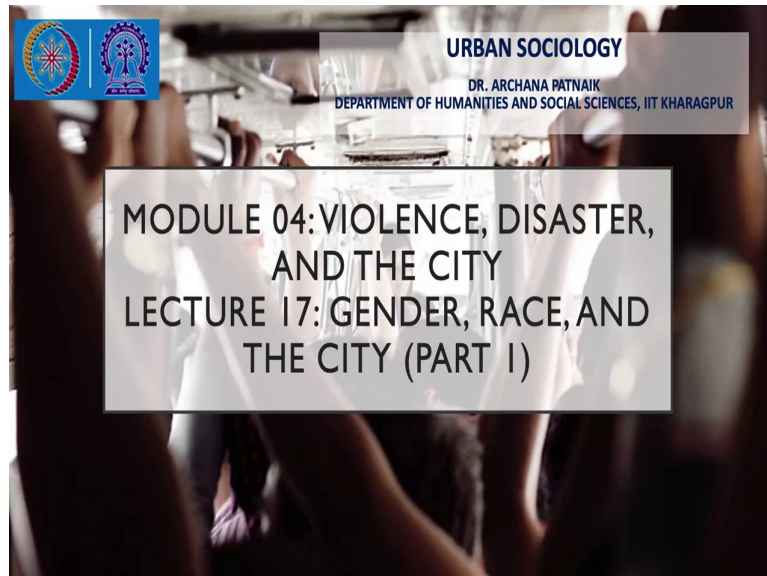


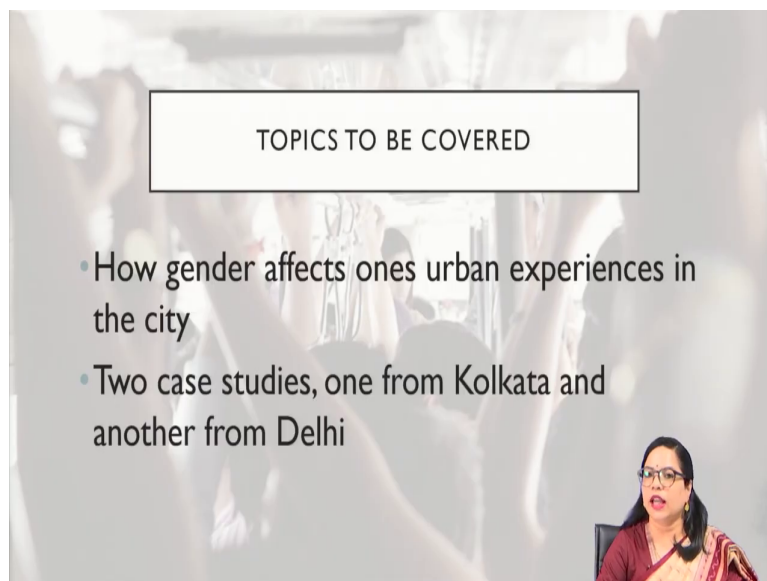
Urban Sociology
Professor Archana Patnaik
Department of Humanities and Social Science
Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur
Lecture 17
GENDER, RACE AND THE CITY (PART I)

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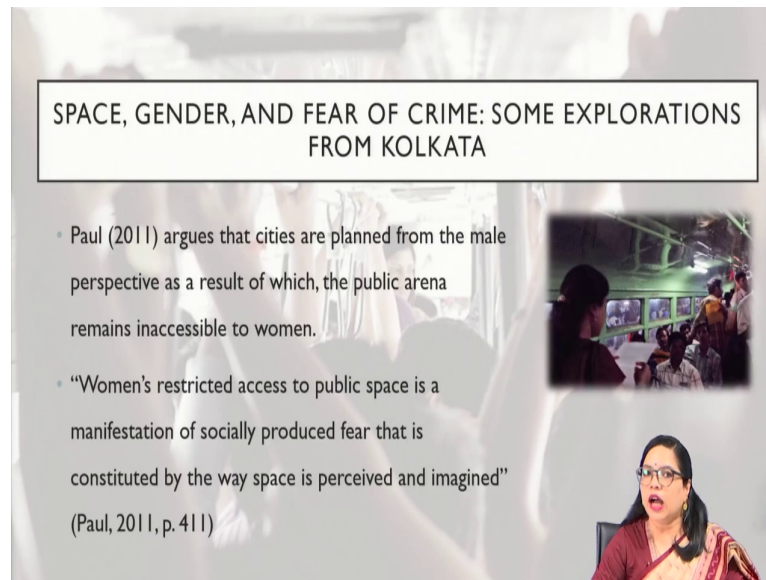
Welcome to today's lecture on Gender, Race and the City. This module has been divided into two parts for the better understanding.

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In the first part, I will be discussing four cases on how gender affects ones urban experiences in the city. And the first two cases will be from India, especially from Kolkata and New Delhi. The second two are from the countries like the Netherlands and the Mexico.

