



PLANNERS NEWS LETTER

April - June - 2021
No. 18 x 2

Institute of Town Planners India
4-A, Ring Road, I.P. Estate, New Delhi - 110002

www.itpi.org.in
RNI-DELENG/2004/12724

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Special Issue
International Women's
Day – 2021



Shri Chandrakant (Babu) Kavlekar, Honorable Deputy Chief Minister and Minister Achieves, Archeology, Factories and Boilers, Government of Goa laying the Foundation Stone of Goa Regional Chapter building

FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY OF GOA REGIONAL CHAPTER BUILDING

While laying the foundation stone of Goa Regional Chapter (GRC) building on 25th March, 2021; Shri Chandrakant (Babu) Kavlekar, Honourable Deputy Chief Minister and Minister Achieves, Archeology, Factories and Boilers, Government of Goa, in his address mentioned that it is heartening to note that Goa Regional Chapter of Institute of Town Planners, India is constructing their own building with all amenities and felt honoured to lay foundation stone for this prestige building. He congratulated the members of Goa Regional Chapter of ITPI for their effort to construct and also Institute of Town Planners, India for providing generous grant for construction of the building. In his address, he has said that he believes in the saying 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and have no doubt that all the town planners of Goa will come forward for supporting this endeavour and render their assistance for completing the building. He has also

mentioned that he is ready to provide his contribution and support the GRC for completing this building and also complemented Institute of Town Planners, India for taking initiatives for deciding to construct such a prestigious project in Goa, which will become a centre of activities of professional town and country planners and other related professionals.

While concluding his address, Honourable Minister mentioned that the building will be completed in the record time, hopefully during his tenure as Minister, and would be happy to inaugurate the same.

Shri N. K. Patel, President, ITPI, on the occasion of the foundation stone laying ceremony, congratulated the Executive Committee of GRC and Shri James Mathew, Chairman, GRC (online) for their effort to plan and design and start construction of the building and hoped that the project will be completed in record time



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**Shri Chandrakant
(Babu) Kavlekar,
Honorable Deputy
Chief Minister
Government of Goa,
addressing the
participants**

MRC (N), Lecture Series –IX

for which generous grant will be released by ITPI, HQ., however, members are also requested to raise funds.

Shri S. B. Khodankar, Secretary General, ITPI also congratulated the members of GRC (online) and requested them to make efforts for the completion of building and regularly visit the site so that the work can be completed in the record time. He also further elaborated that ITPI, HQ., will provide all the assistance, as far as possible.

Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram, President Emeritus, ITPI in his address (online) narrated the efforts of Prof. E. F. N. Riberio, Past President, ITPI; Shri Pradeep Kapoor, Former Secretary General, ITPI and himself as the then President, ITPI for procuring the plot from Mr. Macedo the owner of land. He has also mentioned that the exiting building was very old and was in dilapidated condition and therefore it was decided to construct the new building by the Council, ITPI and requested Ar. Gerard Da Cunha, to prepare plan / design the building, which should be landmark of the area. He was happy to mention that his dream to have Goa Regional Chapter building became true today and congratulated Shri James Mathew, Chairman, GRC and his team for taking the initiative to construct new building of GRC, ITPI at Alto Porvarim, Goa.

MAHARASHTRA REGIONAL CHAPTER, NAGPUR LECTURE SERIES –IX

Maharashtra Regional Chapter, Nagpur organized Lectures Series IX on 2nd February, 2021 (online and offline) at MRC (N) on the theme 'Sustainable Cities'.

Before the Technical Session, Shri S. B. Khodankar, Secretary General, ITPI was felicitated by Maharashtra Regional Chapter, Nagpur through the hand of Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram, President Emeritus ITPI and Vice President Commonwealth Association of Planners. In his address Shri S. B. Khodankar, Secretary General, ITPI mentioned that, these are proud movements for him, being facilitated in the august presence of Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram, who was not only instrumental for promoting town and country planning profession, but, was also responsible to the advancement of the town and country planning education in the country, right from starting the Town and Country Planning Departments in the various states and also starting the postgraduate and undergraduate courses in the various central sector and corporate sector institutions imparting town and country planning education in the country. In fact he was also instrumental in starting B. Planning program, at undergraduate level, by convincing, the

Shri Pradeep Kapoor, Former Secretary General, ITPI mentioned that Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram, President Emeritus, ITPI had the vision to procure land for all the Regional Chapters of ITPI and construct the building, so that ITPI activities can be started from its own building and we are happy that today this dream is being fulfilled. He then shared his experience of purchase of plot / land from Shri Macedo, and was happy that the construction work is started to day. He then requested Shri James Mathew, Chairman, GRC do ensure that building will be completed in record time as per the approved plan.

Shri James Mathew, Chairman, GRC, welcoming the Honourable Minister and ITPI Members also gave, in brief, the efforts of the Executive Committee Members of GRC and mentioned that outright efforts will be made for completion of GRC building and requested all the members of GRC to support and render helping hand in completion of this project.

Shree Vinod K. Chandra, Secretary GRC extended the vote of thanks to Shri Chandrakant (Babu) Kavlekar, Honourable Deputy Chief Minister, Government of Goa and also to all the participants (online and offline and off time).

then Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India, and also prepared the DPR for Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India for starting new Schools of Planning in central sector. Due to his efforts two new Schools of Planning and Architecture were established one at Bhopal and second at Vijayawada. He then mentioned that NITI Aayog has recently constituted a Committee on 'Reform in Urban Planning Capacity in India' to review current planning education system in India, in terms of multi-disciplinary curriculum and related issues at graduate and postgraduate levels. The committee is entrusted to examine the present availability, demand and supply of qualified urban planners in India in the context of role and responsibilities required at different levels, and strengthen the mechanism of empowering states and local bodies with adequately skilled and qualified manpower resources for planning and managing settlements; President ITPI is also the member of this Committee.

After the felicitation of Shri S. B. Khodankar, Secretary General, ITPI; Shri Sujit Rodge, Chairman, MRC (N) invited Ms. Noopur Joshi, Research Assistant, National



Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram presenting the memento to Shri S. B. Khodankar, Secretary General, ITPI, on behalf of MRC (N)

University of Singapore to talk on the theme 'Principals of Sustainable Urbanism' (online). In her presentation Ms. Joshi mentioned that in last decade population of Asian cities grew by 31% adding 4.1 crore people, however for providing housing to this influx, 20,000 homes will be required. This increasing population of our towns and cities, generally, gets settled in the periphery of large towns and in the satellite towns, which is a common phenomenon in Asian cities. She also elaborated the terms like productive metropolis, circular landscape, reinventing existing landscape repositioning the working cities, based on lifelong learning, etc., with example from Singapore and other cities. While concluding her talk Ms. Joshi mentioned that the principle of sustainable urbanism is based on three 'R' i.e. Reform, Revive and Reinvent, which need to be followed, in the context of India.

Dr. Sarika Bahadure, Assistant Professor, VNIT, Nagpur and Ms. Shreya Sable, Adjunct Faculty VNIT, Nagpur, made joint presentation on the theme 'Sustainable Planning: A Case of Hill Towns'. The speakers highlighted that hill area are the preferred tourist destinations and explained the development pattern in the Hill towns from pre-independence period till date. Due to limited land availability for development activities the hill settlements face the challenges of congestion, overcrowding, pollution, inadequate infrastructure and deficiency in housing, commercial space and industries. They highlighted that a hill area means, a settlement located at above 600 m means sea level with an average slope of 30

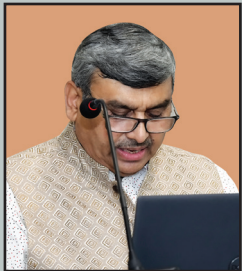
degree. Such settlements generally experience heavy rainfall causing erosion of lands, they have poor mobility due to steep slopes, they are prone to high seismic activities and have a sensitive and a fragile ecosystem, which calls for sensitive, eco-friendly and sustainable developmental approach during planning. Taking the example of Gangtok Sikkim, as a case study, they explained that there is a need to prepare disaster management plan, which is being prepared after carrying out primary and secondary study of existing land uses, population projection and calculating carrying capacity and preparing sustainability map.

In his address Shri S. B. Khodankar, mentioned that the term sustainable development grew from numerous environmental movements in earlier decades and was defined, in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission 1987), as the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This contributed to the understanding of sustainable development which encompasses a number of areas and highlights sustainability as the idea of environmental, economic and social progress and equity, all within the limits of the world's natural resources.

Rio Earth Summit (1992) enshrined sustainability in Agenda - 21, a Plan of Action and recommended that all countries should provide 'National Sustainable Development Strategies'. However, down 10+ years,



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Shri S. B. Khodankar,
Secretary General,
ITPI, addressing the
participants

MRC (N), Lecture Series –IX

since Rio, there has been little change in poverty levels, inequality, or sustainable development, as the World Development Movement notes, 'Despite thousands of fine words, the last decade lost the sustainable development with deepening poverty, global inequality and environmental destruction'.

In referring to sustainable urban development, Satterwaite argued that 'it is not cities or urbanization that sustainable development seeks to sustain but, instead, it aims to meet human needs in settlements of all sizes without depleting environmental capital'. This means seeking an institutional and regulatory frame work in which democratic and accountable city and municipal authorities ensure that the needs of the people within their boundaries are addressed while minimizing the transferring of environmental costs to other people or ecosystems in the future. While Succinctly describes what sustainability aims to achieve, but does not identify the means by which sustainability goals might be achieved. To translate this general definition into meaningful objectives for sustainable urban development, is complicated and subjects to a variety of interpretations. Satterwaite has developed the interpretation of the concept for application to cities. He explains that meeting the needs of the present involves - economic needs; social, cultural, environmental, and health needs; political needs; and minimizing use or waste of non-renewable resources; amongst other needs.

Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram, President Emeritus, ITPI mentioned that the complex and variegated relationship between the city and the United Nations promoted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which gets more pronounced in the present situation. However, there are 17 Sustainable Goals (SDGs), set by the United Nation. Each of these Goals are interlinked with urbanization which is considered as an opportunity. These Goals cater to social justice and economic development that is environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change. India is committed to implement these goals at national, state and local levels. NITI Aayog has evolved a SDG Index which documents the progress made by states and UTs towards implementing SDG 2030 targets.

