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Social safety's women in urban public space (Case study: Mashhad metropolitan)

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ABSTRACT : *Urban spaces are places in order happening crime. Considering of them both of quality and quantity aspects is necessary. On the other hand, gender urban design is important due to some urban spaces are unsafely for attendance of women. Planning and designing safe public spaces for women and girls means creating public spaces with features that enhance women's safety and feelings of safety, and detract from features that cause women's insecurity and feelings of insecurity. While planning and designing safe public spaces for women, planners, designers and architects place special focus on lighting, landscaping, visibility, motorized traffic, pedestrian traffic, urban furniture, potential hiding spots, signage, security personnel, proximity to other public spaces, proximity to emergency services, and access to public transportation. Each of these areas is given particular consideration from the perspective of the women and girls who use public spaces. In order to, this research is applied and the research method is "descriptive – analytical". The method of data collected is field and questionnaire. Therefore were used 180 questionnaires. Also, was used "SPSS" method for analyzing data. The finding shows that urban space safeties in studied area have decreased. on the other hand if the time of attendance women increase , urban security will increase .*

KEY WORD: *Urban public space, women security, safe space, Mashhad metropolitan*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Safety planning and design also involves more than just the concrete, physical features of a space, although interventions at this level may occur first in safe cities for women programmed (Zarabi, 2013, 47). It is a necessarily participatory process whereby community members (especially women) work together to create spaces that accommodates strong social relations. In order to be successful, planners and designers must pay attention to how people express themselves in, and interact with, public space. In any given day, public spaces are the setting for a myriad of gendered social interactions. As a result of these interactions, public spaces themselves become gendered. For example, in a school yard, young girls may gather together under a certain tree and watch young boys play soccer in a field. As this process continues, the space under the tree will become understood as a "girl's space" and the soccer field will become understood as a "boy's space". This can be problematic because public space should belong to everyone and everyone should have a right to use it – girls should feel free to use the soccer field and boys should feel free to sit under the tree. Thus, planning and designing safe public spaces for women and girls also means analyzing the various uses of public spaces, who uses them, when, and for how long. This kind of planning and design also focuses on who *doesn't* use a particular public space, when, and why. This is because when certain groups, like women or girls, do not use a space, it is usually an indication that the space feels insecure to members of that group.Planning and designing safe public spaces for women and girls requires constant attention to physical and social characteristics of space. It also requires constant evaluation of the social and physical implications of the planning and design process.

The planning and design of a space has the potential to either reinforce gender inequality or to advance gender equality. For this reason, the planning and design process is a crucial facet of creating safe cities for women and girls.Gender is a particularly important consideration when planning and designing essential services in communities. Often, when essential services are badly planned or missing, women and girls bear the brunt of the insecurity that accompanies such situations. For example, "Sexual harassment is rampant when girls go out in the open for defecation. Men disguise themselves as women and hide themselves in the fields...There have been instances when girls were abducted from the fields and men were caught for sexually harassing them. After 11pm, girls are usually forbidden from going to the fields unless they are accompanied by an elder" (Asdaqi, 2012, 56).Planning and designing safe public spaces for women and girls is the process whereby urban planners, designers, architects, women, grassroots and other community actors collaborate to make the physical features of public spaces safe and welcoming for women and girls. If public spaces are dark, abandoned, unclean, overgrown, or lacking certain elements like benches or emergency phones, they are potentially unsafe for everybody, but for women and girls in particular. Therefore, there is an increased chance that women and girls will not use spaces where they feel fear and/or experience violence. In safe cities for women and girls initiative, it is necessary that the safety needs of women and girls are taken into account in planning and design. Experience shows that when a space is occupied by women and girls, it is also occupied by more people in general. Streets, parks, bus stops, sports fields, squares, parking lots, etc. that have been planned and designed according to the specific safety needs of women and girls exhibit the following

characteristics (Sistani , 2012 : 89):
- Easy access to and from the location
- Easy movement within the location
- Good lighting so that users can see and be seen
- Easy-to-read signs to help users find their way
- Clear, well-kept paths where users can easily see each other
- General visibility of the entire space, free from hiding places where a person could wait unseen
- Includes mixed uses – many places to hangout, walk, play, eat, exercise, etc. for diverse user groups at different times of day
- Provisions for different seasons (shade in hot weather and protection in cold weather)
- Provisions for young children and the elderly (because women are often caretakers), e.g. in urban areas this could mean low, wide sidewalks for strollers, wheelchairs, and walkers, and areas with slow-moving traffic
- Access to clean, secure, easily accessible toilet facilities with space for changing children's diapers

