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towards Habitat III  
a gender perspective

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**towards Habitat III  
a gender perspective**





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Abstract

## **Does the domestic space belong to women? An Assessment of the Housing in the New Indian Urban Agenda through the lens of gender**

*Rewa Marathe, Suzana Jacob*

### *Abstract*

Households in the cultural context of a patriarchal society such as India, are primary headed by men. The reason why a female heads a household is not because of improving social and economic status of women—it is unlikely that a woman will be considered head of the household in the presence of her husband. It is mostly because there is no alternative (Masoodi, 2015). According to the 2011 Census, about 27 million households in India (11% of total households in the country), are headed by women. Still the socio cultural system places women as a outsider in their own family - the one who will marry and leave her parents' house for her husband - and as the outsider in their husband's



*High Rise Residential Apartments, Mumbai*

house who came into the family through the marriage. In spite of it all, the house remains at the heart of their lives. It is where they spend most of their time, look after their family and children and even run businesses. In such a conflicting scenario of ownership and belonging to the house, it is essential that we question our housing policies, building and property ownership regulations for their adequacy of providing safety and security to the women. This paper presents India's current scenario through the lens of gender, with focus on India's new urban agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The purpose is to highlight the gaps in the system which weaken women's position as an equal member of the society.

#### **KEY WORDS**

*Gender, Housing, Policy, India, Mainstreaming*

#### **Lo spazio domestico appartiene alle donne? Una valutazione dell'Housing nella Nuova Agenda Urbana Indiana attraverso le lenti di genere**

Le famiglie nel contesto culturale di una società patriarcale come l'India, sono prevalentemente guidate da uomini. Il motivo per cui una donna si trova a capo di un nucleo familiare non è una conseguenza del miglioramento della condizione sociale ed economica delle donne - è improbabile che una donna sarà considerata capo della famiglia, in presenza del marito. È soprattutto perché non ci sono alternative (Masoodi, 2015). Secondo il censimento 2011, circa 27 milioni di famiglie in India (11% delle famiglie nel paese), sono guidate da donne. Il sistema socio culturale pone ancora le donne in una posizione simile a quella di un estraneo nella propria famiglia - quella dell'uomo che sposerà e per il quale ha lasciato la casa dei propri genitori - che la rende un'outsider nella casa del marito in cui è entrata attraverso il matrimonio. A dispetto di tutto questo, la casa resta al centro della loro vita. E 'dove trascorrono la maggior parte del loro tempo, curano la loro famiglia e i bambini nonché dove conducono i propri business. In uno scenario così conflittuale di proprietà e appartenenza della casa, è essenziale che si mettano in discussione le politiche per la casa, le normative che regolano la costruzione e la proprietà delle abitazioni affinché si possano adeguare per garantire sicurezza e protezione alle donne. Questo articolo presenta lo scenario attuale in India attraverso la lente di genere, con particolare attenzione alla nuova agenda urbana dell'India e agli obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile. Lo scopo è quello di evidenziare le lacune nel sistema che indeboliscono la posizione delle donne come membro paritario della società.

#### **PAROLE CHIAVE**

*Genere, Housing, Politiche, India, Mainstreaming*



## **Does the domestic space belong to women? An Assessment of the Housing in the New Indian Urban Agenda through the lens of gender**

*Rewa Marathe, Suzana Jacob*

### **1- Introduction**

This paper presents a broad analysis of housing and its influence on women in India, in terms of policy, programmes and design. It addresses housing sector in general and some issues of affordable housing, to highlight the diversity of struggles within the seemingly homogenous group of “women”. The study is limited to urban development and policy dialogue in the country and draws upon wide range of work done by experts in the housing sector in the last few years and theoretical research on the subject of gender mainstreaming. The aim of the paper is to highlight systemic ignorance and exclusion which is at the heart of this.

Lack of access to and control over land, housing and property constitutes a violation of human rights and contributes significantly to women’s increasing poverty (Housing and Land Rights Network). Women’s equality depends on restructuring the delivery of care in some way. While individual women have and will continue to make incredible strides, women as a class will not fully achieve social, economic, and political equality until responsibility for the care of society’s dependents becomes consistent with participation in public life. (Silbaugh, 2007).

