters (Namaste, 2000).

Furthermore, women with disabilities encounter significant barriers to safety and accessibility in urban environments, as the built environment often fails to accommodate their diverse needs and experiences (Imrie, 2012). Physical barriers such as lack of ramps, uneven sidewalks, and inaccessible public transportation systems limit their mobility and independence,

increasing their vulnerability to violence and harassment (Kitchin, 1998). Additionally, societal attitudes and stereotypes about disability intersect with gender to further marginalize women with disabilities, compounding their experiences of discrimination and exclusion in public spaces (Garland-Thomson, 2009).

In conclusion, intersectionality highlights the complex and interconnected nature of gender-based inequalities in the built environment, emphasizing the need for intersectional approaches to address the unique vulnerabilities faced by marginalized groups (Hancock, 2016). By centering the experiences and perspectives of women of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and women with disabilities in urban planning and design processes, policymakers, urban planners, and designers can develop more inclusive and equitable strategies to promote women's safety and well-being in urban environments (Fenster, 2005).

4. Factors Influencing Women's Safety

The safety of women in the built environment is influenced by a myriad of factors, ranging from physical design elements to socio-cultural dynamics. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to enhance women's safety and promote gender equality in urban spaces.

4.1 Urban Design and Infrastructure

Urban design significantly affects women's safety in public spaces. Elements like street layout, lighting, and surveillance can enhance security (Jacobs, 1961) or increase vulnerability (Pain, 2001). Well-lit streets and active storefronts deter crime (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2012), while dark, isolated areas pose risks (Valentine, 1990). Safe public transport improves mobility, while poor infrastructure limits access to opportunities (Ceccato & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2021). Social norms and gender inequalities further restrict women's freedom (Phadke et al., 2011). A gender-responsive urban approach is essential for safer, more inclusive cities (UN-Habitat, 2020).

5. Case of Shahjahanabad, Old Delhi, Delhi

Shahjahanabad is renowned for its bazaars, street cuisine, shopping areas, and Islamic architecture, serving as the metropolis of Delhi's symbolic centre.

Shahjahanabad, the imperial capital of the Mughal Empire (1628–58), was constructed between 1639 and 1648 and covered a sizable area along the Yamuna River's banks in the Delhi triangle's southeast. Between the reign of Humayun's Delhi and the arrival of Shahjahan, the renowned Mughal architect who created Shahjahanabad, the seventh city of Delhi, in 1648, Delhi experienced something of an eclipse. More people can see Shahjahan's Delhi today than any of the Delhis built before it. As evidenced by the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid, the scale on which he erected was likewise more heroic.

5.1 Heritage of the city

In addition to the living social heritage of Shahjahanabad, there is the architectural heritage. The heritage of evolving residential architecture and the heritage of the urban shape of the entire city are both found beyond the monuments of the Jama Masjid, Red Fort, and the other smaller ancient structures. The historic preservation of a national heritage is involved. There are havelis (houses of noble families), mahals (palaces) and katras (four-sided courtyard homes) in old Delhi of such beauty that, but for their continued occupation, they could be dismantled and reassembled in the National Museum. Great Mughal and Hindu traditions of house design and construction are embodied in their form. The overall morphology of the city is a rare example of an evolved Indigenous tradition of urban form.

A second aspect of the architectural heritage is its contemporary social significance. Katra and haveli style houses continue to respond to the social requirements and cultural traditions of their residents. Both limit access of strangers to the home while granting the benefits of sunlight and greenery. Since the majority of old Delhi-ites prefer to maintain traditions of purdah, the internal courtyard space is especially important for women and children. The katra style house form is particularly conducive to parosi (neighborly) relations which develop between residents which share the common courtyard. Inside, the haveli or katra space can be further divided in accordance with cultural attitudes about social relations between the various members of extended families.

5.2 Community Pattern:

Old Delhi's mohallas are close-knit, culturally rich neighborhoods where residents share familiarity, traditions, and a strong sense of place. The human-scale built form enhances aesthetics and security, deterring outsiders and crime. Self-governing bodies like Mohalla Samitis and panchayats manage civic issues, uphold social order, and support welfare, education, and cultural activities. For residents, these vibrant communities are not slums but a preferred lifestyle, unlike the socially detached colonies of South and West Delhi.

