Inclusivity in Urban Development: The Gender Perspective

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Abstract - This comprehensive document explores the critical intersection of gender, development, and urban planning, emphasizing the need to integrate gender considerations into the development of urban areas. It recognizes that gender roles and inequalities significantly impact the lives of men and women in cities and aims to ensure that urban policies and projects address these disparities, fostering gender equality, inclusion, and sustainability.

The document delves into multifaceted dimensions of gender, distinguishing between practical and strategic gender needs. It traces the evolution of gender development, highlighting the importance of mainstreaming gender considerations into development planning. Key indicators like the Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) are discussed as essential tools for assessing gender equity.

The report also examines gender planning, emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive policies and addressing institutional concerns. It spotlights the Indian scenario, emphasizing the imperative of gender equality for national progress. Additionally, it discusses the increasing representation of women in Asian politics and the challenges they face.

In conclusion, while progress is evident, challenges remain in achieving gender equality in urban environments. This document serves as a valuable resource for policymakers and stakeholders committed to creating more equitable and inclusive cities.

Key Words: Gender Development, Gender Inequality, Gender Planning, Women's Empowerment

1.INTRODUCTION

Gender development and planning in urban areas is a crucial approach that seeks to integrate gender considerations into the process of development and urban planning. It recognizes that the experiences and opportunities of women and men in cities are significantly influenced by gender roles and inequalities. This approach aims to ensure that urban policies, programs, and projects address these disparities and promote gender equality. It encompasses aspects such as gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, safety and security, inclusive participation, access to services, gender-responsive budgeting, and data collection and analysis. By integrating gender perspectives into urban planning, it aspires to create more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable urban environments where the needs and aspirations of all residents, regardless of gender, are considered.

2. GENDER: UNDERSTANDING ITS MULTIFACETED DIMENSIONS

Gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, and identities associated with being male or female. It goes beyond biological distinctions (sex) and encompasses how societies perceive and shape the roles of individuals based on their sex. Traditional development approaches treated women's issues separately, aiming to integrate them into existing processes. However, addressing gender disparities requires tackling the subordinate status of women relative to men. Achieving empowerment involves promoting gender equality and equity, challenging societal norms, and transforming structures that perpetuate gender-based discrimination. It's not just about women but the complex interplay of gender relationships within a society.

2.1 Understanding Gender Roles in Society

In society, men and women fulfill distinct roles based on their positions within the household and their control over resources. These roles can be categorized as follows:

2.1.1 Productive Role: Both men and women engage in activities with exchange or use value, contributing to income generation, whether through market production or subsistence production.

2.1.2 Reproductive Role: Women primarily bear the responsibilities of childbearing, child-rearing, and maintaining the present workforce, which is essential for future labor force reproduction.

2.1.3 Community Management Role: Women extend their reproductive role by ensuring the provision of resources at the community level. This often involves unpaid work for collective consumption.

2.1.3 Community Politics Role: Men typically take on roles in community-level organization and formal politics, often compensated directly or indirectly through status or power.
It's crucial to recognize that women bear a significant burden, often working longer hours than men, particularly in the reproductive and community management roles. Balancing and valuing these roles is essential for gender equality.

2.2 Gender-Specific Needs: Practical and Strategic Distinctions

Gender plays a pivotal role in determining unique needs for both women and men due to their distinct roles and the prevailing gender hierarchy. These needs can be categorized into two main types:

2.2.1 Practical Gender Needs:
Practical gender needs are those that women identify within their socially accepted roles. These needs are often of a practical nature and revolve around addressing deficiencies in living conditions. Examples include access to clean water, healthcare services, and employment opportunities.

2.2.2 Strategic Gender Needs:
On the other hand, strategic gender needs are identified by women in response to their subordinate position in society. These needs are aimed at achieving greater gender equality and challenging existing gender roles. Examples of strategic gender needs encompass legal rights, addressing domestic violence, and advocating for equal wages.