### **2. Indian housing scenario**

Urban population of India is about 377.1 million (31% of total) (Census, 2011). With more than 10 million people migrating to cities and towns every year, this number is expected to reach about 600 million by 2031 (Kumar, 2016). This is creating a large demand for housing in the cities. According to estimates of the Technical Group constituted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA), the urban housing shortage in the country (quantitative and qualitative) at the end of the 11th Five-Year Plan (2013) was estimated to be 26.53 million for 75.01 million households (Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, 2007). The group further estimated that 99% of this shortage pertains to houses for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Lower-Income Groups (LIG) (Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, 2007).

In the federal structure of the Indian polity, the matters pertaining to housing and urban development have been assigned by the Constitution to the State Governments. The Centre can, at the most, “issue directives, provide advisory services, set up model

legislation and fund programmes which the states can follow at will". Despite this, the states have rarely made housing policy (Batra, 2009). Thus the housing policies that are practiced in the different states are largely an off shoot of that outlined by centre. In the recent years, Government of India tried hard to cover the gap in the housing demand and supply through various schemes and programmes, but the target driven approach has done little in qualitatively improving the scenario.

### *Gender and Housing*

Access to safe and secure housing is a factor of the traditional gender binaries. It is an extension of the patriarchal culture which contributes to the differences in boys' and girls' educational access, career aspirations, and the wage and social status advantage (Hughes, 2008). Enforcement of this biological gender dimorphism is the most basic power dynamic in society, allowing 'men' to coerce 'women' with their stronger bodies and dominance-driven behaviour (Hughes, 2008). But today, the definition of gender has evolved. It is now considered as a person's social gender, rather than the biological, and it includes the respective person's upbringing according to gender roles, social expectations and (behavioural) norms for women/girls and men/boys. These norms are mutable and vary both within and between cultures (Urban Development Vienna, 2013). Gender must be considered in the context of age, class, income group, and ethnic type and the differing degrees of power.

Even with this diversity it is easy to see that women or individuals with non-conforming gender identities, face similar issues (relatively speaking) due to their position in this society (Hughes, 2008). This is a result of gender blind policies and practices. Gender blindness<sup>1</sup> is ignorance of issues that are faced by "others" (including women and individuals with non-conforming gender identity). A gender blind policy assumes that everyone is affected in a same way by that given policy, programme or legislation, irrespective of their gender. India's housing sector, much like its other sectors, is driven by many policies which follow this pattern. While this ignorance affects everyone in the society, the negative consequences are severe for the "others".

The SDGs clearly advocate for gender equality through Goal No. 5 and safe, sustainable and resilient housing through Goal No. 11. Its targets indicate a more comprehensive approach addressing needs of women, than before, and will be important as many countries, including India, will use these targets to drive their urban agenda. India's new urban policies indicate a shift towards more inclusive practices, as discussed later in the paper, but they continue to exhibit major gaps on the implementation end.

House is a workplace for the caregiver. In the current Indian context, this is primarily women. This is where they do all the domestic tasks, from cooking food to raising children. It is a place of security for them. Safe and affordable housing for women is a key to combating urban poverty (Khosla). In spite of all this, they tend to be excluded from the housing planning and design process. Their participation usually begins where the housing project ends - in the maintenance of housing stock (Fernando, 1985). Women and men differ in their roles, needs, and perceptions regarding housing and conscious