Safety planning and design for women and girls is important because it creates public spaces where women and all users have equal opportunity to be healthy, secure and happy. This kind of planning is based on the fact that the physical design of urban spaces affects women's use and enjoyment of the public realm.
Designing and planning safe public spaces for women and girls is important because:
- It raises awareness of the fact that space is not neutral; the design of spaces can either facilitate or impede their use, appropriation and safety for women and girls.
- It recognizes that gender and gender relations between women and men are key factors in how urban spaces are organized and developed.
- It recognizes that the city spatially reflects specific social, economic and historical characteristics that are unique to local women's situations.
- It recognizes that spaces in the city reflect the relations of power that determine the behaviors and differences in the lives of women and men.
- It recognizes that the public spaces in a city are usually designed based on a traditional conception of the family and a traditional division of labor among women and men (men as workers in the public space and women as caretakers and home keepers in the home and private spaces). Furthermore, it promotes initiatives to change this spatial organization in order to reflect changing gender roles in society.
- It recognizes that women's fears are based on reality (the relationship between feelings of fear and experiences of violence) and that women know when and where they feel unsafe in the cities and why.
- It is a useful tool to improve the quality of urban and community life and to reduce women's fear and victimization.
- It recognizes that if women and girls avoid using certain public spaces because they do not feel safe, these spaces will become more insecure for women, girls, and other users. Therefore, it is a useful tool to

improve the quality of urban and community life for everyone, and to reduce women's fear and victimization.

- It promotes the right to the city and to citizenship for women and girls as a condition for equitable and sustainable cities and communities.

The best way to ensure that spaces are welcoming to women and girls is to consult with women and girls who are the intended users of a space. However, women and girls may find it difficult to participate in public planning and design discussions for a variety of reasons. The following list should be considered by any person or organization wishing to involve women and girls in the planning and design of public spaces (Esfahani, 2009:75).

Women may not attend public planning discussions on safer communities because:

- They have difficulty getting to or from the discussion
- They are unaware of women's safety issues because there is little public or media discussion of them
- They may have internalized/accepted gender-based forms of violence (e.g. sexual harassment) as normal and not see them as a problem.
- They have difficulty reading materials for the discussion
- They cannot afford childcare for the time it takes to participate in discussions
- They do not have time to participate in discussions because of work/family/ volunteer commitments
- They cannot attend discussion meetings which are being held at an inconvenient time
- Their culture may not be supportive of such activities
- They do not have the support of their spouse or friends
- They are afraid of speaking in public
- They are poor and feel as though they do not belong
- They are disabled and cannot access the space where discussions are being held
- They are unaware that resources exist to plan communities to support women's safety
- They have no computer to access information about discussions
- They do not speak the language in which the discussion is being held
- They have more pressing personal concerns such as poverty or poor health
- They cannot find the place where the discussion is being held
- They do not feel safe in the place where the discussion is being held
- They have to look after elderly members of their family and have no time
- They do not believe that they are smart enough to participate in the discussion
- They have participated in public meetings in the past and had bad experiences
- They feel intimidated by large groups and/or public officials
- They do not feel confident speaking in front of men
- They feel like their age makes their concerns irrelevant (whether they are old or young)
- They feel apathetic about public issues (Biyabangard, 2010:34).

Women consistently express greater fears for their personal safety in urban environments than do men. Statistics demonstrate that, conversely, young men are the most vulnerable to actual attack in towns and cities, while women are more likely to be attacked in their own homes by someone they know well. However, these figures are possibly skewed by the fact that if women are afraid to go out on the streets alone they are less likely to become victims of crime in the urban environment.Research by Women's Design Service reveals that it is fear of sexual assault which underlies women's anxiety. Women have been at risk from male sexual assault through history and across cultures, a situation often legitimated by a concept of women's inherent inferiority to men. Furthermore, they are rarely treated as innocent victims of assault. Where rape cases are brought to law, the woman often ends up 'more accused than the accused' (Javadi , 2009 :90) In the UK today only 7.5% of reported rapes result in a conviction, and it is widely thought that 90% of rapes go unreported.During the 1970s, when the second wave of the Women's Liberation Movement was at its height, a number of "Reclaim the Night" marches were organized. The aim was to give women the confidence to go out into urban public spaces after dark. One of the popular chants was 'However we dress, wherever we go, Yes means Yes and No means No!' These demonstrations helped to push the agenda of women's safety forward, but recently the marches have been revived by the London Feminist Network because the pace of change has been too slow (Syed Hussain, 1998:23).