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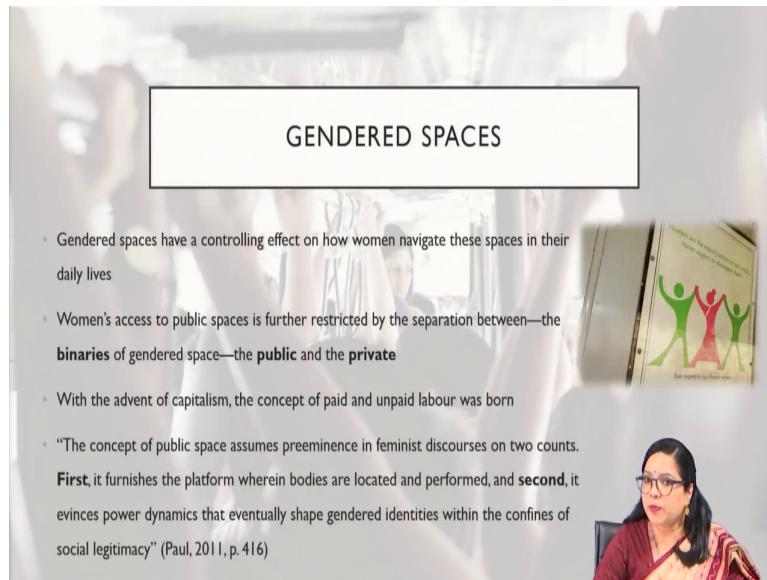


SPACE, GENDER, AND FEAR OF CRIME: SOME EXPLORATIONS FROM KOLKATA

- Paul (2011) argues that cities are planned from the male perspective as a result of which, the public arena remains inaccessible to women.
- “Women’s restricted access to public space is a manifestation of socially produced fear that is constituted by the way space is perceived and imagined” (Paul, 2011, p. 411)

The article “Space, Gender, and Fear of Crime: Some Explorations from Kolkata” by Tanusree Paul argues that cities are planned from the male perspective as a result of which, the public arena remains inaccessible to women. The author argues “that women’s restricted access to public space is a manifestation of socially produced fear that is constituted by the way space is perceived and imagined” (Paul, 2011, p. 411). Public spaces are inherently masculine and there is always a fear of being exposed to crime within women for this reason. This fear has a role to play in the shaping of the space as non-friendly to women.

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GENDERED SPACES

- Gendered spaces have a controlling effect on how women navigate these spaces in their daily lives
- Women's access to public spaces is further restricted by the separation between—the **binaries** of gendered space—the **public** and the **private**
- With the advent of capitalism, the concept of paid and unpaid labour was born
- “The concept of public space assumes preeminence in feminist discourses on two counts. **First**, it furnishes the platform wherein bodies are located and performed, and **second**, it evinces power dynamics that eventually shape gendered identities within the confines of social legitimacy” (Paul, 2011, p. 416)

The slide features a background image of a woman in a red sari. On the right side, there is a small inset image of a poster with three stylized human figures in green, red, and blue, holding hands. The poster has some text in a non-English script.

As space becomes gendered, it has a controlling effect on how women navigate these spaces in their daily lives. Women's access to public spaces is further restricted by the fact that they have been socially relegated to private spaces ever since the concretization of separation between—the binaries of gendered space—the public and the private. The development of capitalism further increased the gap between the domestic sphere and the public sphere where the latter was marked by paid labour.

Acc. To the author (p. 416), “The concept of public space assumes preeminence in feminist discourses on two counts. First, it furnishes the platform wherein bodies are located and performed, and second, it evinces power dynamics that eventually shape gendered identities within the confines of social legitimacy”

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GENDERED PERCEPTIONS

- There is a difference between how men and women perceive space, especially public space
- This kind of preconceived understanding is based on socio-cultural norms of the society according to which they are socialized
- As a result, there are do's and don'ts' when it comes to women's use of public space which also affect their mobility around the city

The slide features a background image of a woman in a red sari speaking. To the right, there is a small inset image of a busy street scene with cars and buildings.

There is a difference between how men and women perceive space, especially public space. This kind of preconceived understanding is based on socio-cultural norms of the society according to which they are socialized. As a result, there are do's and don'ts' when it comes to women's use of public space which also affect their mobility around the city.

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PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

- It was during the **nationalist struggle**, that the strict demarcation between public and private emerge.
- Culture had two domains—**material** and **spiritual**
- Material domain represented the **public** space or **bahir**
- Spiritual domain represented **private** space or **ghar**



The slide features a background image of a woman in a red sari speaking. To the right, there is a diagram showing a large blue circle labeled 'PRIVATIZED SPACE' inside a dashed circle labeled 'PUBLIC SPACE'. A smaller pink circle labeled 'PUBLIC SPACE' is also shown. To the left of the diagram, there is a small image of a rural house with a thatched roof and trees.