5.3 Economic function of the city:

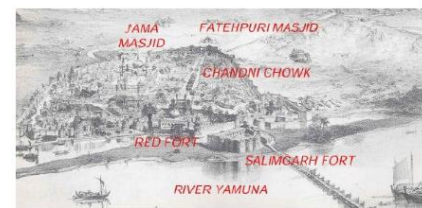
Old Delhi is a key commercial hub for the Delhi-New Delhi region, specializing in wholesale trade, cottage industries, manufacturing, and recycling. It supplies grains, spices, textiles, electronics, and housewares, while also being a center for bookbinding, printing, and handcrafts. Markets like Chandni Chowk and Chawri Bazaar cater to diverse needs, including Muslim specialty goods. It also leads in food production, meat distribution, and recycling. Despite social isolation, Shahjahanabad has always played a vital economic role.

5.4 Status of women in the old time

To stay in purdah, women were urged (veil). Their faces had to be always hidden. The presence of the purdah system prevented them from having the freedom to live their lives as they pleased. It was forbidden for the women to move freely. They were accompanied by others if they left their dwellings. Participation in social, cultural, economic, and political activities was forbidden. They were advised to stay within the confines of the home. The purdah system denotes the separation of women from the public using their attire as well as high-walled enclosures, screens, and drapes with their homes.

Meena Bazaars, also known as Kuhs Ruz ("Day of Joy"), were held only for women during the Mughal era, apart from the emperor and a few princes. Throughout the Norouz (New Year) holiday, the bazaars lasted for 5 to 8 days. They were initially planned by Emperor Humayun, but Akbar and his successors increased their complexity. The marketplace was only open to the emperor, princes, and a select group of nobility. As is obvious from the name Meena, Meena Bazar's goal was to increase women's employment. The products were pricey and restricted to

*Figure 3 old map of the city;
Source Google-*



*Figure 4 map of heritage building in
Shahjahanabad;
Source- Google*

Indian sultanates. Due to culture and tradition, women's conditions at the period were also declining.

5.5 Evolution with time

The Walled City of Delhi (Shahjahanabad), frequently referred to be the essence of Delhi, is fading despite the last 50 years of planning. It is deteriorating, and its illustrious past is passing away. The Walled City, whose population was initially projected to be around 60,000, reached its maximum point of 4.2 lakh people in 1961 before dropping to 3.50 lakh in 1991 and 2.35 lakh in 2001. The population has been falling primarily because of commercial operations expanding and the quality-of-life degrading. The Walled City has becoming progressively more crowded with trade and business, which now numbers 46256 or almost 7% of all current establishments in Delhi. In contrast to the city's 2% population, the Walled City houses 60% of wholesale trade, 25% of retail trade, and 28% of informal trade and services. The Walled City has a total area of 569 ha, of which 180 ha (31.8%) is used for residential purposes, 88 ha (17%) for commercial purposes, 22.60% for transportation (roads and trains), and 9 percent for other purposes. (1.6%). The overcrowding is primarily caused by I the fact that railway establishments account for a sizable portion of circulation, (ii) the fact that commercial establishment densities have increased significantly over time, and (iii) the fact that the number of workers per acre in commercial, industrial, or trade establishments has increased significantly. Delhi's Old City is where wholesale markets specialising in practically every commodity are concentrated. Historic structures, monuments, and urban history are abundant throughout the Walled City. There were 1321 historical monuments in Delhi according to the Archaeological Survey of India in 1914, 1208 of which are still standing today. Of these, 411 are in the Old City, of which 41 are designated as protected monuments. Under Section III of the Slum Area (Improvement and Clearance) Act of 1956, the Slum Department of the MCD is responsible for managing around 3,500 evacuee properties, or "Katras."