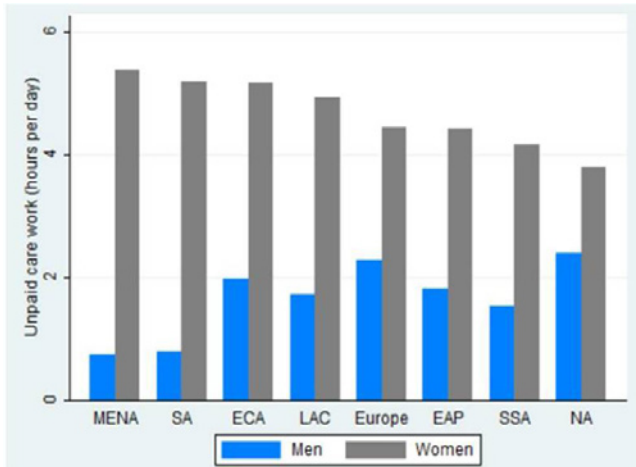
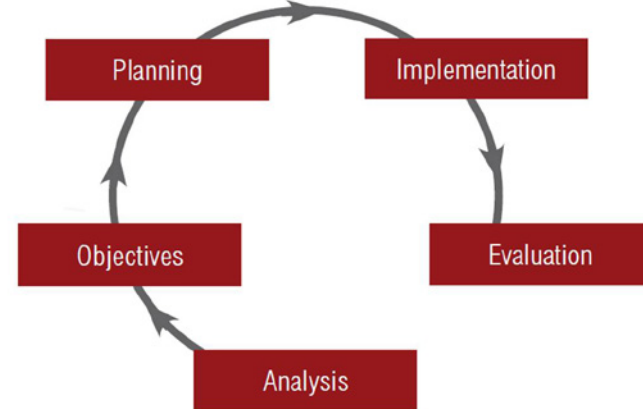


Fig. 1 - Time spent on unpaid care work varies by gender and region (Gaëlle Frant, December)

Fig. 2 - Gender Mainstreaming in Planning Process (Urban Development Vienna, 2013)

### Gender mainstreaming in planning processes



efforts to address their views lead to better project design and performance. This is where gender sensitive planning brings in great value.

Needs of women are assumed by the largely male-dominated engineering, design and urban planning fraternity and included as “special provisions for women” (Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, 2007) in the policy, planning and legislation as if women’s needs stand apart from general needs of the society and that addressing them is a brownie point. The planning processes also perpetuates traditional gender roles assigned by the local socio-cultural paradigm. These are often stereotypes limiting all users groups in the society, not just women. The unequal distribution of unpaid work between women and men is an illustration of this as shown in Figure 1.

Adopting **Gender Mainstreaming** in India’s housing policies, will provide equal opportunities for people of all gender identities. It will enable equitable distribution of resources, developing a system which is more sensitive to the needs of the society and leads to greater transparency due to wider engagement with the members of the society at different stages of the planning processes. Gender-sensitive planning defines the concept of work not only as paid work but also as unpaid housework and family tasks (Urban Development Vienna, 2013).

This paper presents a broad picture of gender blindness in policy, legislation, finance and design in the housing sector in India. It does so by looking at the national level policies, housing programs, national building code and the current national urban development missions in the country.

### 3. Policy and programme

The ability of women to achieve political, economic, civic and educational equality depends upon the environment in which they live and the facilities they can access (Dory Reeves; Bonnie Parfitt; Carol Archer, 2012). Creation of environments which promotes their progress can only be achieved through deliberate policy interventions. Unfortu-

nately, women appear to have been excluded from majority of the discourse on the subject, being treated as a separate minority category, existing in the private realm (Greed, 1994).

### *Policy*

Housing is a State subject, but states have rarely made policies for housing (Batra, 2009). Some states adopted the directives and policies issued by the Centre, while in other states, no housing policy exists. In addition to the policy, the central government in India also disburses funding to the states through schemes called Centrally Sponsored Schemes. This two pronged approach of policy and programmes is used to address the housing demand in India. India has consistently endorsed and adopted global strategies to shape its housing policies in both private and public sectors.

The National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy 2007 mentions women in two places - Under “*Special Provisions for Women*”: and Under “*Employment issues relating to the Housing Sector*”, stating the need for involvement of women in decision making and need to address concerns of female headed household in case of the former; and discussing disparity of wages, occupational health and safety, and toilet facilities in the latter.

The policy fails women in two ways -

- The policy is clearly gender-blind as it tries to encompass all needs of women within the single phrase of “*special provisions for women*”. These propagates the gender neutral language and approach through the programmes it supports. Pressing issues of women in housing, such as ownership, security of tenure, access of finance, domestic violence, home as work place, etc. are not addressed in the policy.
- Failure of the policy altogether to ensure its adoption at the state level, and thereby cities. This has resulted in lack of implementation of even the token measures currently covered by it, such as “*Employment issues relating to the Housing Sector*” .