It was during the nationalist struggle, that the strict demarcation between public and private emerge. To prove the superiority of Indian culture, the nationalists divided it into material and spiritual domains. The material domain as the name implies was associated with the public or bahir meaning the outside. Whereas, the spiritual domain signified the ghar or the

private sphere which became the arena of women. It also fell to the women to maintain the distinction between these two spheres. (Refer Slide Time: 04:04)

STIGMATIZED SPACES

- When women cross the boundary of private spaces, they are subjected to issues of shame and pollution
- In spite of men being more prone to physical violence in public places, it is women who are more afraid of being attacked
- This fear arises out of the stigma that is attached with women being present in the public spaces without a valid reason



And the women happen to cross this boundary, there arises the issues of shame and pollution. International crime surveys have found that in spite of men being more prone to physical violence in public places, it is women who are more afraid of being attacked, and even though women are more prone to violence within private spheres, they are more afraid of public spaces. It is possible that this fear arises out of the stigma that is attached with women being present in the public spaces without a valid reason. Mostly, for women, public spaces are like gateways from one private space to another.

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RISKS IN PUBLIC SPACES

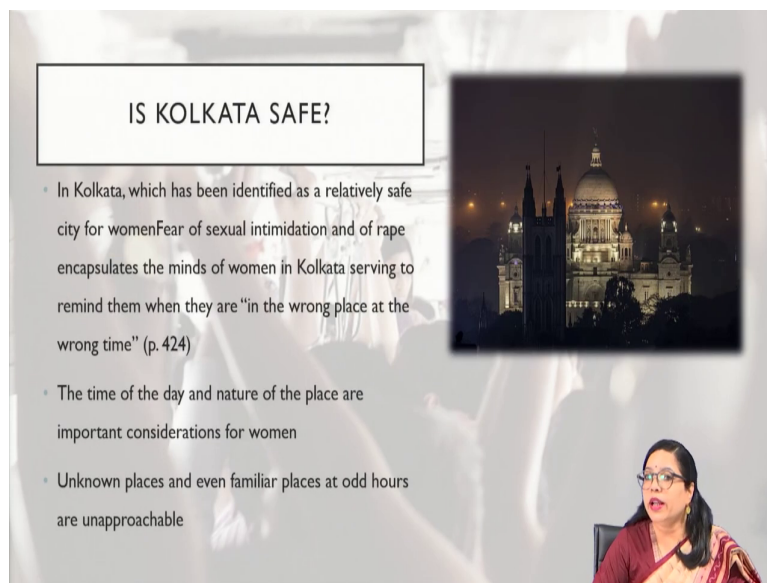
- Four risks are associated with women's presence in public places. They are:
 - There is always a possibility of physical assault
 - Women might lose their reputation by being outside their designated sphere
 - Women are often themselves blamed for the crimes carried out against them
 - Segregation of the two spheres are reinforced (Phadke, 2007, cited in Paul, 2011, p. 420)



Phadke (2007, cited in Paul, 2011, p. 420) has listed 4 risks being associated with women's presence in public places. They are:

- There is always a possibility of physical assault
- Women might lose their reputation by being outside their designated sphere
- Women are often themselves blamed for the crimes carried out against them
- Women might completely lose the opportunity to be a part of public spaces, thereby reinforcing the segregation of the two spheres

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The slide features a title box at the top left containing the text "IS KOLKATA SAFE?". To the right of the title is a photograph of the Kolkata State Capitol building at night, illuminated against a dark sky. Below the title, there is a bulleted list of three points. In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a small inset video frame showing a woman with glasses and a red sari speaking.

IS KOLKATA SAFE?

- In Kolkata, which has been identified as a relatively safe city for women, fear of sexual intimidation and of rape encapsulates the minds of women in Kolkata serving to remind them when they are "in the wrong place at the wrong time" (p. 424)
- The time of the day and nature of the place are important considerations for women
- Unknown places and even familiar places at odd hours are unapproachable

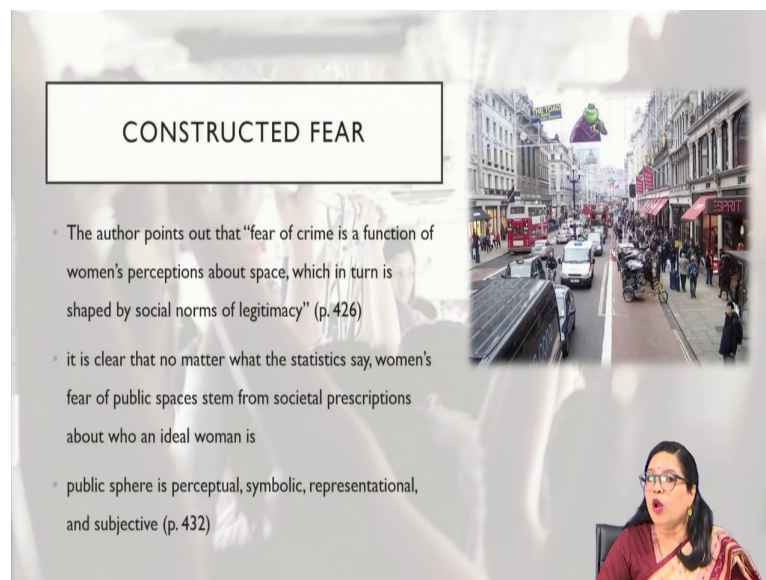
Acc. To the author (p. 420), "Thus, on the one hand, space informs the processes shaping women's identity, and on the other hand, space itself gets produced through their behavioral patterns in response to notions of social legitimacy. A male or a female body, through its occupancy of space, reproduces the material social relations, and by being governed by the dominant social discourse of what is "right" and what is "wrong," they re-entrench these social structures".