However, he underlined that out of 17 SDG Goals, Goal – 11 focus on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and noted that by 2050, 70% of the world's population will live in cities, making cities critical in achieving a sustainable future for the world. Businesses, together with governments at various levels, and civil society organizations and citizens are collectively engaged

in pursuing ambitious objectives to make cities more competitive, safe, resource-efficient, resilient and inclusive. Key areas in achieving progress on Goal - 11 are; (a) identifying and agreeing the most sustainable ways to achieve the targets- what activities should be ceased and which ones accelerated; (b) building appropriate capacity and skills across these stakeholder groups to deliver; (c) attracting / securing finance, innovative designs and delivery models and projects for integrated city infrastructure- including buildings, energy, mobility, telecommunications, water, sanitation and waste management services, and; (d) ensuring practical processes for multi-stakeholders engagement in all stages of urban development that build consensus, inclusion, resilience and sustainability.

The targets of SDG – 11 to be achieved by 2030 are:

- Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons;
- Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries;
- Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage;
- Significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations;;
- Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management;
- Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities;
- Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning;
- Substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion,

resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels; and

- Support least developed countries, through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.

India being the signatory to sustainable Development Goals, is committed to implement these goals by the targeted year 2030. Accordingly, NIT Aayog has the twin mandate to oversee the implementation of SDGs in the country and promote cooperative federalism among states and UTs.

The vote of thanks was extended by Dr. Pankaj Bhadure, Secretary, MRC (N) and anchoring was done by Ms. Riddhi Sarada.

NOSPLAN ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT OF PLANNING

NOS Plan, organization of students of planning, held their Annual Convention during 29th – 31st January, 2021; and invited Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram, President Emeritus ITPI and Vice President Commonwealth Association of Planners, to the Valedictory Ceremony held on 31st January, 2021 as the Chief Guest.

In his Valedictory address Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram, was happy to note that NOSPlan got energized and organizing its XXII Annual Convention titled as 'Punarutthan' i.e. Resurgence, at SPA, Delhi, and awarding Planning Trophy, NOSPlan Publication Trophy, Gaming Trophy, beside Logo Design, etc. In addition, other awards like 'Design it Accessible' sponsored by National Institute of Urban Affairs, 'CURE for Basti' sponsored by Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence, 'Strength Mapping' sponsored by Non-urbanism, 'Map it out' by Urban Box and 'In and Out', etc., sponsored by Planning Tank.

Dr. Meshram, in his address also highlighted the fact that NOSPlan, was created in 1971 at the initiatives of Institute of Town Planners, India with the objective to developing the community of planning students for becoming better planning professionals of tomorrow. In fact, it is platform for interaction between planning students and entire planning fraternity. However, as it happened with any other organization, NOSPlan has also noticed ups and downs but it is really encouraging to mention that NOSPlan re-surfed with more vigor, with the active support of Prof. Dr. P. S. N. Rao, Director, SPA, Delhi and also of Prof. Dr. Ashok Kumar, Dean (Academic), SPA, Delhi.

I am sure that participating students must have been benefitted, through the various activities and competition as they could have realized where they stand in comparison with other students from other schools and also from students of other schools / institutions. It is important to mention that Institute of Town Planners, India has declared NOSPlan as their



Prof Dr. D. S. Meshram, being presented memento by NOSPlan

students' wing and would be providing link on ITPI website to NOSPlan and also provide space in ITPI Newsletter to report their activities, for dissemination to student of the schools registered with ITPI. He then requested NOSPlan to encourage their members to participate in the activities of Commonwealth Association of Planners in their 'Young Planner's Network'.

He also highlighted certain points, not as sermons, but as suggestions like hard work always pays so cultivate this habit. Architecture, & Urban Design, and Town Planning are separate and different disciplines, while architecture and engineering disciplines deals with building or group of buildings but canvas of planning is much wider, because it deal with whole towns. He has also underlined that when architects and engineers can do the jobs of planner, why can't planners do the job of architects / engineers because basics of architecture and engineering are also taught



to planners. Thus, planning discipline is second to none. However, he has also lamented that, planning students are not writing articles / research papers, even after completing their education. Therefore, in order to in cultivate habit of writing papers, he suggested Director, SPA, Delhi to make it mandatory to publish at least one paper concerning their thesis, then only their thesis be adopted, as is done for the Ph.D. students to publish mandatory two to three papers.

As after completing their education, students will be entering in the profession therefore, Dr. Meshram requested them, to adopt the healthy competition and follow the Code of Conduct prescribed by ITPI, and also to charge the fees as prescribed by ITPI for planning projects / works beside to help their juniors. He has also mentioned that Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has already issued the advisory to state governments, to follow the Recruitment Rules adopted by Town and Country Planning Organization and approved by UPSC. He then highlighted that,

the requirement of planners will be increased many fold as per the Committee of Experts constituted by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and further added that NITI Aayog also constituted an advisory Committee on 'Reforms in Urban Planning Capacity in India'.

Prof. Dr. P. S. N. Rao, Director, SPA, Delhi, in his brief talk, mentioned that activities like annual convention organised by NOS Plan encourages the students to assess themselves, not only in comparison with their batch mate but also students from other schools therefore, all the schools should participate in this event of students.

Prof. Dr. Ashok Kumar, Dean (Academic), SPA, Delhi gave the highlighted of the various activities undertaken since last three days and expected that, in future, all the schools, recognized by ITPI, would participate in this national event for students of planning.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – 2021

In the ITPI Council meeting held on 10th April, 2021; Prof. Dr. D. S. Meshram, President Emeritus, ITPI suggested to invite the views / opinion of women planners / experts from various sectors like professionals from public, cooperate and privates; and academicians from government and private institutions at different levels, on the challenges they came across due to dominance of males in profession and education and how they have resolved the same? He has further mentioned that during Business Meeting of Commonwealth Association of Planners he has proposed to establish Women Planners Network Forum under the umbrella of ITPI on the pattern of CAP. Shri Pradeep Kapoor, former Secretary General, ITPI also endorsed this view. He further elaborated that International Women's Day (IWD) call to action for accelerating Women's equality and the theme of IWD - 2021 is "Choose to Challenge", We can all choose challenge and call out gender bias and inequality and celebrate women's achievements. In fact, Women's equality celebration came into being in 1911 after German socialist activist Calra Zetkin proposed to celebrate international Women's day at the Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen in 1910.

After discussions, in the ITPI Council meeting, it was decided that, as a first step, ITPI may invite the views of women planners / experts from various sectors, in India and abroad, and accordingly,

Secretary General, ITPI was requested to address a letter, to some women planners. The views / opinion received from some of the women planners / experts were exhaustive / elaborate, however due to limitations of space in Newsletter, the write up was limited to 1200 words only. The views / opinion received have been divided into two groups (a) women planners engaged in professional and (b) women planners engaged in education and research.

Views / Opinion of Women Planners in Profession



I. P. Parate,

Former Director (Planning),
DDA and former
Chairperson of Delhi
Regional Chapter, ITPI.

After obtaining master's degree in town and country planning, I joined the Planning Department of Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in 1982 and retired as Director Planning in 2015. Planning Department of DDA comprises one of the largest team of town planners in any Development Authority in the country. This Department prepares plans, policies, and proposals for guiding the organized and planned development of Delhi through the process of master plan, zonal plan, action area plans, urban extension projects, etc. I had the opportunity to

work in planning department at the time of preparation of Master Plan of Delhi (MPD - 2001) and also MPD - 2021 which was under preparation at the time of my retirement.

The theme of International Women's Day 2021 is "Choose to Challenge" which is a great opportunity to remind us of the need for education and the work - we all must act towards normalizing equality at all levels. As they say, a challenged world is an alert world, and challenge is what we must do to break the status quo. Through ages women have been looked down upon as inferior sex, unable to perform the task other than family responsibilities, and so, this IWD - 2021. Let us all choose to promote professional growth of women in planning and advocate for equitable treatment and advancement of women planners at all stages of their career. Let us seek out and celebrate women's achievements in every sphere.

Town planning in India, in its present form, is a young profession, and very few women used to choose planning as a career, and thus it remained a male dominated profession. During the early days it was realized that gender equality is particularly essential to town planning because the lack of gender diversity affects not only the way we design and plan but also for whom we design and plan. Hence, the benefit of having women in planning goes far beyond in fulfilling the industry's immediate skill requirement. Fortunately, the decades of 1990 and 2000, saw progress with an increasing number of women joining the town planning profession, and since then the number is growing, day by day.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the professional journey of any woman planner and in particular gender related barrier to professional advancement, it is important to understand the professional experience as a planner and describe the barriers or obstacles faced which may have been gender bias. When I joined DDA in 1982, most of my colleagues were my batch mates who knew me before I joined the Department and hence were always helpful. As regards to my seniors, I was fortunate that even they supported me and had total confidence in my abilities. I think that was an important factor in building my confidence towards my work in the early days. At home front, a supportive husband helped a lot in ensuring and fulfilling career.

However, it will be unfair to say that I did not face my share of difficulties. In the early days, a lot of work revolved around site visits, and due to lack of women in the workforce, the systems and processes around a woman officer travelling for site visits were

not established. **As I grew up the hierarchy, I faced instances where I felt arrogance amongst my male colleagues who were not used to having a woman officer as part of high-level meetings.** It took more effort than usual to have my voice or opinion heard around the table. It just meant that I needed to be more assertive and ensured that my opinions were taken seriously. This worked for me throughout my career.

Now the circumstances are changing and the attitude towards women is evolving for the better. There are more women in the planning profession and, with time, the hurdles they face will be reducing. This is a never-ending process, and one day it will lead to a completely unbiased and a gender agnostic workforce. Till that day we must continue to choose to challenge and celebrate women's achievements everywhere.



N. Usha,
Former Chief Town Planner,
Chennai Metropolitan
Development Authority,
Government of Tamil Nadu.

I started my career as an Assistant Planner in Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) in 1988 immediately after completion of my studies. I had no earlier work experience and was completely new to the work culture of a government organisation. Women Officers were relatively less and formed a small group. My first posting in the Master Plan Unit at CMDA was in the process of preparation of Second Master Plan for Chennai Metropolitan Area. Those were the days when application of technology was limited and work was mostly manual in nature. Master Plan preparation involved extensive survey of the planning area and this meant that we had to go for land use survey work continuously, across the length and breadth of the Metropolitan Area which was extremely strenuous and tiring. As a woman officer, several practical problems were encountered with the most important issue being to find appropriate places for eating lunch and rest rooms in particular. This problem was solved by carrying out some due diligence prior to the survey work and by identifying few institutions and government buildings in the vicinity of the area being surveyed and then obtain prior permission for using their infrastructure during survey period. Similarly, while undertaking inspections during enforcement drives organised by the Authority, sometimes poses threat especially for women officers in terms of



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safety and security. These situations were tackled with tactfulness and presence of mind and by not precipitating it further with words or actions.