In 2015, the country welcomed a Draft National Urban Rental Housing Policy, 2015. It presses for the need for rental housing for target groups which include single women among others; and it talks about provision of shelter for vulnerable groups (this includes women) (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2015). The policy shows some recognition of gender based needs by attempting to identify working women as follows - “*this segment usually stays for 6 months to 5 years preferably at a single location. Mostly depend on hostels provided by educational institutes or private hostel operators or individual owners providing paying guest accommodation*” (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2015). This is a feeble attempt for addressing requirements of half of the population. Similar attempts are made in the transit oriented development (TOD) policy of Delhi. (Delhi Development Authority). But these policies still fall short in addressing the diverse and complex issue of gender in the housing sector and the measures continue to be token in nature, without much influence in the situation on the ground.

In 2016, the Government of India developed a Draft National Policy for Women which

articulates a vision for empowerment of women (Women and Child Care Development, Government of India, 2016). The policy looks at enabling environments such as housing and shelter, drinking water and sanitation, social security and infrastructure among others. Though this policy gives hope of addressing women's needs, the country is still a far cry from meaningful mainstreaming of gender in the policy making process.

Even though quite complex, gender mainstreaming can begin with the simplest of interventions, as is seen in case of the City of Montreal, where METRAC<sup>2</sup> developed the system of gender based safety audits and the City of Vienna, which adopted gender mainstreaming as a cross cutting strategy for the whole municipality by establishing an Office of Gender Mainstreaming. Unfortunately, so far success of gender based safety audits in India has been limited and they are often turned into a publicity tools by local governments, failing to result in positive change on ground. In these cases, the audit recommendations are quickly forgotten about once the initial act has occurred and public attention has waned. (Women in Cities International, 2009; Jagori, 2008; Wekerle, 2005)

#### *Programmes/Schemes*

Housing schemes for poor (women) have to be designed to address women's issues of lower incomes, informal sector employment, lack of access to collateral, formal credit, low control over family finances and low levels of literacy (Khosla). Unfortunately methods for recruitment of beneficiaries, including means of announcing the scheme, applications procedures and down payment requirements often inadvertently exclude women as there is no effort to reach women who are often unable to participate in activities where information is likely to be available.

Previous housing policies and programs failed to consider the significance of female home ownership in poor households (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). The recent Pradhan Manthri Avas Yojana (PMAY), a scheme under the New Urban Agenda makes an attempt to address this issue. The mission supports construction of affordable houses for the homeless with basic civic infrastructure and mandates its registration in the name of a woman in the family (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2015). Allocation of houses to beneficiaries is through a transparent process using an online portal. Further, government used Aadhar cards<sup>3</sup> for recruitment of beneficiaries (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2015). Still, the success of the programme will depend on the advocacy and engagement of women at all levels.

The recent attempts to understand the interaction of women and home ownership, and inclusion of women as equal partners in housing has not been sufficient. The activity of housing should not end with provision of house, but as Turner says, should create environments that help make good decisions (Fernando, 1985). Looking beyond the EWS and LIG, programmes should address several other factors such as lower wages as compared to male counterparts, social stigma with single mothers and unmarried women, and many more, that restrict the ownership and access to affordable housing to



the diverse group of women.

### *Legislation*

Gender based gaps in housing legislation can be explored through the lens of home (and land) ownership, and housing (and land) acts. Constitutional right for gender equality does not reach the religious and customary laws that dictate most property rights relative to marriage, divorce, and inheritance (Gopal, 1993). In majority of Indian communities, property is mostly inherited by the male members of the household. Even outside the forte of inheritance, most women do not enjoy property rights for house or land acquired with the participation of women in paid work and unpaid care work. Women are more often excluded from secure land tenure and housing than men (UN Habitat, 2012). This is largely due to the socio-cultural paradigm, which places them as an outsider in their own family - the one who will marry and leave her parent's house for her husband - and as the outsider in their husband's house who came into the family through the marriage. The situation has several important implications for women. This includes their inability to escape situations of domestic violence due to fear of homelessness; their inability to raise finances using the property, whether it is to educate the children or to finance a business ventures; their weak legal status keeping them from benefitting from the sale of the property among many others. The current system of property rights tend to reinforce the control of man as the primary breadwinner, giving them power over the household. This further continues as a result of the practice of beneficiary recruitment, which assumes that the beneficiary is the "head of the household", who is always considered to be the father or the husband (unless there is no adult male member in the household).