In Kolkata, which has been identified as a relatively safe city for women, they still stick to the social norms that have been prescribed for their presence in the public sphere

According to Paul, fear of sexual intimidation and of rape encapsulates the minds of women in Kolkata serving to remind them when they are “in the wrong place at the wrong time” (p. 424).

Apart from the fears of sexual violence, “other factors that preclude independent and free mobility of women in this study include the social stigma of being described as bad women, family restrictions, dependence on husbands or male partners, and consequently, the lack of personal freedom to decide upon their spatial mobility” (p. 425). The time of the day and nature of the place are important considerations for women. Unknown places and even familiar places at odd hours are out of bounds.

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The slide features a title box at the top left containing the text "CONSTRUCTED FEAR". To the right of the title is a photograph of a busy city street with cars, pedestrians, and buildings. Below the title, there are three bullet points. In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a small inset video of a woman speaking.

CONSTRUCTED FEAR



- The author points out that “fear of crime is a function of women’s perceptions about space, which in turn is shaped by social norms of legitimacy” (p. 426)
- it is clear that no matter what the statistics say, women’s fear of public spaces stem from societal prescriptions about who an ideal woman is
- public sphere is perceptual, symbolic, representational, and subjective (p. 432)

The author points out that “fear of crime is a function of women’s perceptions about space, which in turn is shaped by social norms of legitimacy” (p. 426). Even when women are in their neighbourhoods, also colloquially known as ‘para’, they must have a purpose for their presence, unlike men, who can go about leisurely activities at about any time of the day. Thus, it is clear that no matter what the statistics say, women’s fear of public spaces stem from societal prescriptions about who an ideal woman is. The author concludes from various sources that public sphere is perceptual, symbolic, representational, and subjective (p. 432).

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THE INTIMATE CITY: VIOLENCE, GENDER AND ORDINARY LIFE IN DELHI SLUMS

- Delhi bus rape incident in 2012.
- The rape and murder of two minor girls who had gone to defecate in the open fields in Badaun near Delhi
- There is a wrong notion that improvement of infrastructure can actually lower the number of sexual crimes.
- Moreover, it serves to hide the exclusionary attitude of the rest of the city towards slums and justify the latter as the only misogynistic space.



Let us now move on to the case from Delhi. In the article, “The Intimate City: violence, gender and ordinary life in Delhi slums”, Ayona Datta explores the intimate lives of women within a slum area in Southern Delhi having approximately 5000 residents. It is referred to as the ‘camp’. According to her (2016, p. 1), “everyday life in the slum requires the production of (1) an urban subject who shows agency not by resisting but by living with intimate violence; (2) an urban subjectivity involved in acquiring knowledge of one’s bodily terrain in order to limit this violence; and (3) an urban citizenship that argues for a “right to intimacy” as a way to claim a right to the city”. Slums in Delhi have been identified as hot baits of sexual criminal, especially since the Delhi bus rape case incidents that happened in the year 2012.



The rape and murder of two minor girls who had gone to defecate in the open fields in Badaun near Delhi also highlighted the absence of basic hygienic provisions. Scholars argued how it is not just an issue with the infrastructure but that of public safety, especially for women.

However, this connection mistakenly suggests that improvement of infrastructure can actually lower the number of sexual crimes. Moreover, it serves to hide the exclusionary attitude of the rest of the city towards slums and justify the latter as the only misogynistic space.

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BEYOND PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE

- We must go beyond the public-private divide
- In the excluded slums, intimate violence is directed against the women residents.
- Even though intimate violence is more frequent, it is always the violent incidents in the public that receive all the attention
- Since the slum has been constructed as a separate entity from the rest of the city, the residents are denied basic rights and also subjected to state violence






The author wants us to go beyond the public-private divide and emphasizes “expansion of the horizons of urban geography to the intimate spaces of the home” (p. 2). Not only there is violence perpetrated against slums through exclusionary practices but it is also where intimate violence is directed against the women residents. Even though intimate violence is far more frequent, it is always the violent incidents in the public that receive all the attention. Since the slum has been constructed as a separate entity from the rest of the city, the residents are denied basic rights and also subjected to violence on the behalf of the state.