Caroline Moser has analyzed how state interventions recognize the different roles played by women as shown in **Table-1** and how their needs are met. Her analysis shows how mostly practical needs are met and, in few occasions, strategic needs are met.

Table -1: Women's Triple Role and Meeting Practical/Strategic Gender Needs

Type of Intervention	Women's Role Recognised			Gender Need Met	
	Reproductive	Productive	Community Management	Practical	Strategic
1 Employment Policy					
(i) Skill training					
Cooking	♦			♦	
Dressmaking		♦		♦	
Masonry/carpentry		♦		♦	♦ᵃ
(ii) Access to credit					
Allocated to household	♦			♦	
Allocated to women		♦		♦	♦ᵇ
2 Human Settlement Policy					
(i) Zoning legislation					
Separates residence and work	♦				
Does not separate residence and work	♦	♦		♦	
(iii) House ownership					
In man's name	♦				
In woman's name	♦	♦		♦	♦ᶜ
3 Basic Services					
(i) Location of nursery					
Located in community	♦	♦	♦	♦	
Mother's workplace	♦	♦		♦	
Father's workplace	♦	♦		♦	♦ᵈ
(ii) Transport services					
Only peak-hour bus service		♦		♦	
Adequate off-peak service	♦	♦	♦	♦	
(iii) Timing of rural extension meetings					
In the morning		♦		♦	
In the afternoon/evening	♦	♦	♦	♦	

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat. (June 1999).

2.3 Evolution of Gender Development
In the early 1970s, the 'women in development' approach emerged, primarily characterized by income-generating projects for women. However, it failed to address the root causes of gender inequality and tended to treat women as passive recipients of development assistance rather than active agents in shaping their own economic, social, political, and cultural realities.

A new approach, known as gender development, shifted the focus from merely providing equal treatment to ensuring equal outcomes. It sought to mainstream gender considerations into development planning at all levels and across all sectors, addressing not only the differences between men and women but also the inequalities that stemmed from these differences.

In 1975, the United Nations declared the period from 1975 to 1985 as the UN Decade for Women, leading to the establishment of national commissions for women in many countries. Human development, defined as increasing capabilities and expanding choices for all individuals, was recognized as inherently unjust and discriminatory if it excluded women from its benefits.

As stated in the 1995 Human Development Report, "Human development, if not engendered, is endangered." The 1995 report placed a significant emphasis on incorporating gender considerations into the development process and introduced two measures to analyze the extent of gender disparity in basic human capabilities.

2.3.1 Gender Development Index (GDI)
The Gender Development Index (GDI) is a composite index designed to assess the average achievement in three fundamental dimensions included in the Human Development Index (HDI): leading a long and healthy life, acquiring knowledge, and attaining a decent standard of living. The GDI is specifically adjusted to consider and account for gender inequalities that exist between men and women.

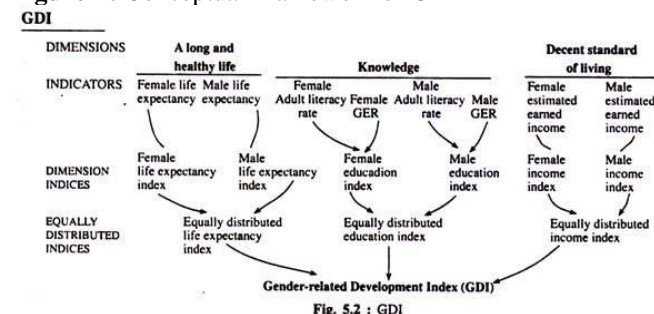**Figure-1:** Conceptual Framework of GDI

Source: www.undp.org

The Gender Development Index (GDI) shown in **Figure-1,** conceptual framework designed to measure and understand gender disparities in human development. Built upon the Human Development Index (HDI), the GDI evaluates three crucial dimensions: health, education, and standard of living. Its primary focus is on addressing gender-related disparities within these dimensions, emphasizing differences between men and women's achievements and their impact on overall human development. By adjusting HDI values with gender-specific data, calculating female-to-male ratios, and generating a composite index, the GDI identifies gender inequalities, facilitating informed policy efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across various regions and aspects of society.