As one climbs up the ladder in career by occupying higher positions, the responsibilities become more challenging and at that level one cannot take refuge from discharging their duties simply because we are women. In one such situation, I had to lead a team of Revenue, Planning and Police officials to lock and seal flower shops in the core business district of Chennai to comply with the orders of the Honourable High Court. Though it was a tense situation and there were wide spread protests against the locking and sealing, I convinced the group that there was no other alternative but to seal the shops and later completed the task with full support from the shop owners and the same was appreciated by the management. In my present position as an officer to dispose statutory appeals, there is a need to equip myself on the legal aspects and dispose the appeals as these decisions are likely to be challenged in the court of law.

Career poses several challenges in its path spanning over several decades and these challenges need to be tackled and there is no shortcut because we are women. I have encountered such challenges in an objective manner by trying to understand the context, the framework within which the duties are to be discharged and by eliciting the necessary support from the team. Each day poses new challenges and these are met with logical reasoning and within the framework of institutional responsibilities.

Nivedita Pande,



Partner, Nivedita and Uday Pande Consultants(N+U Design Studio), New Delhi

As I sit back to write about my experiences in the field of planning, nostalgia takes hold of my mind, and takes me back to 1982 when I first

joined Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) as an Architect - Planner. My mind even goes back further down the memory lane to the year 1973, when as a fifteen year old high school graduate from a government-aided girls' school; I joined the course of architecture. I did not know much about architecture except that it is a discipline dealing with buildings. I owe it fully to my aware parents who saw the aptitude in me and decided that this would be a good career for me. With school-girlish attitude I completed 3 years, scoring well in examinations

but still not sure of where would this education take me in future? It was only during the last two years of the course, that the vastness and seriousness of the profession that I was about to enter was realized by me.

The dull atmosphere and monotonous routine work in state government's Public Works Department made me think of options to leave Nagpur for better opportunities. A strong urge to study further in order to broaden the options for work took me to School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi where I enrolled for Master's course in Urban and Regional Planning in the year 1979. The initial challenge was to leave my hometown and come to Delhi for studies, with no one to name as a local guardian and no financial assistance from home. However, with my savings from a previous years of working and the monthly university funding we received, I was able to sail through comfortably. Living and studying on campus, liberated my mind (leaving behind my conservative up-bringing in my hometown), broadened my vision not only professionally but in real life situations also.

Working in Mumbai seemed like a bigger challenge. Staying alone, in a MHADA allotted apartment (mind you, no home deliveries those days), all by yourself, one would think of it as a challenge. While work is concerned it was a new learning of the way the government functions.

Coming to Delhi and working in an organization like Delhi Development Authority, helped me gain a deep insight into the profession. In fact, my early years at DDA were the most formative years in my career. **Being a young woman officer, hierarchically at a higher level than some supporting staff older in age, was a challenge.** They were there to oust me on my first joining day itself. Even in meetings with officers from other government organizations, I realized people were not comfortable talking directly to me, instead they were comfortable talking to a junior who was more in age. Realizing this, I started going alone for the meetings so that they were forced to talk to me directly. But I realized that the societal mind set has to change as the problem did not lie with me but with the other person.

Planning field wise DDA was a vast learning ground. I was initially posted in the Traffic and Transportation Planning Wing, where I travelled across Delhi for road alignments, intersection designs, etc. It familiarized me with the entire Delhi of those days. Delhi is so huge and still growing, that one could be staying in one part of Delhi for a whole of lifetime without

having an idea about other parts of Delhi. The thing that disturbed me initially was that all were 'sahibs' – a very bureaucratic way of working, the planning department itself was so compartmentalized. The files were unnecessarily shunted back and forth, going up and down in each wing of planning. Thus a few hours' work of requesting and getting information from one department to another, would take weeks and months. I found it to be a waste of energy, time and resources.

After nine long years of working in DDA, I found it difficult to continue, and one day just submitted my resignation, and joined my husband's practice. We did, with lot of hard work with sincerity and luck favoured. The experience of working with DDA helped us a lot in making plans for colonies developed by private developers. The experience of working in DDA also made us understand how the authorities function and we had lesser complaints than those in private practice who did not understand the functioning of government organizations. There are many good systems of administration, accountability, record keeping, etc., that government organizations practice. We firmly believe that a person, who has worked (and I stress upon the word "worked") in any government organization, is a very valuable person as he / she understands the importance of systematic working. It also makes easier to understand schemes announced by government from time to time. However, it is not denying the fact that there were many challenges on the way like clients not paying our dues, a builder duping us with our hard earned money for the space we had dreamt to be our office, losing everything from computers, plotters, to even pencils in a devastating fire in the office, the slowdown in the economy and construction industry and many more.

Many young professionals-precisely to be couples and wanting to start practice together, question me if we ever had ego issues in our partnership. To this my answer is that we grew together and learnt together. We always respected each other's identity, there was never an effort to surpass each other and everything was in the interest of the work at hand. One more thing we followed was to keep the house in order on top priority by taking help from parents, domestic help and sometimes even office staff. This way, we were never stressed at work. The other important thing that we observed was to never take office related issues at home. Once home, we never discussed the work.

Now for last few years, children have also joined the practice. I have been pursuing my interest in

art and have been a professional artist doing my shows. I paint in oil medium. My paintings have been recognized with awards from various established institutions. With a supportive family including my parents, in-laws, husband and children, the journey has been a beautiful one. With my own experience I can say that if you follow your heart and have a passion, you will find time for everything and can balance your life. I always say that I am incomplete without my profession and my passion.



Pratibha Bhadane,

Joint Director Town Planning, Nashik; Town Planning and Valuation Department, Government of Maharashtra

When there was not much importance for girls in engineering education especially in civil engineering field, I completed my engineering degree in 1989 and joined the government service at Jalna in 1990. **Working woman means that there is always a quarrel between her biological clock and carrier clock, and the same happened with me also.** I got a government job and got married as well. But I was not one to stop with this and with the help of my supportive husband and son, even after marriage in 1997, I successfully completed Maharashtra Public Service Commission(MPSC) examination and became Assistant Director of Town Planning, and in 2002, I completed mandatory requirement of Master's degree in Town Planning, from College of Engineering Pune, for which I missed so many smiles and cries of my little child. With this sacrifice, I once again faced MPSC Examination and became Deputy Director of Town Planning in 2009. And now from 2017, I am holding the position of Joint Director of Town Planning in Nashik Division. This was my journey from Jalna to Nashik via Pune-Mumbai.

Everyone, in his / her life, has to perform things for the first time and the only option is to do it responsibly. I prepared development plan for the first time when I was working for Dhule Municipal Corporation on deputation from state government. Then came Kalyan Development Plan, which I prepared using a digital technology for the first time, during which I faced many challenges like aerial survey data and ground details did not match, etc. Therefore, we have resorted to ground surveys, using instruments like total stations, etc., for completing the remaining work of Development Plan. However, moving forward, I realized that preparation of development plan was



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difficult, but its implementation is more difficult. In earlier days of my service I used to go to homes of farmers in the morning and have a cup of tea with them and convince them to surrender their lands to Corporation in exchange for TDR. Also in "Goda Park Project" I acquired required parcels of land by mixing with people and convincing them about benefits of TDR.

I would also like to mention that a female can also maintain relations with public like a male does. In 2001, I was involved in Nashik Development Plan Road, which is having more traffic as well as commercial potentials and was occupied by the shopkeepers and they did not want vehicle parking over there in front of their shops. For this purpose, we published a public notice and called the shop owners for the interview and discussions and showed them the beautiful Plan of the road with footpath and paving, etc. After discussions in a tactful manner they surrendered their land and today the Road is existing the way we planned. I still remember the day when the senior citizens in that area personally visited me and thanked for providing them footpath for morning/evening walk. Besides, a case which became very famous in the Corporation at that time was when a politician came to ask about compensation to be paid to him for the reservation on his land by the Corporation. As the amount of compensation was very heavy I suggested Commissioner that we can generate the required funds if owner opt for 'Accommodation Reservation' the commissioner agreed, and appreciated the idea and the scheme was implemented.

Later, while I was in Pimpri-Chinchwad, I acquired the land for BRTS Project (Nashik Phata Bridge flyover and underpass land parcels), the important projects of the Corporation for which there was strong opposition of the owners. However, I managed to acquire the land through TDR as well as private negotiations. Similarly, acquisition of land for Road Project near Pimple Gurav Road Project near Jagtap Dairy also created win-win situation between the owners and authority. It may also be mentioned that the BRTS Road passes through the Defence Land, therefore the issue of Red Zone for defence area was required to be resolved besides the completion of the BRTS road, and JnNURM Project, for which I have to visit South Block, Delhi with Commissioner to present the case to Defence Officials and after great persuasion, we managed the permission of Defence Authorities for acquiring land parcels required for the project.

Another challenging task in my carrier was to prepare Regional Plan for Kalyan Corporation, which we prepared by using digital technology and I use to call this project as 'Express Regional Plan', because by traditional way Regional Plan could be completed in 7 years (approximately) but we prepared Kalyan Regional Plans in only one year. Following this technology, we prepared other 12 Express Regional Plans in just 25-30% of the budgeted amount, for which I was felicitated with "CM Award" in January, 2019. I was also awarded twice with 'Best Engineer Lady Award' first in 2001 at Nashik, and second in 2014 at Pimpri Chinchwad, besides I was also Awarded with 'Leading Lady Award' in 2017.

This is the journey of woman planning professional, which was full of challenges. In our daily life also women are facing challenges but since every lock has a key, every problem has its solution, which can be resolved with patience and confidence. Lastly, I would like to say, "Empower a woman than to Compete".



Ravuri Jyothi Vidyullatha,
Chief City Planner,
Greater Vishakhapatnam
Municipal Corporation.