5.6 Existing Landuse & Built-up

The following map shows the landuse of Shahjahanabad. Heritage monuments consist of 14% and Gateways consists of 9% of total site area. Further the landuse is predominantly Residential with 20%, then commercial with 14%, Mixed use with 12% and public semi-public with 7%.

53% of the total area of Shahjahanabad is covered by built-up while 47% of the area is an open area. Most of the open area is available in the Northeast region due to the presence of Red Fort.

5.8 Issues

5.8.1 Current Crime Against Women

At least one woman is raped in the nation's capital every 24 hours, according to a 2004 police report from Delhi (The Times of India 2004). According to a survey by the Delhi Commission for Women, women and girls from lower socioeconomic classes are more likely to be raped, even if middle-class women are at best given insufficient protection. Delhi has the highest rate of crimes against women in both the public and private realms, per the National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB 2007). The most offending city among the 35 major cities was Delhi surveyed by the NCRB in 2007., which "accounted for 29.5 percent of rape incidents, 31.8 percent of kidnapping and abduction cases...and 21.5 percent of molestation instances" While other crimes against women, such as dowry killings, domestic violence, and psychological torture, rank Delhi as the worst Indian city, rape, kidnapping, and molestation commonly occur in the city's public areas and

make up a significant amount of the city's reported crime. In a recent survey conducted by the Centre for Equity and Inclusion (CEQUIN) and the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) in 2009, 96% of the 630 women between the ages of 12 and 55 from all socioeconomic demographics in both New and Old Delhi stressed that they particularly feel threatened in the well-known markets of Chandni Chowk, Connaught Place, and Karol Bagh as well as in the public buses (Indo-Asian News Service 2009). One of the survey's more unsettling findings further explains that 60% of these women are most worried about the safety of young girls, and 88% agreed that public buses are the riskiest form of transportation in the nation's capital. In addition, according to the research, 88% of the women believed that, if they were harassed or attacked in the city's public places, onlookers and other members of the civic community rarely provided them with support or protection. The women are also very hesitant to trust the Delhi police since they anticipate more sexual harassment from them.

5.8.2 Issues Related to Planning with respect to different age groups & Gender

- Impact on a woman's access to the urban environment:

Planning that ignores gendered assumptions in design has an impact on a woman's access to the urban environment. The ability of women to access, utilise, and occupy urban space in large numbers is essential to their idea of safety in the city. Gender insensitive urban infrastructure that is not designed for female bodies and is inattentive to their needs exacerbates situations that render a female defenceless to various forms of exclusion and violence in the city.

- Discrimination at all levels

Gender-based violence occurs on many different levels, starting with prejudice at birth and extending to discrimination in work, income, education, nutrition, and acts of direct or indirect sexual assault. One can easily see this inequality in our local parks and streets where boys predominate in sports like football and "gully cricket," especially in rural regions where girls are not permitted to go out and play in some communities during their childhood owing to a lack of safe open places. Since there are so few facilities in schools to support a girl through her menstruation, especially in urban regions, it becomes challenging for young girls to continue their education after puberty. A girl may need to use a public restroom in an emergency while travelling to and from school.

Since higher education institutions are in remote places where a girl's family or she herself feels unsafe travelling, girls in rural areas confront additional difficulties while attempting to pursue higher education. When a woman starts working in an urban area, the absence of a public infrastructure that supports women becomes increasingly obvious. Due to a lack of infrastructure that is hospitable to women, pregnant women and elderly women find it challenging to travel around the city without needing assistance. No of the age group, a woman's access to public areas is constantly questioned. The patriarchal responses of the society reveal that, given the unfavourable nature of cities, women might be better-off staying away from these spaces entirely, endangering a woman's right to the city and access to public space. Instead of voicing responses that are meant to foster a woman's access to the city.