Women's fear of going out alone after dark means that, in northern Europe, they confine themselves indoors from 4.0pm onwards during the winter months. This has a huge impact on women's ability to engage in employment, adult education, civic and community participation and social and leisure activities (Ozer,

2003:12).Our Making Safer Places projects, initiated in the late '90s, set out to identify how changes to the physical environment might help women to reclaim the right to use public space as and when they wish (Slusky , 2004 :56). Whereas previously many women may not have questioned the social factors that have contributed to their fears, the process of engaging with these issues through discussion with other women has led many of our participants to join groups and organizations working to change the relations between the genders and the social frameworks that perpetuate them (Williams , 2000: 84).

II. STUDIED AREA

Mashhad has been located between Hezar Masjed & Binaloud Mountains. The city is located at 36.20º North latitude and 59.35º East longitude, in the valley of the Kashaf River near Turkmenistan, between the two mountain ranges of Binalood and Hezar-masjed. Mashhad divided 7 parts in planning based on environmental, physical, economical, social indicators (Farnahad consultant, 2008). This area consists of natural and physical opportunities. Thus, middle area is one of the main economical and physical areas in Mashhad. This area has some factors. Such as:
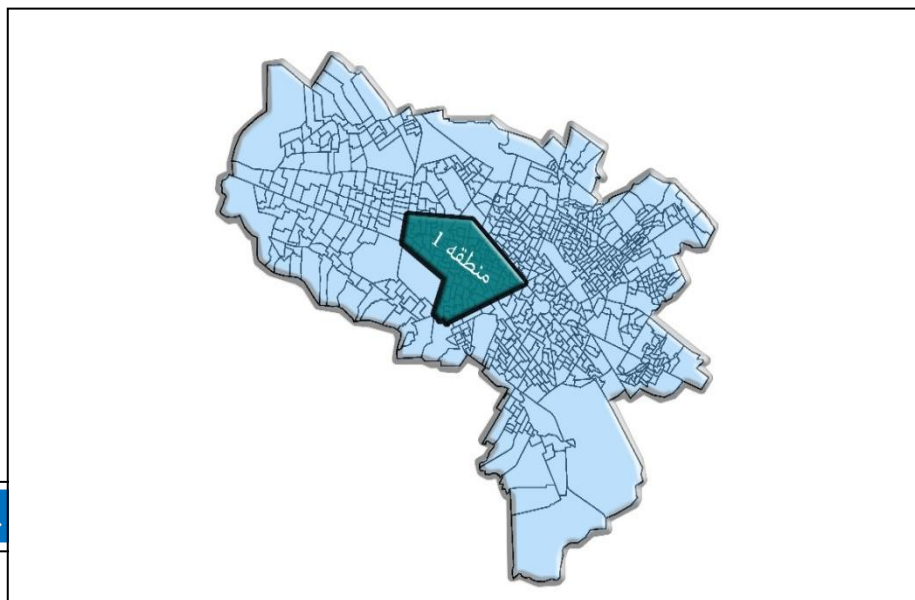
- appropriate place in urban spatial space
- appropriate relation between with natural area such as Binalood mountain
- consisting of structure and various physical fabrics
- centralization of activities in urban scale
- there is value environmental such as : gardens , canals
- there is the most network in this area due to holly shrine
- there is problems about urban spaces and physical structure , so it is necessary urban planning

Mashhad divide 12 municipally regions. Studied are have located in 1 region that has been mentioned in figure one. Social characters of studied area have been shown in table (1).

Gender					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	**Male**	23	**38.3**	38.3	38.3
	Female	37	**61.7**	61.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table (1) .mentioned community

Figure   **1: studied**
area

III. Finding

In this part has been considered mentioned questionnaire.

3.1. Correlation test

There is Coefficient correlation (-0.01) between gender and urban space quality as two main variable. It means if increase urban space quality, secure will decrease between women. On the other hand, there is Coefficient correlation (+0.022) between gender and social attendance as other variables. It means while increasing time of social attendance, so increasing security in urban open space especially for women.