When I was at cross roads to choose my carrier, there were two options before me - be comfortably placed or to face challenges for existence. I have chosen a challenge. After my postgraduation in planning, I was comfortably placed in the teaching profession in the government sector with AICTE pay scale. But that position has not given satisfaction to me as what we are teaching in the college is far from ground reality. We have taught "City is the people - planning affects everybody", etc. But the proper implementation of planning is lacking at grass root level. This made me to choose the challenge. Through the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) conducted examination, I have entered into the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department in the cadre of Assistant Director of Town and Country Planning, Government of Andhra Pradesh in the year 2000. After joining the service, surprisingly, I came to know that there were no women officers earlier in the field of Town Planning in the Andhra Pradesh (the then combined state) and the field is a male dominated one. Initially I was posted in a Municipal Corporation which was the second biggest in the state of Andhra Pradesh as an Assistant City Planner. At every stage / place my footing was as a "first women officer in the cadre."

The nature of the job as an Assistant City Planner was quite challenging and needed to do the policing to have a vigilant watch to checkmate the greedy builders and landlords. During my tenure as an ACP, I have faced many challenges like attending removal of unauthorized constructions and demolition of violations to the Master Plans, without proper police protection. It was quite challenging to attend duty and balancing motherhood, as well. But when I look back at the achievements made, I feel satisfied. When people acknowledge that “being a lady officer you understood our problems and resolved the issues”, I use to feel happy.

It was the happiest moment when I received applause for the better implementation of the Master Plan from the public and made the people happy and comfortable than receiving awards from the government. At that time, I realized that it is equally important to have a better setup to implement a Master Plan along with preparation of Master Plans. I took it as a challenge and most of my tenure I have been working in the field of development control regulations only. Now I have reached the top most position in the department i.e, reached up to the cadre of Director of Town and Country Planning, Government of Andhra Pradesh and working as Chief City Planner to the biggest Municipal Corporation - Vishakhapatnam of Andhra Pradesh.

In the past 20 years, after my entry into the Department, many lady officers have come in the field and gender equality was often discussed and proved that women are better than men. Due to more women planning official’s involvement, gender sensitive planning and challenges faced by the women in the society were given priority while preparing Master Plans. We are enforcing for social infrastructure development exclusively for women also. All this we could be able to do since we know better about the need of families as a woman. We are moving forward with a motto that “City is the People”. **Women officers have proven that they are better than many and playing a big role in implementation of Master Plan and regulation of development in the urban areas by way of convincing people and reducing the violations to the Master Plan, acknowledged by the people and the government that women are more powerful than men in implementing the Development Control Regulations.**

It may also be mentioned that there remains hardly any area of activity today which has not been touched by women so far, we work shoulder to shoulder with our male counterparts and prove equal in their

capabilities in all the spheres. The barriers that play a role in limiting the number of women in the department can be characterized as internal, that is, factors that are within the person, or external, those factors that are within the work environment and that may be influenced by societal attitudes. Men distinguish women officers as weak individuals with no real ability for law enforcement which is a wrong perception. The nature of job and the management of organization is physically demanding and mentally very challenging. Strict regulation, long hours of work, work during night hours, facing crowds, makes it more daunting a task. As a woman in the planning profession, I could resolve all the above challenges in the organization in addition to my traditional family responsibilities.



**Swati Meshram, Ph.D.,
AICP, LEED AP, FITP**
Planning Manager,
City of Buena Park,
California, USA

My journey into planning started when I was very young, still in school, talking to my father as we stood together waiting for the school bus. He explained to me what was architecture, and what was planning. I visited his office, Town and Country Planning Organization (TCPO), and recall being impressed with Geographical Information Systems (GIS), and noticed that there were no women planners at that time in TCPO. Time passed, and upon completing my architecture degree, from SPA, New Delhi, I decided to pursue my master’s degree in environmental planning. A conscious decision on my part as the time was to pursue the degree abroad because if I stayed in India, I knew that I would be known as “D. S. Meshram, Chief Planner’s daughter”. My professional progress would likely be attributed to him, and I would remain in his shadow for a long time, if not forever.

It was the year 2000 when I started my master’s program at Arizona State University, United State. After graduating, my career has been a typical trajectory, starting from an intern, then a technician, associate planner, and so on. I worked in the private, as well as local government organizations and I also earned a Ph.D. along the way. I worked hard, I weathered a major recession, and I am currently the Head of the Planning Division at a suburban city in Orange County in Southern California.

I worked under two women, both renowned in the regional circles, one of them owned the company



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and the other was a Director and led the planning, building, and code enforcement divisions. I have also worked under men and consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to learn from them. Until recently my journey has been like that of any man, in the sense that I never felt like I was treated differently simply because I am a woman. However, I am happy to be where I am today and staying in my current position allows me to make an impact, yet I also have the drive and ambition to go higher from where I am today. As I ponder now upon rising higher in the profession and look around, it is so heart-warming to know of so many esteemed and successful women in our profession, and so many more on their way to making a difference, both in India, and USA. Despite there being so many successful women leaders in planning, I notice that gender gap still exists at higher, decision-making levels.

As a division head I try to be aware of any bias on my part, and as I become self-aware, I inadvertently become observant of biases in others. There is much bias I notice, but this write up is about women, so I shall focus on that. **In reading literature and research on gender bias I found that multiple studies have shown that women score higher on the various leadership capabilities, yet statistically, the number of women in leadership roles trails far behind.** This is true within the planning field as well. If given the opportunity, women perform equal or better than men in leadership roles; then why is there a disparity and a gender gap?

More women are succeeding today because the men in our lives are stepping up to their own responsibility at the home front, and I am one of them. Even with a supportive family behind an aspiring, competent woman, it is commonly said that women have to work harder in the workplace compared to their male counterparts to earn the senior level promotion.

What seems to be holding women back is not lack of capability, but a lack of exhibiting outward self-confidence, gender bias, and dearth of opportunity. As I advance in my career, I am recognizing these traits, and though a difficult emotional journey to go through, I am realizing that it is not a shortcoming in me, but rather a bias in others. As I read articles and research papers, I realize that while my experiences are my own, I am not the only one living them. For example, studies of performance evaluations of people in management roles have shown that women score themselves lower than men score themselves – perhaps some form of acquired modesty or lack of self-confidence? Contrastingly, men may be overconfident about their capabilities.

Whichever the case may be – women are not 'perceived' as leadership material, even though they are. Unfortunately, being loud and assertive even with average competency is viewed as more 'leader-like'. Women have to modify their behaviour and become more assertive even though they don't need to be. This bias that a leader is loud, aggressive, overly confident person needs to be replaced to that of a non-gender specific person who may not be aggressive, but still capable of doing what is best for the organization.

Dearth of opportunity is not to be confused with lack of positions, but rather, consider a scenario – a female and a male candidate both with 13 years of experience are being considered for a position. If 8 out of 10 people serving in hiring or influential roles asked to make decision were men, odds are, the man will be given the opportunity over the woman. Simply put, there is a subconscious resistance to change, and there is a solidarity in similarity. This is also true in a field small and specialized field such as ours.

The odds for a woman to succeed are not insurmountable, but they are not equal either. The Institute of Town Planners is doing its part in providing platforms to highlight the women planners, not just with this issue of the newsletter, but also with several panel discussions and webinars featuring and promoting women in planning. It is encouraging to note that ITPI will be creating planning "Women's Forum" within the umbrella of ITPI to boost the participation of women planners in the profession, on the pattern of Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP). However, there is a lot of scope to promote participation of women in ITPI activities.

This year the theme for International Women's Day is #Choose To Challenge. The next time you are faced with a decision between promoting an equally qualified man or a woman, #Choose To Challenge yourself and think long and hard – 'do I have a bias, and am I letting that bias cloud my judgment?' Consider both biases – a bias against women in senior level positions, as well as the bias for a false stereo type of an overconfident talkative person as a 'leader'. If you are a woman, be aware that you might also have a gender bias. Be confident, be your own advocate, and also be a champion for other successful as well as upcoming women. When you feel like giving up because it feels as if the odds are stacked up against you, think of others before us who did not give up. Because of them we are able to reach the senior levels today, and because of us others will go even higher than us one day.



**Usha Prasad Mahavir,
FITP**

Former Executive Director (Projects) and Head of the Consultancy Wing, HUDCO Ltd., New Delhi

After completing post graduation in urban and regional planning from the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), New Delhi, I joined Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd., (HUDCO), in 1988, as Assistant Appraisal Officer. HUDCO, then, was at its zenith, as an excellent pioneering institution in technical and design innovation for sustainable urban development. Now, more than a year has passed by, having superannuated, from HUDCO, serving as the Executive Director (Projects). However, the memories of the International Women's Day 2019 celebrations at HUDCO are still vivid in my mind. The theme for IWD - 2019 was 'Balance for Better.' The focus was on the celebration of *Shakti* power (feminine energy) used in conjunction with *Shiva*, as in *Shiva-Shakti* – the balance between male and female energies in all aspects of life for ensuring health, happiness, and self-respect. The IWD also emphasised promoting equal status for both men and women in professional fields, media perception, the positions they hold in the government, and many more. During the IWD 2019 event, HUDCO bestowed upon me the "Mother Teresa Award for *Nari Shakti*" for sincerity, devotion, and selfless passion. It was a pleasant surprise, and I felt overjoyed at attaining the pinnacle of success after sincerely contributing three decades to the Organization's growth.

As Executive Director (Projects), and Head of Consultancy Wing, I got numerous opportunities to work closely with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, in implementation of the Government of India flagship programs, the recent one being the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Housing for All (Urban). I was involved proactively with MoHUA in appraisal and monitoring the implementation of the projects. I also got the opportunity to be a member of the Indian Delegation led by CMD, HUDCO to participate in the World Urban Forum 9 on the theme of 'Cities 2030 - Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda' organised by UN-Habitat at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2018. As a Team Leader for setting up the exhibition at the India Pavilion, I put up a grand show depicting and showing India's Journey in urbanisation, challenges and massive strides

and achievements of the Government of India. This magnificent show of the India Pavilion, was appreciated by not only international community but by Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India. Beside I was also involved in the programs of the Government of India related to the housing sector, including JNNURM, and Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), etc.

I have provided assistance in conceptualizing and formulation of detail project reports including organizing more than 40 capacity building programs for the functionaries of the state governments, and was highly involved in appraising more than 80 percent projects sanctioned by the Ministry, as HUDCO was the Central Monitoring Agency. As the nodal officer for the Government of India flagship programmes, I worked tirelessly without any break for achieving the Mission targets, often requiring to attend the office till very late in the evening. HUDCO Management felicitated me, in 2008, for outstanding performance to JNNURM Mission, and Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation nominated me for an exposure visit on urban services to the poor in the water and sanitation sector to Brazil, in the same year.