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URBAN CITIZENSHIP IN SLUMS

- The woman in slums are seen as a burden who need to be under the protective custody of the patriarch.
- The violence that is perpetrated within the intimate space of the slum goes unnoticed since it is deliberately hidden from public view
- Urban citizenship can be expressed through demands for intimacy and privacy in case of slums

As stated earlier, the division between public and private began in India during the Nationalist struggle. Home started to be seen as the domain of women who ceased to have

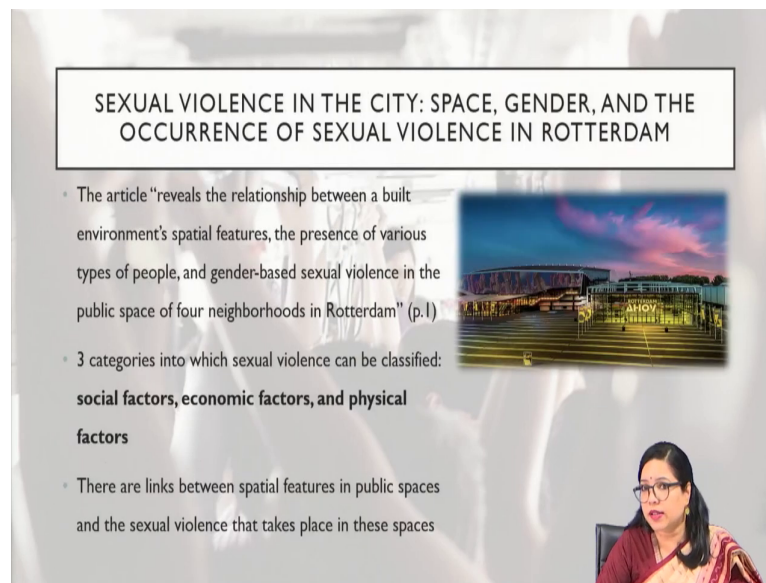
any fundamental rights. They were governed instead by religious codes. The woman is thus seen as a burden who needs to be under the protective custody of the patriarch. The violence that is perpetrated within the intimate space of the slum goes unnoticed since it is deliberately hidden from public view. Urban citizenship thus can be expressed through the demands for intimacy and privacy in case of slums.

The author narrates three stories of women living in this slum to argue her point. The first story, that of Ameena who has been subjected to violence by her father and her uncle ends up being dejected by the state, and finally becomes a resident of the slum. Here she is taken care of by Sujata, who herself is an outlier. This story illustrates two things according to the author. Firstly, it shows how state authorities insist on separating the private and the public and send the victim back to the intimate space where the violence is being perpetrated. Secondly, this issue attests to how the community's stronghold on its residents is called upon to control all acts of intimacy and violence.

The second story is that of Meenu Kumari, an educated social worker who started working towards the welfare of women in Okhla region and then went on to start a primary school for the children living in the slum area. She also gave advice on health and lifestyle problems to the women of the area. Her logic was that she was helping them become informed citizens capable of protecting themselves from intimate violence. In Meenu's opinion the problems in the slum were mainly due to two reasons (p. 13): "first, as a consequence of the social and physical exclusion of slum dwellers from the public life of the city; and, second, on account of their withdrawal within the "oppressive" spaces of the slum."


The third and final story is that of Shraddha who was trained as a social worker by the women's wing of a nationalist party. In Shraddha's opinion, the space crunch was the main reason for deterioration of slum areas. The limited space was further worsened by lack of leisure opportunities. Children had no scope for getting educated given the lack of space and opportunities. Shraddha's narrative is a call for right to intimacy within the private spaces of slums. "The separation between public and private forms of intimate violence in the city underlines urban geography's failure to connect the experience of exclusion from the urban public realm to the intimate relations of power within the home, family, neighbourhood and community" (Datta, 2016, p. 18).

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SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE CITY: SPACE, GENDER, AND THE OCCURRENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ROTTERDAM

- The article “reveals the relationship between a built environment’s spatial features, the presence of various types of people, and gender-based sexual violence in the public space of four neighborhoods in Rotterdam” (p.1)
- 3 categories into which sexual violence can be classified: **social factors, economic factors, and physical factors**
- There are links between spatial features in public spaces and the sexual violence that takes place in these spaces



In the next two cases, we will focus on the situation outside India. The first case is based on the article “Sexual Violence in the City: Space, Gender, and the Occurrence of Sexual Violence in Rotterdam” by Miranda and van Nes (2020). The article “reveals the relationship between a built environment’s spatial features, the presence of various types of people, and gender-based sexual violence in the public space of four neighborhoods in Rotterdam” (p.1).

According to the authors, there are 3 categories into which sexual violence can be classified. They are social factors, economic factors, and physical factors. The study deals with the links between spatial features in public spaces and the sexual violence that takes place in these spaces

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PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

OSCAR NEWMAN (1972)

- Gender exclusive places so that there is no inter-mixing between the genders.

JANE JACOBS (1961)

- Gender intermixing so that the roads are too populated for incidents of sexual violence

Created by Gan Khoun Lay from the Noon Project

The slide features a central illustration of two black stick figures, one appearing to be in a physical altercation with the other, with a large exclamation mark above them. To the right is a black and white photograph of a dense crowd of people. In the bottom right corner, a woman in a red sari is speaking.