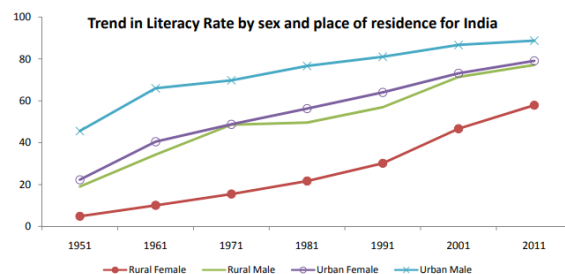


Figure 5 trend of literacy rate by sex and place of residence in India (Source: Census of India)

- **Absence of Local Democratic Participation**

The main concern with respect to urban planning in India is the absence of local democratic participation in cities. The institutional frameworks for decentralized governance are not in order, even after two decades of the passing of the 74th constitutional amendment which enables urban local governments to operate as self-governing bodies. The planning process turns ineffective since public participation is not made mandatory as per law and comments from the public requested only once the plan is completed. This form of planning process does not even meet the requirements of people it is planning for, much less for the women stakeholders. The absence of participation badly affects women since they are the ones who can express about their needs and requirements, depending upon on the problems that they face. For instance, a report by NEW INDIA EXPRESS reveals the case of Visakhapatnam in October 2017, where several incidents of rape and sexual violence had been reported against women who do not have access to safe housing and must resort to sleeping on the streets or under flyovers highlighting the role of poverty and destitution in sexual violence. Even in old delhi there are lot of cases against women which are not even talked and that just erase it even by the family. Such incidents remain ignored, underreported and the aggrieved are often silenced by the authorities. (2)

- **Include Women Perspective in Planning**

The Delhi government launched the Stree Shakti programme for slum-dwelling women in 2002 to address issues with women's health and well-being, gender discrimination, community involvement, and women's empowerment. While the Master Plan provides no recommendations regarding urban design, services, or infrastructure that could make the city more inclusive of women from the perspective of women's safety, it does not use breakdown data to show which regions are more vulnerable for women. While discussing urban planning or service provision, the 2006 plan talks about creating a safe and inclusive city without addressing women's access, and it also makes no mention of women's unique issues.

6. Case Studies and Best Practices:

Examining successful initiatives and interventions aimed at improving women's safety in urban environments provides valuable insights into effective strategies and approaches that can be replicated and adapted in different contexts. Here, we review several case studies and best practices from around the world, encompassing urban design interventions, community-based programs, and public transportation reforms.

Intervention Type	Location	Description
Urban Design Interventions	Bogotá, Colombia	The "Red de Ciclorrutas" (Ciclovía Network) is a network of bike lanes and pedestrian paths that has transformed Bogotá's urban landscape, making it safer and more accessible for women to navigate the city. By providing dedicated spaces for non-motorized transport and promoting active transportation, the Ciclovía Network has enhanced women's mobility and reduced their vulnerability to harassment and violence on public transit.

Intervention Type	Location	Description
	Copenhagen, Denmark	The "Shared Space" approach adopted in Copenhagen's city center prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles, creating vibrant and inclusive public spaces where women feel safe and empowered to assert their presence. By redesigning streets to prioritize human-scale interactions and slow traffic speeds, Copenhagen has created an environment that promotes social cohesion and reduces the risk of traffic-related injuries and fatalities, particularly for women and vulnerable road users.
Community-Based Programs	Mumbai, India	The "Women on Wheels" program empowers women to become trained drivers of public transportation vehicles, such as taxis and auto-rickshaws, providing safe and reliable transportation options for women and girls in Mumbai. By increasing the presence of female drivers on the road, the program has not only improved women's access to mobility but also challenged traditional gender norms and stereotypes in the male-dominated transportation sector.
	Cairo, Egypt	The "HarassMap" initiative utilizes crowdsourced data and digital mapping technology to document incidents of sexual harassment and assault in public spaces, raise awareness about the prevalence of gender-based violence, and advocate for policy changes and community interventions. By harnessing the power of technology and community mobilization, HarassMap has catalyzed public discourse on women's safety and influenced government responses to address the root causes of harassment and discrimination.
Public Transportation Reforms	Vienna, Austria	The "Women's Safety Audits" conducted by the city of Vienna engage women and other marginalized groups in assessing the safety and accessibility of public transportation systems, identifying areas for improvement, and advocating for policy changes and infrastructure upgrades. By centering the voices and experiences of women in decision-making processes, Vienna has implemented gender-sensitive interventions, such as improved lighting, increased surveillance, and enhanced signage, to create safer and more inclusive public transportation environments.
	Mexico City, Mexico	The introduction of "Women-Only Cars" on the metro system in Mexico City provides women with dedicated spaces free from harassment and violence, enabling them to travel safely and comfortably. By implementing targeted interventions to address gender-based violence and ensure women's right to mobility, Mexico City has improved the accessibility and inclusivity of its public transportation system, setting a precedent for other cities grappling with similar challenges.