In November 2008, as a member of the Indian Delegation, I participated in the World Urban Forum - IV at Nanjing, China, on 'Harmonious Urbanisation: The Challenge of Balance Territorial Development'. At the forum I made the presentation on 'Housing for Inclusive Cities', and also participated in the Mission to France and Spain on 'Affordable Housing and Constructed Related Enterprises' organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries and Euro India Centre in 2010, which was also beneficial in formulating and implementing the guidelines of Rajiv Awas Yojana, later subsumed in PMAY (Urban). I also led the HUDCO team into drawing up an operational manual for implementing agencies and other stakeholders of Indian housing project in Sri Lanka, these efforts were lauded by the office of the Indian High Commissioner at Colombo. In fact, I achieved many more milestones and got vast opportunities to perform and excel in both the Regional Office (NCR), and the Corporate Office functions of HUDCO.

While pursuing graduation from Sir J. J. College of Architecture, Mumbai, the ratio of girls and boys was around fifty-fifty, in a class of 60 students. Later, I was sponsored by the Bombay Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA), Government of Maharashtra, to pursue Master's in Urban and Regional Planning at SPA, New Delhi. At that time,



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there were only two women students in a class of 20 students. The ratio of women was relatively higher up to graduation level but dropped substantially at the post-graduation in the planning field. Today, girls are going for higher levels of education in planning, and at the postgraduate level, the ratio of women has increased to around 50-60 per cent. They are also holding critical positions in colleges and universities, such as Heads of the Department, Deans and Directors; and Commissioners or General Managers in various Development Authorities. Likewise, women in HUDCO constitute around 30 per cent of the workforce across all levels, which exhibits substantial contribution to the Organisation's growth. Throughout my professional journey in HUDCO, I handled challenging roles and responsibilities both in the managerial and leadership roles. Accepting challenges, multitasking and wearing multiple hats was a regular feature in professional life. Faced many challenges in trying to strike a balance between the home front, ageing parents and office commitments. Challenge has been the only constant in my life, and a challenging world is a vigilant world. Change and transformation come from the challenge. Change begins outside the comfort zone. Multiple office responsibilities and assignments often demanded burning the midnight oil lamp, which was a regular feature.

This landmark achievements and recognitions as a successful woman, I owe to my family, office colleagues and friends who supported and encouraged me to climb up the ladder. **An attitude of gratitude enables you to bounce forward when challenges come your way. Remember – You are responsible for your miseries, while everyone is responsible for your success!** In the same light, I convey my gratitude to the Institute of Town Planners, India (ITPI) for providing me this opportunity to share my experiences with fellow planners, and also to contribute by way of participating in a few Committees set up by the Institute.

Views / Opinion of Women Planners in Education



Alka Bharat, Ph.D.

Professor,
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A few decades back, one morning, my grandmother was quoted as saying “an angel has arrived”, nearly an impossible gesture at a girl's birth from people of that generation in India. On

this happy note, I lived most of my childhood in bliss, till I shifted to a newly converted co-ed school with very few girl students. A lot of advices, precautions and ways to lead life poured in from all concerned people. My thought process was manoeuvred to think of myself as a female for the first time. Nonetheless, I took all this to strengthen my spirit to march towards my aspirations and yet, see the world as equal.

Taking up entrance examination, conducted for the first time for the under-graduate courses, I was fortunate to get Institute of my choice. I completed my under graduate course with National Scholarship. Similarly, facing National Entrance Examination (GATE), which started for the first time from my batch, I got good rank and therefore got admission to University of Roorkee (IIT, Roorkee, now). I completed the course with Gold Medal. That period was different from today's technological world; with typing on type writers, computing with punch cards and so on.

Having done my professional studies, I started exploring for employment opportunities. To mention an unpleasant incidence during this process; one of the interviews I faced had an undercurrent of not selecting a female candidate, disregarding an individual's credentials. Against these adversities I was able to clear two Public Service Commission selections and lectureship in Regional Engineering College (NIT now), Bhopal, where I moved a long way to be now amongst senior Professors of the Institute, two tenures of Head of Department and Dean (FW). My first tenure of Headship was not easily accepted by the major lot, but with help of my few colleagues and Institute administration I was able to start ambitious B.Plan course. My second tenure was full of challenges to revive the B.Plan program, which was temporarily put on hold.

I evolved my demand-based expertise of architecture, physical planning, economics, natural resources, environment and human rights through taking up additional formal programs of PGDEL, PGDEM, PGDHR and M.A (Economics). This has helped me to see the profession and system robustly, integrated with perspective frame.

There were definitely discriminatory challenges which I came across but I took them in my stride. I am fortunate to have supporting parents, husband and all near dear ones. When I see females sacrificing their aspirations and not progressing due to gender biases, I wonder how society can develop by suppressing women who are equally integral and important part of the society.

My determination and efforts led me to contribute to works of many reputed International agencies like IPCC, IPBES, etc., and many state governments' assignments. I have travelled widely to many countries and 'am an expert, advisory committee member, chairperson and panelist at many national and international platforms. Apart from few national research projects, I have an international travel award and an International project (won through competition) to my credit.

I have more than 60 presentations and 80 publications at national and international platforms and also have many reputed national and international citations. I have also contributed to chapters in many books and have many outreach activities to my credit. I am reviewer to many international journals and Associate Editor to an International Journals.

At times, I have also faced situations where despite having knowledge, credentials and experience, men prefer to select their own kind and move within their own circles. Life is a see-saw for all, but I think it is more challenging for females who have to balance between three aspects of their life: family, profession and social system.

I believe, every human has its role in growth of the system. So, as an individual, continue to prove yourself, fight the gender battle as there is no dearth of opportunities.

I appreciate all those who are helping in the movement to make the society "Inclusive and Equitable"



Anjana Vyas, Ph.D.

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Women constitute about half of the world's population. The education and professional involvement of women has made a great stride in recent times. Contribution of women in the field of urban planning is also increasing. **The women planners are actively participating in the policy making, plan preparation, academia and research fields.** Many successful women with their sheer persistence, skills and capabilities have become role models to many other young aspirants. Learning about their journey serves as an encouragement and motivation to many. It is appreciable that on the occasion of International Women's Day, Institute of Town Planners, India (ITPI) has planned to publish

a special News Letter focusing on the participation and role of the 'Women in Planning'.

As a postgraduate student in economics, two topics interested me the most in developmental planning subject: National Growth Models and Sustainable Development. Internship at IIM, Ahmedabad has given the opportunity to learn and deepen my interest in policy planning. During the initial years of career, I observed chaotic urban areas, the congested roads, conflicts of mixed traffic, expansion of the urban sprawl sparked inquisitiveness and enthused me. A senior faculty at CEPT, encouraged me to study 'Planning'. I learnt and understood the planning education is oriented to practical judgement, perception, performance and prudence which provided me a way of looking at values and perspectives. It helped develop a deeper understanding of my previous field- economics, and enable to adopt reflective approaches, dealing with complexities involved in contemporary planning practice and rationalities. The planning is rather a multi-disciplinary process which helps in developing accountable, transparent, responsive and inclusive solutions.

Planning is a holistic multifaceted field where decision-making is a thoughtful process. It is a framework that helps transform vision into implementation, using space (land) as a key resource for development. Recognizing the role of increasing advancement of satellite technology and remote sensing imagery as an invaluable source of data of present and past to predict and plan for future, I decided to take steps in that direction. Having got the opportunity to study Geomatics from Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS), Dehradun, I envisage the importance of evolution of science and technology effecting the changes in planning decision making process. True to the expectations, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) soon had emerged as an important source of spatio-temporal data and statistical significance for frequent planning and updating of relevant spatial information. The introduction of GIS in planning education has influenced planners to improvise geo-visualization and spatial decision making.

During my forty-years long journey at CEPT, I have served in various capacities: as a lecturer, a professor, a Dean, an Executive Director, a Senior Consultant at School of Planning and other Departments. CEPT is a very distinct and a premier institution which promotes academic achievement with a global perspective, research excellence. It is known for flexible academic



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environment developing intellectual capabilities nurturing knowledge, compassion and understanding for individuals. I have experienced freedom, flexibility and enjoyed opportunities, challenges as a student and then as a faculty of planning. I have taught various subjects in planning, guided masters and Ph.D. students and undertaken many research projects. I have advanced with knowledge, skill, confidence, positions, and received recognitions from the CEPT management. Being a planner and a woman academician, I could muster confidence to perform important responsibilities of working with various national and international organisations as a member of Subject Expert Committees, Task Force Committees, Steering Committees, Advisory Committees, Review Committees, Heleva Award Committee, Executive Council of Societies, Board of Studies, Education Standing Committees and also served as Vice President – ISRS, ISG, Chairperson - ISPRS WG VI/2 and V/1. I have been honoured with awards and special recognitions from various societies, organisations, government and academic institutions.

Planning is to be ever conscious in learning and evolving. It is not to be restricted to just mastering a subject, rather more it is practiced, the deeper would be the dive, the more challenges are faced, the more knowledge is gained. It offers suitable philosophy, applicable tools and modern technology for tackling the complexity and uncertainty. The sheer inter-connectedness of the elements and objects broadens the approaches involved in planning. A Body of Knowledge (BoK) of planning is needed to be scientific, directed and demonstrated to succeed. Sole application of paradigms and rules must not govern the process of designing and developing the land use solutions. Rather planning benefits from adopting a futuristic, people centric approach along with time tested experience and wisdom. Knowledge and education in planning expands the horizons and instil the spirit of problem solving. Success that is not reinvented often gets clouded, instead if it entails to stretch beyond the extremes, there is certainly more that exists to accomplish.



Bhavna Shrivastava, Ph.D.
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International Women's Day is celebrated to support the women rights movement. It is an occasion to commemorate the progress made towards gender equality and women empowerment world wide. What do

women empowerment mean? What is significance of it? Why to talk on it? In present world, anyone can say that there is no point on talking about women empowerment. There are many opportunities for women in present world. They are given special scholarships, quotas, etc. But the significance can be understood by those who have to fight for their rights, for the right to eat with all and not at the last, for the right to study, for the right to move out independently, for the right to put forward their views without any restriction, for the right to continue their career after marriage and many more. Urban planning is a gender dominant profession. As per statistics record, women presence can be represented by a very small percentage. Have we heard ever about Esther Hill, Erica Mann, Odilia Suarez, Margaret Alfand, Ellen Dunham, Edith Clarke, Mary Anderson or Aparna Ramani, Ruchi Sanghvi? All of these are renowned women Planners / Architects / engineers but their name have been hidden. There are a number of women urbanists, urban planners, designers, social workers, and economist that have contributed to the profession of urban planning but they hardly get the appreciation. The capability of women to do thing in organized, systematic and in a happening way is not hidden from any of us. The engineers like Emily Roebling and Martha Coston have showed that there's nothing impossible for a women to do. The very much used radium was discovered by Marie Curie, Indra Nooyi Director Amazon and Maria Lagomasino is the Director of Coca Cola company. There are many and many more examples like this. The work or profession never has any gender, just our thinking has.