There are two scenarios presented by authors Oscar Newman (1972) and by Jane Jacobs in 1961 in which sexual violence can be eliminated. The former advocates for gender exclusive places so that there is no inter-mixing between the genders. The latter calls for a mixture of genders so that the roads are too populated for incidents of sexual violence to take place. In order to exercise ones right to the city, one needs to be free to move around. (Refer Slide Time: 16:08)

FEAR OF PUBLIC SPACES

- Women avail the public transport more than men
- They often combine trips to cut down the number of times they have to go out
- There is a fear among women regarding public places and the fear is generally the fear of strangers, mostly men
- The fear is further strengthened due to government advisories that make it the responsibility of women to avoid getting sexually attacked.

The slide includes a photograph of a busy bus stop with several double-decker buses and a large crowd of people. In the bottom right corner, the same woman in a red sari is speaking.

Compared to men, women usually avail the public transport more and often combine trips to cut down the number. In Netherlands, too, there is a fear among women regarding public places and the fear is generally the fear of strangers which are mostly men.

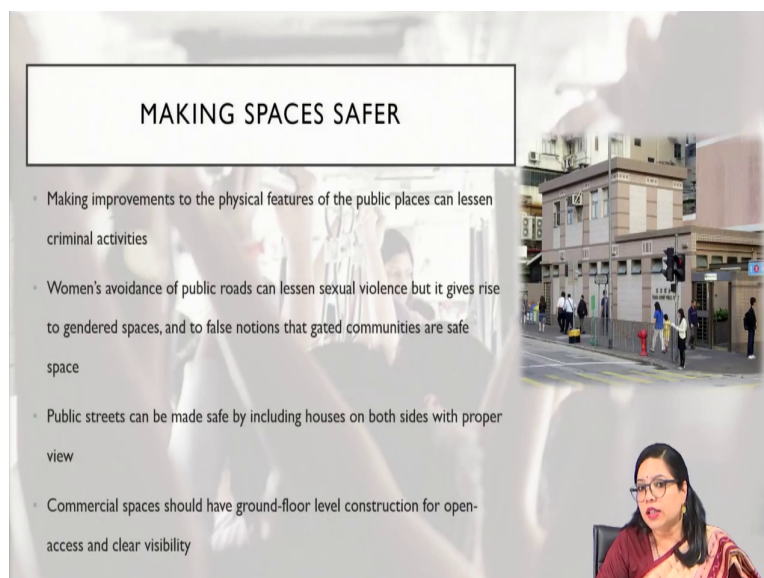
The fear is further strengthened due to government advisories that make it the responsibility of women to avoid getting sexually attacked.

Since the public places fall under the government's jurisdiction, it is their duty to keep it safe. Both the spatial and temporal nature of these spaces have to be understood fully to keep the government informed on the best possible actions. Boomsma and Steg concluded that "the most important physical factors for the perception of safety (or absence of it) apart from gender are lighting, the effect of entrapment (blocked escape), and concealment" (cited in p. 4).

Other authors have shown how technical as opposed to social fixes such as better lighting, proper visibility, and use of CCTVs can improve the safety situation. The study of Rotterdam showed that although Newman's idea of separating the genders physically ensures the absence of sexual violence. "The authors, however, argue that built environment with opportunities for everyone to move freely and safely requires enhancing well-integrated streets and urban blocks with high building permeability to reduce sexual violence risk, as streets are the urban spaces where everyone needs to move between home, work, and leisure activities" (p. 26).

It was found that areas with most leisure activities had the greatest incidents of sexual violence in the nighttime and busy streets during the day had the least number of cases. However, in commercial areas, where the visibility is not high, sexual violence occurs despite the heavy volume of people

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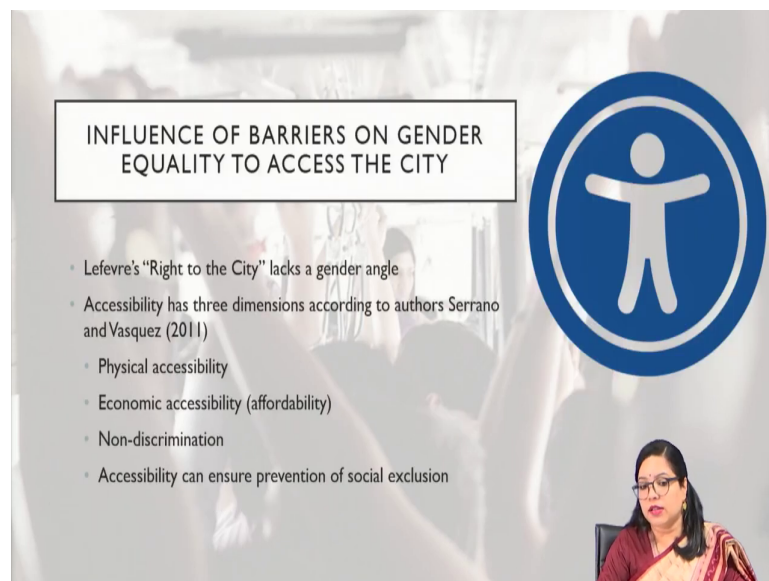


MAKING SPACES SAFER

- Making improvements to the physical features of the public places can lessen criminal activities
- Women's avoidance of public roads can lessen sexual violence but it gives rise to gendered spaces, and to false notions that gated communities are safe space
- Public streets can be made safe by including houses on both sides with proper view
- Commercial spaces should have ground-floor level construction for open-access and clear visibility

The studies showed that making improvements to the physical features of the public places can lessen criminal activities. Since women tend to avoid public spaces, it ensures less sexual violence but at the cost of their freedom. Their avoidance of public roads gives rise to gendered spaces which are closed for women's access and secondly, to false notions that gated communities are safe space.

