7 CHAPTER SEVEN: SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous chapter dealt with the summarization of the implications of the findings of the thesis for spatial planning interventions aimed at providing gender appropriate outdoor leisure spaces for urban dwellers improving subjective quality of life. Based on the same, following suggestions and recommendations towards achieving the goal of gender appropriate design of outdoor public leisure spaces were made.

Intrapersonal as well as interpersonal leisure constraints are not likely to be appropriate targets for spatial design intervention. However, other variables and processes identified and confirmed by this thesis are potentially malleable and could be effective targets for interventions in the areas below:

The findings suggested that improvement to spatial quality of leisure places from gender point of view with respect to visual permeability and provision of certain landscape elements and amenities will contribute towards enhancing women’s leisure participation in outdoor environment. The research suggests that gender blind approach in planning and design of outdoor leisure spaces results in failure of enjoyable and rewarding leisure experiences. Interventions towards appropriation of outdoor leisure spaces could focus on reducing the experience of failure in leisure and enjoyment, or conversely enhancing the pleasure and joy experienced through outdoor leisure spaces.

7.1 Spatial Design Level

1. Providing women-centric or women-oriented activities at the panoptical locations that were men’s obvious preferences may impart sense of security to whole space.
2. Women are more frequently accompanied by children. For them, availability children’s play areas in leisure spaces is of prime importance.
Such spaces also impart liveliness and sense of security to the leisure spaces that encourage women’s leisure participation.

3. The leisure spaces throughout may be interwoven with various children’s play instruments across the length and breadth so as to make the whole space more lively and add the sense of safety and comfort as women preferred such spaces near children’s play areas irrespective of them accompanying the children or not. Such provision will eliminate the possibility of private and scary, lonely areas where women will fear to trade.

4. Child care facilities at garden may provide women quality time of their own and use it for their own leisure. Once they develop their own interests and activities in such spaces, there are fair chances that they will continue visiting these spaces even after the children grew up and would not need their mothers to accompany them.

5. Leisure places should be designed to accommodate less extensive activities and with spaces that are quieter and protected yet lively.

6. Considering women’s preference to be in groups or involve in group activities, various group activities and classes may be introduced in leisure spaces.

7. Women’s outdoor visits are more acceptable if they are on the pretext of religious reasons such as visiting temples or such spaces than for pure leisure or socializing. Such small temples inside the leisure spaces may attract more women. (Mahimkar & Gokhale, 2015)

8. As women preferred visual permeability and being in such spaces that are visually connected to other areas in the same leisure spaces as well as outside areas such as streets, residential development around or any such land uses, it is recommended that boundaries of each zones within the leisure space as well as whole of a leisure space are to be designed in such a manner that visual connections to other spaces does not get disturbed.
9. As a part of visual permeability as well as sense of safety in terms of avoiding such areas where there is a possibility of stranger hidden, women seemed to avoid presence of big shadowy trees though they provide enough comfort.

10. Spatial planning and design of leisure spaces with avoidance of areas with hidden corners, dark and impermeable spaces can act as a tool for appropriation of outdoor leisure spaces from gender perspective.

11. Landscape elements that may create areas with perceived insecurity such as big shadowy trees, structures that provide hidden or dark spaces, etc. may be avoided and instead substituted by low height shrubs, flowering plants and ground covers/lawns, open structures etc.

12. Supportive to policy measures to extinguish the clear division of gender roles and to encourage people to venture into other gender role, spaces may be carefully designed for such activities.

   a. Men’s toilets may have facilities with nappy changing platforms, children’s washbasins and toilets, etc.

   b. Children’s play area may be designed in a closer proximity of typically male occupied areas such as open gym so as to encourage them to accompany kids to gardens.

   c. Playgrounds may have partial spatial arrangements with provision of spaces reserved for girls/women for the purpose of active sports. Such areas will be specifically designed considering women’s concerns for safety. Such reserved spaces for female participants may be provided in the close proximity of other women’s preferred spaces with reference to activities or typologies such as group activities or small temple, etc. Such presence of other women may add a sense of safety to the reserved area as well as eliminate the possibility of inhibitions while in the playground, at least in initial stages.
13. The importance of provision of safe and clean toilets has to be imposed on the minds of designers as outdoor leisure spaces lack such basic amenities as toilets that drives away most of the female users or restrict the time of their presence in such spaces. The location of the toilets also plays a major role in putting it to use and hence such amenities are to be placed at such locations that they are visually connected to other areas and not placed in hidden, lonely and dark corners.

14. The aesthetic and atmospheric standards should be followed as they are more precious to women than men.

15. Sufficient outdoor leisure space amenable to appropriation should be available within reachable distance to minimize travel time and efforts for leisure participation.

16. Provision of certain protected areas or times are needed so as to make women feel comfortable to perform certain leisure activities.

### 7.2 Planning level

1. Identification and listing of outdoor public leisure spaces that may be unsafe or risky for women and girls and further addressing them with corrective design measures. It will contribute towards making them safe and lively and put them to use while reducing crime against women at such places as well as induce an experience of joy for the users of such spaces. The places of concern may have spatial character such as small, dark, poorly lit or unused and falling within abandoned lots between housing developments and highways, empty spaces between industrial zones and central business districts accessed with unsafe alleyways, street corners, and spaces between buildings. Such spaces cannot be left unattended as they are connectors between formal and informal outdoor public leisure spaces. Such efforts will ensure safety and enjoyable leisure experience for all leisure participants in outdoor environment.

2. Inclusive city planning integrating women’s needs and interests is a need of an hour. Adopting integrative city planning with mixed land-use while
avoiding strict division of areas for recreation, work and housing will impart sense of inclusivity as well as safety to all parts of the city. 

3. Imparting clear visibility with the help of convex mirrors, smart retrofitting such as Wi-Fi connectivity, cameras, mobile apps, urgent SOS network connectivity, etc. may help induce the sense of security in women’s minds thereby avoiding the possibility of entrapment and improving their access to all parts of the city.