Land acquisition is one of the most commonly used tool for land assembly in India. It has huge impact on lives of women, particularly as displacement affects their access to work and mobility. The burden of displacement may affect women differently (may affect women negatively) because of the fact that there exist gender disparities in the country (National Commission for Women). Further, the latest ordinance to the Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 exempts several type of development projects (including schools, hospitals) from mandatory social impact assessment (SIA) for "*ease of business*". Absence of SIA makes acquisition and hence displacement easy. It causes loss of access to common property resources, livelihood, services, sanitation facilities and breakdown of family life during transition period with many other effects. Also, women as project affected person (PAPs), stand little claim to the re-imbursment in presence of male family members.

In practice, many recent land registration and housing programmes, as well as wider land and planning policies, are not gender sensitive. Even when gender considerations are integrated into the design, they have not always been implemented in practice. It is rare for all the ingredients of a progressive legal framework to be in place and often inconsistencies between sources of law and individual pieces of legislation remain. In addition, there are gaps between legal provisions and social norms and practices (Ra-

kodi, 2014).

### *Finance*

A house is a significant and often the only asset for many individuals and purchasing one requires major financial support. However, current formal financing systems tends to be latently exclusionary for women. Broadly speaking, there are two challenges regarding financing housing - financing to build a house and house as a financing medium. Women and women headed households have perpetually been in a form of Catch-22 situation, where absence of property registered to their name limits their capacity to raise finances and the limitation of raising finances keeps them from acquiring property. Given that women-headed<sup>4</sup> households tend to be poorer than those headed by men, and may lack time and skills to self-build, financing housing is particularly problematic for them (Moser, 1992). Lack of information on the subject, low and irregular incomes, lack of collateral, complicated loan application procedures, discrimination on the part of male bureaucrats, high interest rates and women's lack of legal standing in certain areas, all contribute to weaken their position in purchase of a dwelling unit. Where financing agencies are not closely informed about the characteristics of income earning of subgroups of beneficiaries charges may discriminate against the neediest groups (Moser, 1992). In cases where these households manage to secure financing, they are at a disadvantage if the cost-recovery payments are based on the average household earnings for the community as a whole. Further, women working on low and irregular incomes might struggle with payment of fixed sum each month in a formal housing finance scheme.

Despite greater economic difficulties amongst women, and their primary role in providing for family welfare, it is often found women appeared more responsible about their debts. The instances of women in male-headed households making personal payments on mortgage loans to ensure that they protect the shelter for their children and themselves is also common (East Africa Development Library). Where housing financing fail to address needs of women, finance is made available at the expense of the domestic budget. In such situations women may end up cutting back on food and other vital household items and working much harder in the home to compensate for the drop in resources and to save money (Moser, 1992).

SEWA Bank is a cooperative that runs exclusively on the deposits of members, who are the bank's shareholders. It aims to provide poor women with access to financial services that are tailored to self-employed women's needs and means. The disbursement of loans is integrated within a number of additional financial and non-financial services: savings, deposits, insurance; but also legal aid, childcare and vocational trainings. A study of how SEWA members were using credit revealed that over 44 per cent of the money borrowed was being used for the single purpose of repairing or upgrading the family house (Obino, 2013)

#### 4. Design

Purpose of gender mainstreaming is to identify gender-specific inequalities under all the various elements of urban development (Rebecca Chestnutt, 2011). Planning and Design are two of these key elements, and they continue to be a reflection of the limited understanding of a culturally privileged<sup>5</sup> and male dominated profession. Even with the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) giving constitutional status to municipalities, the processes have remained out of the reach of the broader population<sup>6</sup> and hence women.