Finally, the study suggests that public streets can be made safe by including houses on both sides with proper view and commercial spaces should have ground-floor level construction for open-access and clear visibility (Refer Slide Time: 19:18)



INFLUENCE OF BARRIERS ON GENDER EQUALITY TO ACCESS THE CITY

- Lefevre's "Right to the City" lacks a gender angle
- Accessibility has three dimensions according to authors Serrano and Vasquez (2011)
 - Physical accessibility
 - Economic accessibility (affordability)
 - Non-discrimination
- Accessibility can ensure prevention of social exclusion

The final case is based on a study conducted in Mexico City by authors Mejía-Dorantes and Villagrán and published as the article “A review on the influence of barriers on gender equality to access the city: A synthesis approach of Mexico City and its Metropolitan Area” (2019). Lefevre’s “Right to the City” that has been discussed in the previous lecture unfortunately lacks a gender angle.

Accessibility has three dimensions according to authors Serrano and Vasquez (2011):

“(1) Physical accessibility: The mobility system must be physically accessible to all people, in other words, it must be located at a reasonable geographical distance in order to satisfy basic needs.

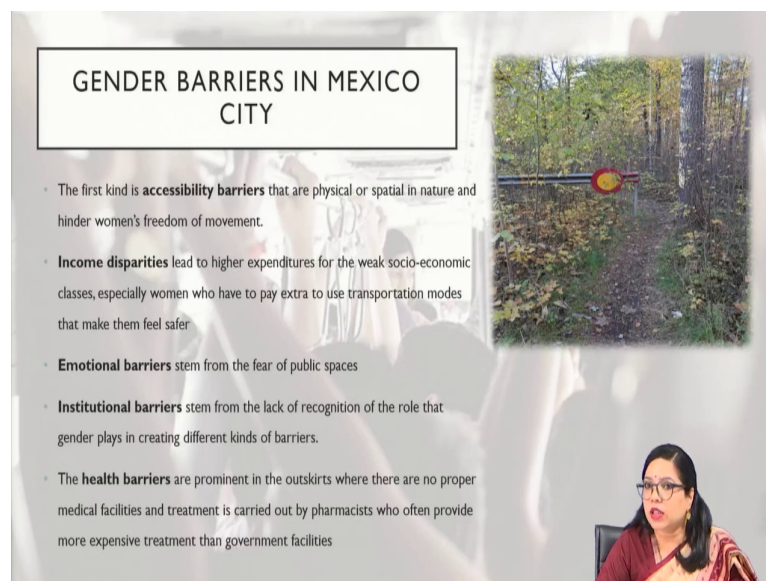
(2) Economic accessibility (affordability): It stands against a disproportionate burden that would limit carrying out certain activities or rights. The direct and indirect costs and charges

associated with traveling from one place to another should not compromise or jeopardize the exercise of other rights.

(3) Non-discrimination: The access to the mobility system should not exclude people due to any type of sociocultural aspects, such as race, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, national or social origin, economic position, birth or any other social condition.” (cited in pg. 2)

Most authors agree that accessibility is important to ensure the prevention of social exclusion. So, what did the study on Mexico City reveal?

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The slide features a title box at the top left, a list of five bullet points, and a small photograph of a road barrier on the right. A woman is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

GENDER BARRIERS IN MEXICO CITY

- The first kind is **accessibility barriers** that are physical or spatial in nature and hinder women's freedom of movement.
- **Income disparities** lead to higher expenditures for the weak socio-economic classes, especially women who have to pay extra to use transportation modes that make them feel safer
- **Emotional barriers** stem from the fear of public spaces
- **Institutional barriers** stem from the lack of recognition of the role that gender plays in creating different kinds of barriers.
- The **health barriers** are prominent in the outskirts where there are no proper medical facilities and treatment is carried out by pharmacists who often provide more expensive treatment than government facilities

There are several barriers that women face in Mexico. The first kind is accessibility barriers that are physical or spatial in nature and hinder women's freedom of movement. Public transportation is often out of bounds because of the poor conditions that the access paths which lead to their usage are in. Care related tasks are often carried out by women who have to opt for difficult or more expensive mobility options since the cities have been designed from a male-centric view point.

Moreover, public transport is often filled to the brim during busy hours leading to rise in episodes of harassment against women. Income disparities lead to higher expenditures for the weak socio-economic classes, especially women who have to pay extra to use transportation modes that make them feel safer.