Across the world women are facing increased domestic violence, unpaid care duties, unemployment and poverty. In India, most women contribute in home-based work, are self-employed, or work in the informal sector; among women workers. In informal workers, 54.8 percent of the workforce belongs to women workers. There are many initiatives taken by Government of India for the improvement of quality of life of women. Some of them are PRADAN started in 2013 in Kishanganj district in Bihar, NRLM in 2015 and Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), which was launched in 2016 by the Government of India. PMUY is one of the best example if implemented properly. However, at society level and home level there is no significant change of their lives.

We are having examples of majority of the countries that have been more successful in dealing with situations at the time of the pandemic. For example

heads of Government in Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand and Slovakia have been widely recognized for the rapidity, decisiveness and effectiveness of their national response to COVID-19. United Nations is aware about the situation and strength of women at global level, that is why in UN 65th session of the Commission a campaign was started i.e., “Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”.

In my experience, women have infinite powers at inert level and they are the best judge of their lives. **As we have equal education rights for all, likewise use of that education into practice is the right as well as duty of every woman architect and planner.** So, never sit back when there is a setback. We need to give power and faith to women across different communities and structures. When such a strong environment is created in closed hesitant group, then people will definitely tend to challenge unequal norms.



Kiran Sandhu, Ph.D.

Associate Professor,
Guru Nanak Dev University,
Amritsar

As I sit down to pen my thoughts on the occasion of International Women’s Day, I take a pause and look back

on my own personal journey from where I started and where I have reached in my half decade of life’s path and half of it as a planning professional. The first thought that comes to my mind is what Michelle Obama said, “There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish.” So true, I say to myself. When a woman chooses to challenge and break strongholds, not only does she raise herself but in the process shatters the glass ceiling that was thought not possible earlier. So to all those daring and remarkable women across ages, my pen renders an admirable salute. Perhaps my own story pales in comparison. Nevertheless, as each drop in the ocean counts, so does mine, perhaps.

Well, to introduce myself, I was born in an Army family and had the good fortune of being educated in several schools across towns and cities of our beautiful nation. The exposure helped in making me of inquisitive nature with a bit of a rebel streak. So when Science was the in word for kids my age, going to be Doctors or Engineers, dear me had chosen Arts

with Geography as my main subject. The reason at that time was my fascination with the world and my aim that I shall travel around it when I possibly could. The drifter that I was, I completed my Masters in Geography and then a Masters in City and Regional Planning.

I was able to clear the National level University Grant Commission(UGC) Eligibility Test for Lectureship and was employed as a full time Lecturer in Guru Ramdas School of Planning at the young age of Twenty Four. To be very honest, my sense of direction and focus in my field started after my tryst with classroom teaching. As my interest developed further, I looked for opportunities to fulfil my childhood dream of studying abroad. After two attempts of getting a full scholarship, I was finally successful the third time and won a British Commonwealth Scholarship to study Development and Planning in University College London, which was and continues to be amongst the top 10 leading Universities in the world. I had the opportunity there to meet and interact and compete with students of forty nationalities. It was very challenging since the education system was entirely research based. After my initial teething issues, with lot of perseverance and hard work, I was able to top my course and was also offered an admission to pursue Ph. D.; which at that point of time I could not accept due to personal reasons.

I made the decision to return back to India and teach students as well as develop the courses in my school based upon the knowledge I had acquired in England. Having done the same for a few years, I was offered a assignment by the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) to work in capacity building of technocrats in matters of Urban and Regional Planning in South Sudan in Africa. I took on the challenge of this assignment and worked in the remotest parts of South Sudan as a part of an international 7 members team and set up a road map for the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Infrastructure in South Sudan. During this time, I had direct approach with the Vice President of South Sudan and also wrote his speech for the National Conference in Town Planning, which was the first such event in South Sudan. During this time I was also the only female member of the team initially. While the tasks were challenging, they were very rewarding in my growth personally and as a planning professional.

My next important assignment came with an offer from the World Bank funded project on capacity



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building and establishing planning degree courses in Ethiopian Civil Service College in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I served there for two years, training bureaucrats and technocrats in town planning matters and also established three Master level courses namely, Urban Planning and Management, Environment and Climate Change and Transport Planning and Management. For my contribution I was felicitated by the Federal Ministry of Urban Transport, Government of Ethiopia.

Simultaneously, I have had the chance to attend International seminars and conferences in many countries across the globe such as Sweden, France, Belgium, China, Sri Lanka, Romania, Poland, etc. In 2011, I began my Ph.D. at Griffith University, Australia which is ranked amongst the top 500 Universities in the World. I took it up as a challenge to study and research in another context so as to widen my sphere of knowledge and experience. I successfully completed the research and also published in high impact factor journals during this period.

All this while, I have continued to be engaged in teaching and research activities at Guru Ramdas School of Planning and also served as the Head of the Department from 2017 to 2019. During this period, several seminars and conferences were held in the Department and one of the highlights was the organisation of the first GIAN course wherein Dr. Nazar Al-Sayad, a world renowned Urban Historian and Planner from the University of Berkley in California was the principal resource person. A Masters programme in Transport Planning was also launched during this period.

It's been twenty five years since I have meandered along some of the milestones of my journey as mentioned above and I must say that it has been a joy ride fraught with challenges as well. **From my own experience I can say that there is no substitute for grit, determination and hard work and no challenge is of such magnitude that can stand in the face of these three qualities.** I hope to continue my journey as an academic and researcher but my belief that only a good human being can make a good professional remains extremely strong. Working on that personal front is even more desirable besides grooming to be a successful professional. I urge all young women and men out there who might be reading this post to carve their own path, follow their hearts and set their minds in the direction they want to move. Believe me, victory will be inevitable.



Meenakshi Dhote, Ph.D.

Professor and Head,
Department of
Environmental Planning,
School of Planning and
Architecture, New Delhi

I completed my Undergraduate and Post Graduate education from SPA, Delhi in 1986 and started working on projects related to environmental planning since then. I had always wanted to teach and research in the area and have had a very satisfying and rich experience in the field. However, when I look back as a woman in the profession, there have been subtle instances which make me extra careful in addressing my responsibilities. I remember when I appeared for the Masters in Landscape Architecture interview, I was asked whether I was applying because this course is generally taken by women. During one of the studio exercises we were supposed to survey the Yamuna Riverfront and somehow the portion that had the Nigambodh cremation grounds had no volunteers. Finally, three women students of the class which included me surveyed the ground and I still remember standing above the wood store to take photographs of the activity pattern and layout of the crematorium.

As part of faculty, we occasionally get involved in projects as consultants. In the field of environmental planning many projects have Court cases running parallel and the project is part of the Court requirement which also means checking facts on ground. These projects have taken me to one of the most beautiful landscapes of India. The learning from these experiences have been immense, but the fact that people do not expect that, as a woman, you may go there does come up. In fact, people would call up to dissuade me from going saying that people will attack me. **At times, during field trips, when my team had many women, I was asked to come again with men as they would be better in understanding issues. But once it is clear that we were there for work, the support had been forthcoming.** I can say my faith in the need for meaningful public participation in planning exercises has been as a result of the interactions with the common people living in these areas.

Planning as a profession has a very important role in India, since it deals with allocation of use to land which is a scarce commodity. In spite of being one of the countries with a large land mass, the population density makes the land man ratio very low. Coupled

with this the country's land mass supports many ecologically significant areas – being a mega diverse country it hosts many biodiversity hot spots, some of which are globally significant as they regulate the global climate. Due to their sensitivity, they have been designated as – biosphere reserves, national parks, sanctuaries with a demarcated regulated area surrounding them.

The planning guidelines address many issues that are specific to India, however, the public participation has to be strengthened and should also be interwoven in the implementation. The people should own the plan and should not allow any changes once formulated. This can happen only if they understand the plan in terms of how it addresses everyone's need and the changes it will bring to the use of land. Inclusive participation involving all sectors of society is needed and we need to develop a mechanism for it. People sometimes give such good solutions which stems from their familiarity of the area over generations, and all we need to see is to how it fits into the overall plan and provide for it. When they see the incorporation of their suggestion in the plan, they accept it as theirs. As planners the rapport with people should be such that more than who made the plan, the people should feel that it is their plan. In one public participation meet I was told that people just want us to hear about their ideas, as once communicated to our team they have the faith that their job will be done. Such simplicity of common people is very touching and as planners we owe them a good living environment.

I, through my membership in various committees, constituted by the National Green Tribunal, feel the need for further strengthening of certain areas, with respect to planning guidelines, such as the historic core city, urban extension and redevelopment, peri-urban areas, eco-sensitive zones, low carbon vision and biodiversity conservation, and disaster management and resilience.



Neelima Risbud, Ph.D.

Former Professor,
School of Planning and
Architecture, Delhi

It has been almost 48 years since I entered the planning profession as a student. It has not only been a very challenging professional journey but an immensely satisfying one.

As a student there were no Women's hostels at School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi and I had

to stay in a guest room for 2-3 months. In a class of 40 students, I was the only woman and it was really difficult sometimes to cope with it socially. Once the teacher announced a site planning assignment and asked all students to visit the site in South Delhi, and within minutes, all students went away. New to the not so woman friendly mega city of Delhi, I was completely at loss how to reach the site. While conducting household survey with the class in Jaisalmer, the community objected to my roaming around with boys and threatened to inform my parents. They started responding only when told that I was already engaged. On another occasion, working as an Assistant Town Planner in Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the engineering staff working on my project mentioned that being a lady you need not visit the site. I had to assert myself that I will do whatever is required of my duties as an officer. When I joined SPA as an Assistant Professor, I had to teach students almost a decade elder to me but my hard work and experience of project implementation in DDA helped me to teach and generate confidence in me as a teacher. Things have changed now, but 40 years ago there was no lady Planning officer in DDA or in the Planning Department of SPA.