2.3.2 Gender empowerment measure

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) shown in **Figure-2,** composite index designed to assess gender inequality across three fundamental dimensions of empowerment: economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making, and control over economic resources. GEM provides a comprehensive view of the extent to which women have access to and influence in economic and political spheres, as well as their ability to control resources. By quantifying these gender disparities, GEM aids in identifying areas where women's empowerment may be lacking and informs policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's active participation in decision-making processes and economic opportunities.

Figure-2: Conceptual Framework of GEM
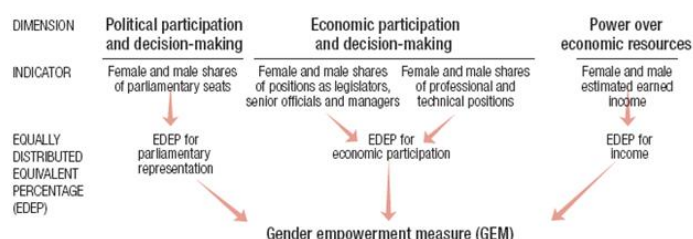
Source: www.undp.org

The Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) are vital indicators used to evaluate gender equity in a country's development. The GDI assesses disparities in basic human development dimensions, including health, education, and standard of living, revealing whether both genders have equal access and achievements. A GDI value of 1 signifies perfect gender equality. In contrast, the GEM examines gender disparities in economic and political participation and decision-making, providing insights into women's empowerment. These indicators, together, offer a comprehensive assessment of gender equity, aiding policymakers in identifying disparities and formulating strategies to advance gender equality and women's empowerment across various aspects of society.

2.4 Gender Planning

Gender planning aims to liberate women from their subordinate roles and promote equality, equity, and empowerment. Effective gender planning requires a comprehensive gender analysis that delves into the underlying causes of gender-based inequalities.

The process of gender planning comprises three interconnected stages: gender policy development, gender planning, and the actual implementation of policies.

The methodology of gender planning encompasses the specific methods and approaches used to achieve these goals. It is crucial to avoid gender-blind policy formulation and instead identify constraints that may hinder the translation of policies into actionable practices, as this is vital for the success of gender-focused policies.

Gender sensitizing is essential for incorporating gender considerations into the planning process, and it can be achieved through various means:

Development Planning and Macroeconomic Policy: Traditional development planning often prioritizes efficiency and economic growth over social development, particularly women's advancement. To address this, it is crucial to set women's economic empowerment as a macroeconomic goal. This involves recognizing the value of women's work, utilizing gender-disaggregated data, and analyzing the impact of economic policies and structural adjustments on women.

Institutional Concerns: Development planning typically focuses on specific sectors, overlooking cross-cutting gender needs and concerns. Integrating gender needs through effective coordination of planning cycles and establishing structures for gender equality advancement is crucial. Promoting gender policy and planning training within planning agencies, recruiting both women and men into planning roles, ensuring transparent and accessible governance and planning systems, and involving participants in monitoring and evaluation are important actions.

Public and Private Spheres: Gender improvement efforts often target the public sphere, leaving gender relations within households largely unchanged. Addressing power dynamics in the private sphere is essential for women to effectively benefit from changes in the public sphere. This includes promoting gender-aware curricula in education at all levels and challenging gender stereotypes across sectors.

Gender planning should not be viewed as a separate process but as an integral part of mainstream development planning. It should transform mainstream planning to meet the needs of women and marginalized populations while promoting economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Economic Empowerment: Women's economic empowerment should be integrated into macroeconomic goals, addressing gender disparities in unpaid domestic work and wage employment. It's essential to review economic and social wages to ensure gender equity and examine the impact of globalization on labor markets to prevent the exploitation of women.