The poverty is not just in terms of money but also in terms of time. Since women have to balance household duties along with occasional travelling for care-related tasks, they are

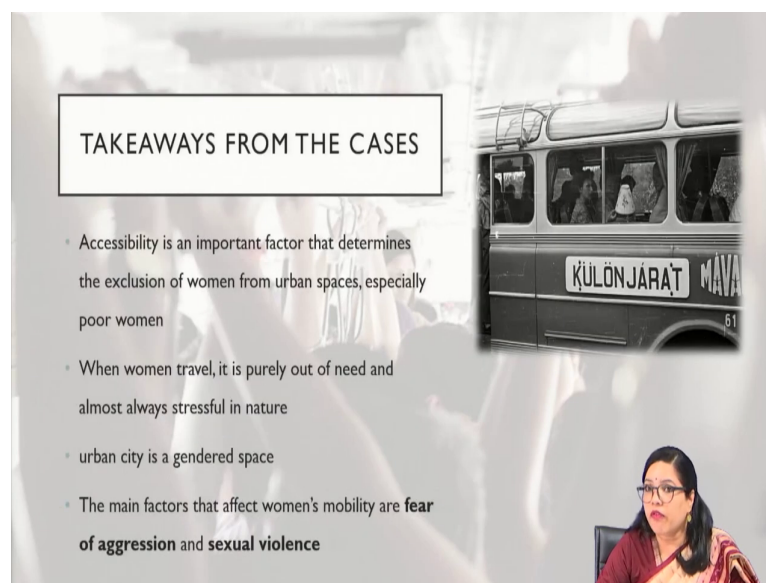
often left with very little time. Emotional barriers stem from the fear of public spaces as I have explained earlier in the lecture. Women are plagued with such fear that they often opt for alternate routes, more expensive transportation, and also depend on a male companion if available.

Institutional barriers stem from the lack of recognition of the role that gender plays in creating different kinds of barriers. As a result, these aspects are not taken into consideration when a city is planned. Moreover, there is a strict division between place of work and place of residence and women have always been relegated to the latter. Given the great distance between the two, women end up spending more money and more time as compared to men.

The health barriers are prominent in the outskirts where there are no proper medical facilities and treatment is carried out by pharmacists who often provide more expensive treatment than government facilities. Thus, it is worth highlighting that sexual violence that takes place in public transport often requires medical attention of a complex kind that these pharmacists cannot provide.

“This study argues that women have been an important collective with mobility restrictions, with a lesser presence in public spaces, which as a whole reflects deep inequalities in the urban space” (p. 8). The different types of barrier are interconnected and one leads to the creation of another.

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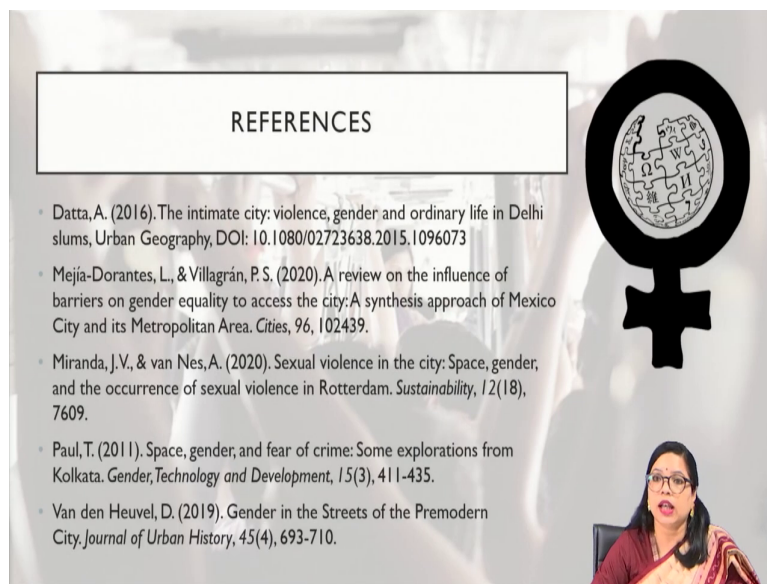
TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CASES

- Accessibility is an important factor that determines the exclusion of women from urban spaces, especially poor women
- When women travel, it is purely out of need and almost always stressful in nature
- urban city is a gendered space
- The main factors that affect women's mobility are **fear of aggression** and **sexual violence**

The main finding is that accessibility is an important factor that determines the exclusion of women from urban spaces, especially impoverished women. When women travel, it is purely out of need and almost always stressful in nature.

Through the four cases that I have discussed today, it is hopefully clear to you how urban city is a gendered space that women have a restricted access to. As you have also learnt, that this problem is universal in nature and women all over the world face similar problems.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:09)



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The slide features a large female gender symbol icon on the right side, which contains a globe with various letters and symbols. In the bottom right corner, there is a small inset video of the speaker, a woman wearing glasses and a red sari, speaking.

In the next lecture, I will talk about how race is another social category that hampers the urban experiences of certain communities. So, see you all in the next lecture.

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THANK YOU!

The slide features a background image of a crowd of people with their hands raised, suggesting a public gathering or protest. In the bottom right corner, there is a small inset video of the speaker, a woman wearing glasses and a red sari, speaking.

Thank you for listening and have a great day ahead.