As a planner in the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in 1976, I got an opportunity to design and see the implementation of the first 'site and services' scheme Avantika in DDA. The project was designed with affordability and incremental housing for a low income population. I was delighted to see that the then Prime Minister inaugurated it in 1977. A larger challenge and adventure was designing the Rohini Project on 2500 ha of land with 6 lakh population. What was most exciting about this project was that as part of a small project team we planned for "inclusive development" for all income groups and proposed affordable standards. We designed plots around a cluster of plots which was a deviation from the current practice and therefore we had to defend it on all fronts. The project was approved by the then Prime Minister and is completely implemented. Working with an interdisciplinary team of engineers and land personnel, the project was a great learning experience.

As an individual researcher, I published research reports on policies of security of urban land tenure in slums, unauthorized colonies, informal property market and urban poor. During my field visits, I always found it safe to visit a slum and found women coming out more openly about their problems in absence of their husbands. They were also very keen to improve their house and were willing to save and contribute for the same.



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As a Professor in the post graduate course in Planning in School of planning and Architecture, Delhi, I introduced new subjects like Informal Housing and Slum Policies, Urban Land Management, Design of Housing Project, Formulation of Housing Standards, Appropriate Development Controls, and Role of Community Participation in the syllabus of the masters program. The teaching in these courses was based on the learnings from my field work related to research. I was also the first Woman Dean of SPA. Interestingly, a senior professor once confided in me that he never expected me to administer my job efficiently.

In 2011 my hands-on field work and research enabled me to give inputs into the National Policy of Slum Free Cities called Rajeev Awas Yojna announced by the President. I was assigned the task of finalisation of the planning guidelines as part of the Slum Free City Plan of Action by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Government of India. This required working very closely with the ministry and in close consultation with other experts, state governments and NGOs.

The National Resource Centre (NRC) was set up by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and funded by DFID for 5 years in SPA and I was given the responsibility to coordinate it. Action Research to support Government of India's policies, several research reports related to slums, typologies and town planning parameters for the urban poor were prepared for the Ministry and shared through several National Workshops. Interestingly the research team supporting me was an all-women team consisting of my old students.

NRC was to take up capacity building of the states and identified cities of northern India including municipal officers, town planners, engineers, development authority staff, community development social workers in areas of slum free city planning process. This project required visiting seven pilot cities in northern India to sensitize the technical staff to assess the work done and create an action plan. During such visits many middle level technical officials initially doubted my ability to guide them as I was a woman and an academician, they felt I perhaps I may not have enough practical experience. On the other hand, meetings with Municipal Councillors for awareness building about provisions of the program were successful as I made the entire presentation in local hindi language and got very good support from woman Councillors.

As a Woman Planner, during my professional journey, initially I faced a lot of gender bias but I realised that if you are technically strong and assert yourself you can make a difference. Lastly all this was possible due to constant support and encouragement of my husband Vijay.



Rashmi Ashtt, Ph.D.
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Cities fascinate everybody for leisure, I also looked for a destination and spot to spend a memorable time since my childhood. As a student, while enjoying excursions, thoughts always flooded my mind as why some cities are so nice as destinations and why some others are so shabby and unattended. Why are people so excited to visit foreign cities and have lots of experiences to share about their planning, transport and road network, cleanliness, landscape area, greenery, commercial areas, schools, etc.

Years later,, after entering architecture, we were educated about town planning and planning of ancient cities in different civilizations. We were exposed to many types of town planning ideas and concepts such as garden city, Letch Worth City, etc.; and also learned about planning interventions.

With urbanization and improved standards of education and need of planned development, various institutions were incepted worldwide and in India also town planning institutions were established. These institutions produced educated planners by sensitising them towards the past, present and future requirement and need of the cities and citizens.

Planning profession, now a days, is exposed to all kind of relevant subjects such as planning theory, city and metro-city planning, socio-economic basis for planning, demography and many more related subjects which initiate process of thinking and inter relating of various aspects of human vs society vs natural environment and new management to go along with each other.

Women are very well equipped with management skills as they are the home managers and also are capable of bringing an equilibrium and balance in planning by virtue of the basic nature and power bestowed upon them. Women can very well understand the sensitivity of social and economic conditions and how they affect people.

Planning as a profession provides a lot of opportunities for women to work as consultant, on managerial post, as town planners in various government agencies such as DDA, TCPO, TPO, State TP offices, etc.; and contributing to profession as well as to their satisfaction.

As the government is moving from government to governance, private players have moved in and so in planning where many MNCs and private agencies such as Voyants, IPE Global, LEA associates, PWC, etc., have moved in thereby providing a lot of employment opportunities to planners and women are equally participating in them.

Women planners are also contributing much to research through holding lead positions in various agencies. In academics, as well, women planners are doing wonders. Planning institutions are employing women planners with valid ITPI registration as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professors, Principal, Director and Vice - Chancellor Levels. Academic institutions like colleges and universities provide very lucrative and honourable jobs to women planners and they are definitely doing very well in the profession.

Although women are doing very well as professional but there are some issues and challenges which they have to face as planners like gender bias as common perception is that field visit better suits males than females. In addition to that security reasons, long working hours somehow lead to a physical and social discomfort for women being home makers and mothers.

With a few exceptions, women are under represented in leadership positions and they have lesser access to senior leadership opportunities. Gender gap is widespread in planning profession which needs to be addressed and bridged without any delay.

Planning as a profession should recognize and address the needs of the women and should make efforts to provide them with a conducive environment to work in. All the planning fraternity should promote planning “for the women, of the women and by the women.”

ITPI as the leading institution in the field of planning can play an important role in the addressing the women issues in the planning profession and I look forward to the redressal of women issues in near future.



Sanjukta Bhaduri, Ph.D.

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After 2 years of postgraduation in city planning with training on subjects covering

various disciplines i.e. planning (theories, principles, practice, understanding of various aspects of the urban settlements, city- region linkages, etc.), design, law, management, it made one realize that since a city never functions in silos and has interrelated problems, it is prudent to apply an integrated approach to city planning and development cross cutting various development sectors and disciplines; which is a big challenge in itself.

The awareness that a student needs to develop communication skills, both oral and written so as to communicate and convey one’s work was generated during post graduation. However, the most important takeaway was that planning is common sense, logic and the continual ability to be aware and learn from situations and surroundings in the city. Most often the city is referred to a laboratory and the ever-changing city throws up multiple contexts, variations and conditions for study, analysis and problem –solving that one needs to be attentive and responsive to.

I became a Lecturer (now renamed as Assistant Professor) in the year 1990 for the post graduate course on Masters of Planning (with specialization in environmental planning) in the Department of Environmental Planning. **As a young woman teacher, the first challenge was to have knowledge of the subject, secondly be good at delivery of the lecture through convincing oratory / communication skills and thirdly be confident enough to impart knowledge to students, particularly older students** (experienced in their work, who were in those times, sponsored personnel from urban local bodies and other government departments) and fourthly enable students to develop critical thinking ability.

The paradigm shift towards outcome based education is concentrated around goal based teaching. Enabling the student to learn to interpret information and apply tools, techniques, principles for the contextual situation is a big challenge.

Though globally online education had made its way long ago, the present times have coerced us to make a transition from in person to online education in our



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country. Thus visual communication through digital technology becomes imperative for a faculty apart from the oral and written communication skills.

Thus for the above-mentioned purposes, one needs to be updated, aware and develop benchmarks for oneself; after all, one is one's own competitor, nobody else. Teaching can never be equated to a fixed hour 9-5 job obligation, but a profession that interacts with young minds, trains and develops their ability to become stalwarts of tomorrow.

As a faculty, there were opportunities to work on projects related to the urban settlements. Considering that the urban settlements are challenged by issues that crosscut across development sectors and there are variations over space, between activities, and across sectors, it becomes crucial to work as a team involving members representing various disciplines. In many cases, it becomes rudimentary to have interpersonal skills, the ability to listen and learn from others.

As a professional, we feel the increasing need for smooth and efficient implementation of projects and thus translating ideas into implementable actions is the need of the hour.

Very often planning is envisaged as people centric planning thus going back to the traditional phrase of planning for the people and by the people. Many of the initiatives / guidelines / policies worldwide have repeatedly referred to multi-stakeholders engagement in various sectors of urban development. Also, many of the research and consultancy projects necessitate stakeholder engagement so as to facilitate stakeholder concerns and plan implementation.

The major challenge for execution of the participatory approach is connecting to the relevant stakeholders and procuring the apt feedback from them. A planner thus needs to be equipped with soft skills including communication skills and interpersonal skills to engage with varied stakeholders. Additionally, participatory approach entails conflicts in interest between various stakeholders, which is also a major challenge. Thus, skills pertaining to problem solving / resolving conflicts / negotiation become increasingly essential for a planner as part of the soft skill set.

Since cities are considered to be dynamic, ever changing and faced with continually emerging challenges, the planning profession also needs to keep pace with continual research and innovations to address and overcome the urban challenges.



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Women play a pivotal role in the success of any society and culture. Women constitute 50% of the human resources, they have sustained the growth of the civilization, played a major role in society's development, and moulded the future of nations. Women have a vital role to play in different sectors. In 75 years of India's independence, we had come a long way from where women were expected to be only wives or mothers to now where women have education, career and, independence. **In recent years the situation has changed and women are emerging as the source of power and symbol of progress. Despite this, their role is underplayed and they face disparity.**

The female students are outperforming their male counterparts by around 5-6% in class XII, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in overall pass percentage. But, when it comes to joining professional courses the number of female candidates reduces drastically. The major reasons for this is the lack of access to training in attempting competitive examinations, as well as the reluctance of parents to send their daughters for joining higher education and professional courses. Around 11 lakh candidates applied for the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Mains 2017, but only 28% were female. Whereas in 2020, out of 7.5 lakh candidates appeared, the female number increased marginally by 15,000 and male reduced by 20,000, but female candidates' participation is still low. The number of females appearing and clearing the JEE Advanced is very low as compared to male candidates. Amongst the qualified female candidates, many opt out of the offered admission at IITs due to societal constraints and geographical mobility. To overcome this issue, the measures like supernumerary seats and separate merit lists have been introduced to increase the female seats and diversity in these institutes.