##### *Planning*

Planning a city is a perpetual process which shapes our everyday lives and its influence is different in the lives of men and women. The failure of Indian cities to adopt an integrated strategic planning approach in the past has led to a disconnect between transportation and land use planning (as a result of poor citizen engagement and gaps in resources and capacity). This lack of integration between land use and transportation (National Institute of Urban Affairs, 2015) has significant consequences for women. Their travel patterns are different from those of men, and these differences are characterized by deep and persistent inequalities. Within any given urban setting, women have inferior access to both private and public means of transport while at the same time assuming a higher share of their household's travel burden and making more trips for reproductive and caretaking responsibilities (Peters, 2013 ).

Accessibility is a product of three main factors - appropriate land use, suitable location of transit stop and urban design that enables comfortable pedestrian and barrier free movement. Many cities show a clear failure on these fronts. This is frequently observed in many of Delhi Metro's inner city stations, which suffer from terrible pedestrian and NMT accessibility, an absence of dense mixed used development in the vicinity, and an alignment of metro lines along arterial streets, which removes the stations from comfortable reach of many residential neighbourhoods. Poor integration of land use and transportation planning has greater consequences for women in slum settlements. These women tend to work as domestic help in adjacent affluent neighbourhood. In the past, slum redevelopment has been done through resettlement of the slum residents to remote parts of the city or its periphery, removing their access to their job or adding countless hours of commute, which is also unaffordable for them (both in time and money). Under the new urban agenda, these issues are addressed by making in-situ redevelopment a condition for national programme funds.

##### *Design*

As suggested by (Greed, 1994), built space is designed with kind of a "God's Eye Perspective", willingly or unwillingly blind to the plight of the "others". In India, the built space is guided by the National Building Code (NBC), prepared by the Bureau of Indian Standards. Prepared over four decades ago by professionals in fields which were and



Fig. 3 - Delegation of Responsibility for preparation of the NBC

Fig. 4 - NBC, Part 2 Administration, page 7

#### 4 INTERPRETATION

4.1 The heading which appears at the beginning of a clause or sub-clause of the Code shall be deemed to be a part of such clause or sub-clause respectively.

4.2 The use of present tense includes the future tense, the masculine gender includes the feminine and the neuter, the singular number includes the plural and the plural includes the singular. The word 'person' includes a corporation as well as an individual; writing includes printing and typing and 'signature' includes thumb impression made by a person who cannot write if his name is written near to such thumb impression.

still are dominated by men<sup>7</sup>, The sectional committee established to address any difficulties in adoption of the Code has 309 positions, out of which only 7 officer holders are clearly female. As we discuss some of the components of the Code, we will be able to understand the significance of this overwhelmingly male authorship.

The dismissal of the 'feminine' and 'neuter' gender in the language, as shown in Figure 4, indicates a gender blindness in the document. This simple statement highlights the 'god's eye view' attitude which eliminates the need of the language which recognizes the diversity of our society. Language shapes our thinking and our ideas of gender roles. Its influence should not be underestimated, for the spoken and written word also convey images. It is not enough to say or write that gender-specific terms "apply to women as well". In the long term, this reinforces gender roles. Gender sensitive language is critical to breaking up these traditional roles (Executive Group for Organisation, Safety and Security (MD-OS)).

The design process again shows a top down approach, where the professionals engage with the owner for requirements, approvals and payments. There is no regulations regarding data collection and the user base. Discussing this prescribed design process is important in context of housing, particularly in case of large scale multi-family low income

housing, because the lack of engagement with users indicates all but elimination of any inputs from women. There is a need for a detailed gender based analysis of the Building Bye-laws, but some key elements which indicate the gender blind nature of the document include:

- An ignorance of the significance of a community space for small scale manufacturing and home run businesses owned by women
- Failure to address the failure of service delivery system - This is especially important for home-based workers, for whom, services directly translate into more time at productive work. Our cities continue to function with failures in service delivery because the caregivers end up filling the gaps, acting as a "sustainability saviour".
- Absence of guidance on active engagement of different user groups in the design process means many of the small details of their daily lives are lost.
- Absence of design norms regarding visibility for safety. There is room for integrating elements of design which prevent crime.
- Absence of norms for conducting gender based safety audits in cities<sup>8</sup>.