Table (2): Coefficient correlation between variables

Correlations		Gender	Destroyed security	Usable time
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	**-.001**	**.022**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.996	.869
	N	60	60	60
Destroyed security	Pearson Correlation	-.001	1	.240
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.996		.065
	N	60	60	60
Usable time	Pearson Correlation	.022	.240	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.869	.065	
	N	60	60	60

Hypothesis test

It seems that attendance of women in studied are has been decreased.
According analyzing of questionnaire, finding show 78.4 percentages of women were attended between Am to Pm. also, only 1.7 percentages of women at night.

Table (3): attendance time to studied area

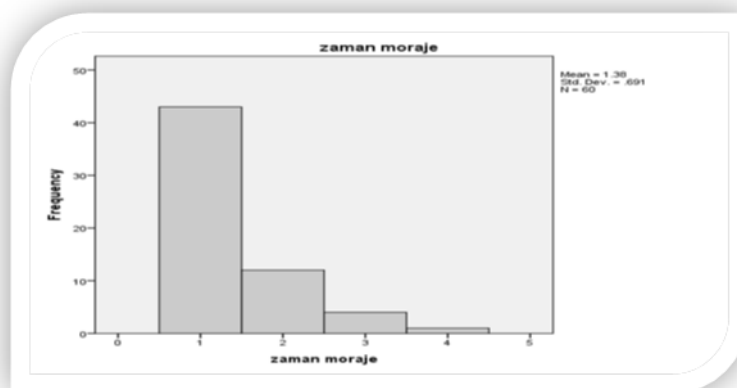| Time		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Morning	43	**71.7**	71.7	71.7
	Afternoon	12	**20.0**	20.0	91.7
	Night	4	6.7	6.7	98.3
	Late night	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Figure (2): histogram graph of attendance women

So, the hypothesis is true according to above information. Attendance of women during day has been decreased.

1-   It seems, that has decreased urban space safety in order to women attendance.

Studied community expose to discussion that there are some factors in order to decreasing safety in studied area. 61.7% believed one of the reasons that have been led to unsafe in studied area was vacant lands. 13.3 believed there isn't adequate light in studied area. And 10% believed addict persons have been led to unsafe place.

Table (4): considering of unsafe factors

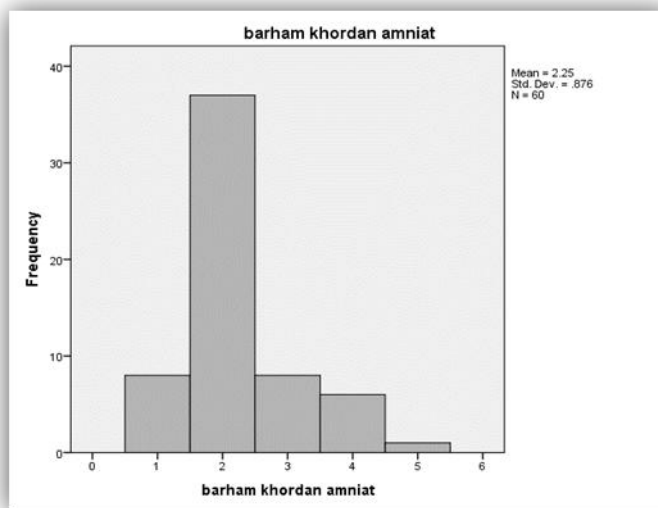| Distribution of safety		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Addict person	8	**13.3**	13.3	13.3
	Vacant lands	37	**61.7**	61.7	75.0
	The lake of light	8	**13.3**	13.3	88.3
	Robbery	6	**10.0**	10.0	98.3
	Other	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Figure (3): histogram graph of unsafe factors

So the second hypothesis is true and the qualities of urban space in studied area are reduction.

IV. CONCLUSION

Both societal norms for behavior and the built environment affect a woman's safety in public spaces. Knowledge of women's issues might begin to make a shift in the way women are treated and respected in the society. While retaliation and rejecting the notion that it is okay to be inappropriately treated in public is perhaps a beginning, the journey is much longer. A crucial step is to generate more awareness about women's safety issues in public spaces. The behavior and attitudes of the society cannot be transformed overnight, but the built environment can be controlled and can be used as a medium for change. Further research needs to be done while engaging various community organizations, municipal authorities, police departments and other important stakeholders. Workshops need to be organized and future women's safety audits need to be designed and led by community members. This would help form crucial links between the

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