In analysing the effectiveness of these initiatives and interventions, it becomes evident that gender-sensitive urban planning policies and strategies are essential for creating safer, more inclusive, and equitable cities for all residents. By prioritizing women's safety and well-being in urban development agendas, cities can foster environments where women feel empowered to assert their presence and participate fully in civic life, ultimately advancing gender equality and social justice on a global scale.

7. Recommendations for Action:

Based on the insights gleaned from the review of case studies, best practices, and existing research, the following recommendations are proposed to create safer and more inclusive built environments for women and integrate women's safety considerations into urban planning processes, infrastructure development projects, and public policy frameworks:

7.1. Adopt a Gender-Responsive Approach:

1. Prioritize gender equality and women's safety as fundamental principles in urban planning and design processes.
2. Incorporate a gender analysis framework into decision-making processes to identify and address the specific needs and concerns of women in urban environments.

7.2. Enhance Urban Design and Infrastructure:

1. Design streets, parks, and public spaces with a focus on creating well-lit, pedestrian-friendly environments that promote visibility and natural surveillance.
2. Ensure the provision of safe and accessible public transportation options, including adequate lighting, security personnel, and gender-sensitive signage.

7.3. Promote Community Engagement and Participation:

1. Engage women and marginalized groups in community-based planning processes to ensure their voices and experiences are heard and integrated into decision-making.
2. Establish partnerships with local organizations, advocacy groups, and grassroots initiatives to co-create solutions that address women's safety concerns in specific neighborhoods and communities.

7.4. Implement Gender-Sensitive Policies and Guidelines:

1. Develop and enforce gender-sensitive urban planning policies and guidelines that prioritize women's safety and well-being in the design and management of public spaces.
2. Integrate women's safety considerations into zoning regulations, building codes, and land-use planning to create environments that are inclusive and equitable for all residents.

7.5. Provide Training and Capacity Building:

1. Provide training and capacity-building programs for urban planners, architects, designers, and policymakers on gender-sensitive design principles and best practices.
2. Foster collaboration between different stakeholders, including government agencies, academic institutions, and civil society organizations, to share knowledge and expertise in promoting women's safety in the built environment.

7.6. Conduct Regular Safety Audits and Monitoring:

1. Conduct regular safety audits and assessments of public spaces to identify areas of concern and prioritize interventions to address women's safety needs.
2. Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of urban development projects to ensure they are responsive to the evolving needs and priorities of women and marginalized communities.

7.7. Advocate for Gender-Responsive Funding and Resources:

1. Advocate for dedicated funding and resources to support initiatives aimed at improving women's safety in urban environments, including research, pilot projects, and capacity-building initiatives.
2. Lobby for the integration of gender-responsive indicators and targets into urban development plans and funding mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency in resource allocation.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers, urban planners, designers, and community stakeholders can work together to create safer, more inclusive, and equitable built

environments that prioritize the safety and well-being of women and promote gender equality in cities around the world.

8. Conclusion:

This study highlights the crucial role of urban design, transportation, social norms, and power dynamics in shaping women's safety in public spaces. A gender-responsive, intersectional approach is essential, particularly for marginalized communities. Collaborative efforts among government agencies, academia, and civil society can foster safer, more inclusive cities. Policymakers and urban planners must integrate gender-sensitive strategies into infrastructure and policy frameworks to promote social justice and equality. Shahjahanabad's historical setting exemplifies these challenges, necessitating improved infrastructure, law enforcement, and community engagement to create a model for inclusive urban safety

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