In addition to the gender blindness of the code, ensuring inclusion in housing design is also contingent upon successful enforcement of the code. Long approval processes, corruption in many offices and absence of post-occupancy evaluation results in built spaces which do not conform to the building bye laws. Thus, beyond having gender sensitive building byelaws, there is a need post-occupancy evaluation.

Design is a logical and contextual response to the needs of the user, rooted in their

realities. Gender mainstreaming leads to acceptance of the wide range of needs of the different user groups based in the domestic space. It accepts that care giving, house-keeping, child care and other tasks are all work even if they are unpaid and carried out in the 'private space'. Treating a house as a workplace for domestic tasks enables the designer to address the diverse needs of the different user groups. Actively engaging women and other user groups in the design process will produce spaces they way they are needed. They will encourage equitable distribution of family duties and paid work, access to services delivery, and safety and security.

## 5. Conclusion

Policy, planning and design together define the housing environment. Through careful coordinated national/state level policies, city wide strategic planning, inclusive building regulations, gender can be mainstreamed into the housing sector in India. This is a complicated task which can succeed with political will, technical capacity, public participation and financial support. There must be a change in the language of our regulatory and statutory documents which define our built spaces. The approach towards the design of houses must respond to the many uses of the house and its occupants. And our decision making processes need to be more inclusive, encouraging shared ownership of home and public space among all. There is a need for coordinated implementation of gender sensitive policies and programmes such as the current national level missions on smart cities, infrastructure upgrade (AMRUT), heritage conservation (HRIDAY) and sanitation (Swachh Bharat). The Smart Cities Mission already presents promise in form of a stronger citizen engagement and inclusive projects, such as in-situ slum redevelopment and transit oriented development. Still the mission does not specifically talk about gender inclusion, so it is left up to the cities to address the issue (which will likely fail due to gaps in institutional capacities) (NIUA-CIDCO Smart City Lab, 2016).

Adoption of Gender based analysis for our policies and practices will help correct the gender blindness our decision makers suffer and ensure quality in our planning and processes. India should learn from Vienna and Berlin to bring about institutional change which ensures gender inclusion. There has to be a change in the discourse on gender and housing, breaking down the stereotypes and biased attitudes. Consistent participatory urban planning and management with true engagement of women and other user in decision making process is important along with a clear mapping of housing related policies objectives to the actions on ground.

So, the answer to the question - "Does the Domestic Space belong to women?" - is clearly no. Even though women obviously work as the captains of the domestic realm and managers of households, they don't have ownership or control of their domestic space, irrespective of their role in the public sphere. However, this does not mean that the domestic space should belong completely to women. It must be shared, just as the design and decision making processes. Sharing, not only empowers women, it also helps



break down the traditional gender roles and blows away the dichotomies of man/'other', real/unimportant, work/home, male/female, majority/minority, good/bad, acceptable/unacceptable (Greed, 1994).

#### **ENDNOTES**

1 Same as gender neutral

2 The Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children

3 Unique Identity Cards, similar to the SSN in the United States of America

4 11% households in India are headed by women

5 To say that architecture is a culturally privileged profession is not to suggest that the majority of architects today enjoy a privileged existence; on the contrary, architects struggle to design in a way that responds to their ideals (such as sustainability), to make ends meet and keep firms alive. (Hammond, 2009).

6 Implementation of the 74th Amendment began with JnNURM in 2005, a whole decade after the Amendment in 1992 (Mahin, 2015).

7 20 women /100 men in the Sciences and 2 women/ 100 men in Engineering (2%) in 1970-71 (Goel, 2007).15 % to 17 % of the total practitioners are female (Desai).

8 Currently Gender Based Safety Audits are conducted in different cities in India. There are also mobile based apps, such as SafetiPin, which enable crowd sourcing of gender based "safety rating" for public spaces.

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