Valuing Women's Work: Acknowledging the value of women's contributions to social reproduction, even when challenging to quantify, is crucial. Supporting women with better access to resources, services, and benefits can relieve them of unequal burdens and promote their economic and social well-being.
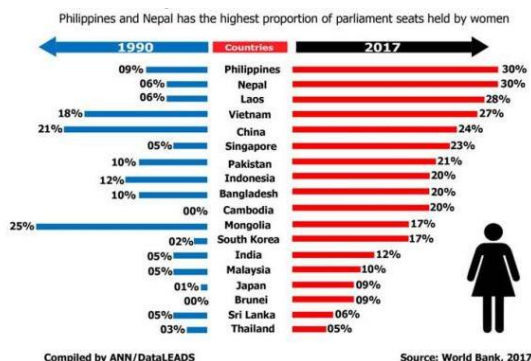
2.5 The Indian scenario

(Malik, Rajeshwari. 2018). India aims to surpass China as the most populous nation and become an economic superpower in the next five years. However, gender equality is crucial for this goal. Despite progress in education, health, and political leadership for women, disparities persist. The latest Gender Gap Report predicts it will take 217 years to close the gender gap at the current rate. Women are paid less than men, and board-level gender diversity remains suboptimal in India, underscoring the need for comprehensive women's development for national progress.

(Human Development Report 2021-22), India's ranking on the 2021/22 Human Development Index (HDI) is 132 out of 191 countries and territories. This ranking reflects a concerning trend of declining human development not only in India but also globally. In both 2020 and 2021, human development, which measures health, education, and average income, has declined, reversing five years of progress. This decline is primarily attributed to a global decrease in life expectancy, dropping from 72.8 years in 2019 to 71.4 years in 2021. It marks the first time in 32 years that human development across the world has stalled, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts to address these challenges and uphold the Sustainable Development Goals.

2.6 Empowering Women in Asian Politics

Over the last decade, Asia has seen a significant increase in women's representation in politics as shown in **Figure-3**, with the Philippines and Nepal leading the way at 30%. However, India lags behind with only 12% female parliamentarians, despite a long-pending bill seeking to raise this to 33%. Meanwhile, countries like Cambodia have made visible strides, going from no women in politics to 20% representation. Japan recently passed a law encouraging gender parity in political candidate selection. The data underscores the need for greater emphasis on promoting women's participation in politics across Asia, especially in countries like India where progress has been slow.

Figure-3: Women Representation in Parliament in Asia as per World bank, 2017

Philippines and Nepal has the highest proportion of parliament seats held by women

	1990	Countries	2017	
	09%	Philippines	30%	
	06%	Nepal	30%	
	06%	Laos	28%	
	18%	Vietnam	27%	
	21%	China	24%	
	05%	Singapore	23%	
	10%	Pakistan	21%	
	12%	Indonesia	20%	
	10%	Bangladesh	20%	
	00%	Cambodia	20%	
	25%	Mongolia	17%	
	02%	South Korea	17%	
	05%	India	12%	
	05%	Malaysia	10%	
	01%	Japan	09%	
	00%	Brunei	09%	
	05%	Sri Lanka	06%	
	03%	Thailand	05%	

Compiled by ANN/DataLEADS   Source: World Bank, 2017

3. CONCLUSIONS

Gender development and planning in urban areas aim to address gender disparities in urban environments. It integrates gender perspectives into urban policies and projects, promoting inclusion, equity, and sustainability. Gender roles, such as productive, reproductive, community management, and community politics roles, significantly affect the lives of men and women. Practical gender needs (related to living conditions) and strategic gender needs (focused on gender equality) must both be considered. In Asia, progress varies, with countries like the Philippines and Nepal leading in women's political representation, while India lags behind. The integration of gender considerations is crucial for creating more equitable urban environments, but challenges persist in achieving gender equality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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