For seeking admission to bachelor's and master's in planning in NITs and IITs, a candidate needs to qualify JEE paper 2 for and GATE-AR respectively. On the positive side, the number of female candidates increased in past few years in postgraduate planning programs thus augmenting the number of qualified planners. Recently, women

are enrolling for Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) program in greater numbers which is a good indicator. Yet, some qualified women planners do not register or join the profession due to family pressure or some other social reasons. Though the women have all the qualities for climbing the professional ladder, they face various hurdles and don't get recognition and thus get demotivated. Only a few women break the barriers and progress in their professional careers by maintaining a balance in their work and family.

Globally, Indian universities strive to achieve gender equality. Women constitute less than 15% of faculty positions in professional courses. To 'recruit, retain and promote' women in academics and research, the Ministry of Science and Technology have introduced a self-assessment process to identify gender gaps and barriers to progression faced by women in the institute. The ministry will rate the institutions as gold, silver, and bronze based on the number of women scientists, faculty, and research fellows. One of the initiatives to boost the women's participation at the institute could be to appoint them to the post of Deans / Heads / Coordinators as per their qualifications without being gender-biased. As many qualified women remain away from mainstream research and do not get enough opportunities, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has introduced a new scheme to promote the participation of women in the research. This is a great opportunity for women academicians and researchers to collaborate with the premier institutions globally. The confidence and motivation shown in the women have resulted in many success stories. Now, all women teams are coordinating short-term training programs, national and international conferences, centralised admission process, etc.

As per Census 2011, India has around 7,935 towns/cities and 6,49,481 villages, indicating the enormous scarcity of qualified planners and more so ever in a number of women planners. As per the report of Expert Committee in Town Planning and Architecture, set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, India would need 3 lakh town and country planners by 2031, while there are only 7000 registered town planners at present. Amongst them, registered women planners are only 940 (14.4%). Total Fellow Members of Institute of Town Planners (FITP) are 524 and amongst them only 25 (4.8%) are women. This shows a huge gap in women's participation in the planning process.

Diversity and inclusiveness are the key aspects of planning. The extensive participation of women in various planning sectors will touch the unexplored perspective. Urban planning as a profession is very challenging but also an opportunist one. Whenever one wants to recall the names of urban planners only men are recollected, as the presence of women in the profession is like a drop of water in an ocean. The legendary urbanist and activist Jane Jacobs was the only one who could be remembered for carving her space in the men-centric world. She said "successful, vibrant, happy cities arise out of the visions of many, not the powerful few. Cities prosper on diversity, the diversity in economics, socio-cultural aspect, the diversity of decision-makers, and the diversity of the communities, thus it demands equal participation of both genders. City planning should ensure that both men's and women's needs and experiences in the built environment are considered equally. The planning of public-spaces, workplaces, accessibility, and transport needs, should be planned considering the vulnerable and disadvantaged people of all gender.

In recent years, the Institute of Town Planners, India (ITPI) has actively involved women in the mainstream as resource persons such as chairpersons, rapporteurs, and speakers at various forums like Webinars, National and International Conferences, Committees, etc. ITPI has opened the doors and provides inspiration for women entering in the planning profession, academics, and research and helps them to make their way in leadership roles. The increasing visibility of women has resulted in gender-sensitive planning practices. Today, a number of women are involved in the urban planning profession as policy makers, planners, designers, economists, social activists, researchers, academicians, etc.; and they are successfully contributing to and transforming the profession. Their confidence and hard work can make them good leaders.

Choose to challenge by changing oneself is the need of an hour. To achieve success, the first step is to overcome the challenge by struggle, hard work, and exploration. The challenges depend on the socio-economic conditions, surrounding environment, and the opportunity. Women should have self-confidence, work sincerely, overcome challenges and explore diverse activities. **The message to all the women planners is to believe in yourself and serve society by contributing to create a better built environment.**



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Sheuli Mitra, Ph.D.

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A coveted degree of Master of City Planning from the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, in 1999, seemed like a passport to exploring uncharted avenues in the planning profession. 22 years later, the journey continues, navigating roads with twists and turns and challenges at every bend. This is not an autobiographical writing of an urban planner, but rather a take on the profession from the perspective of a woman, and in the Indian context. The two key words 'woman' and 'Indian context' have played significant roles at different points in my life as a professional.

My early days as a consultant planner in one of the flourishing civil consultancy firms in Bangalore, while working on a Slum Upgradation Program in 21 cities of Karnataka, first introduced me to the challenges of working in small and medium towns, with a language barrier! The team comprised majorly of senior retired civil engineers as consultants (of course all men!) with me as the only 20 plus architect-planner. My five years of part time association in this organization (while also working as a Lecturer in Architecture) busted the myth that women struggle in male dominated firms, and I remained a coveted member of many project teams. Concerns of my safety were specially looked into when we travelled to small towns across Karnataka by sometimes putting up at colleagues' homes instead of shady hotels. This spill over of professional to personal happens only in India! Towards the end of my 5 year part-time association, I was even permitted to work at home on suitable assignments during my troubled pregnancy, which had made me immobile for some months. With concepts of 'Work from Home' almost unknown in those days, it was the empathy of my team leader in understanding me as a woman and also valuing my professional contributions, which led the firm take this unprecedented decision. Today, with women's rights more legally enshrined in workplaces, the need for personal sensitivity may have reduced, but such acts of empathy only increase the productivity of women in workplaces.

Soon after the birth of my daughter, we relocated to Kolkata, our hometown and I had to look for a new appointment. I was fortunate to be recruited by a leading International Property Consultant with offices

in many Indian cities. With a 9 month old baby, I was considered a weak candidate in a firm, where the earnings of the firm were directly proportional to the hours of work input. I was hired at a much lower scale than others of my designation, in apprehension of my ability to deliver. It took me months of hard work, late into the night, way beyond office hours and a single holiday on the daughter's first birthday, to convince my team leader and the national HR head about my capabilities as a competent professional, following which I was given two raises in a year to more than compensate for my initial low scale! I was not only involved in technical studies, but also responsible for business development in eastern India. The three years that I spent in this organization, were fortunately the peak years of the real estate sector, with SEZs, Industrial estates, Hospitality projects proliferating, apart from the bread and butter residential-commercial-retail bouquet. We bagged projects across Eastern India and even Bangladesh and Nepal and there was a need to expand the team. I remember recruiting three very competent young ladies in the team, who matched my enthusiasm every bit. At a point we were as many women as men in the team and work was better than ever before. **However, with more travel to remote industrial areas in Orissa, tea gardens in north Bengal, road projects across Jharkhand, I realized that the young women could not be sent alone to these locations, from safety concerns.** They would have to be accompanied by the men in the team. Sending men alone to remote locations would help cut down costs. Reluctantly I made a mental note that the next candidate to be recruited would have to be a man. As a woman business head, these decisions gave me sleepless nights and brought to light some harsh realities of the planning profession.

It has been 13 years now that I shifted to full time academics. My corporate career ended not with a bang but with a whimper, on the sudden demise of my mother, who watched over my baby girl grow, while I worked to make my company grow. With no support at home, I realized that the job I took for granted was impossible to sustain. Later I read biographies of successful women in the corporate world and learnt that they all had robust support at home, which I did not. It was a tough decision giving up a job I loved and was so successful at, but I was left with no choice.

I made the choice to change my profession to that of a full time academic once more. My lessons from my 3 years in real estate, triggered many thoughts and even moulded my doctoral research which I began afresh on re-joining academics. My lectures and studios

draw from my experiences as a professional planner and a real estate consultant. Along with teaching, I have continued to take up consultancy and research projects, as one has the freedom of publishing original unbiased findings in academics, different from client specific reports in the corporate world. My role in administration in my corporate life has helped me handle many of the administrative roles in my institution with ease. I have been part of the story of the growth of SPA Bhopal, being the first professor-in-charge of training and placement, the first Dean, Research, later also Dean, Academics. Being part of teams for developing systems and processes for smooth execution of teaching, learning and research processes has given me immense satisfaction.

But the tug of war of Mom versus Ma'am still continues every day, every moment of my life. We women are not superwomen, but ordinary mortals with immense confidence in our abilities and trying to make the best of the one life that we have. But what often goes unacknowledged is behind every successful woman is an ecosystem of support, at home and the work place, helping her juggle between the two realms. So if in one lap the planner speeds ahead, the next lap is overtaken by the mom, the daughter-in-law, the wife! and so the journey of life continue...



Vinita Yadav, Ph.D.

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The participation of women in all spheres of life has increased. It is also true for the planning profession

in India. Being a planner for more than 20 years, it is apt time to reflect upon the challenges faced as a professional. The experience of working in varied organizations i.e. non - government organizations (NGOs), consultancy organization and a teaching institute has given an understanding of how women is treated and expected to perform in such organizations. In an NGO, the expectation was to bring a change in the society, to develop an idea and implement it on ground with conviction. In consultancy organization, it is about timeliness, professionalism and managerial skills where 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. meant exactly the same time period for both attending the office as well as performing at ask. The understanding was if one is unable to perform a task in 8 hours (with 30 minute break) in number of days specified to do a task, she will never perform it. The reasons for latter

were non-inclination or lack of aptitude or inability to perform. In such a case, quick decisions were taken to off load such professionals (rather the one with no professionalism) than to make them a burden for the organization and stressing further those who have to double them up for such maniacs. The trait which is amiss in government institutions. The discussions were mostly technical and opportunities were in plenty. The responsibilities were assigned not based on age or years of experience but realizing the potentials of a professional. The finance was always prime than social relations. The importance of written versus verbal was learnt in a hard manner when salary was obstructed based on written contract despite there being a verbal agreement.

Joining a teaching institution was more an event than a thoughtful process. It was just a thought while crossing the institution and a realisation of difference between what is taught and what profession requires. The latter made one think to join the profession so as to give it back its due and what it requires. The optimism in the eyes was great, when faced the interview in which the idea to make the institution as equal to Global top most institutions was expressed. It's another matter that it sooner got broken as realization seeped inside. The realization that there exists a difference in literary world and professional world. In literary world, rules are manoeuvred on the basis of who is raising it, facts are moulded to suit someone at the cost of others, public exchequer money is being wastefully spent rather than being judiciously used for public goods, job being taken up only to receive the salary rather than with an aptitude to perform for the betterment of profession, delay in professional work being the norm rather than a one-time incident due to an exigency and non-performance being promoted as there is lack of willingness to initiate an action when it is the matter of profession and institution and not of one's own benefit. One will think, what is the women angle here. A women's marital status, biological reproduction, class and ethical standards (rather lack of it) became a tool for favouring a few than treating all women equally in the profession based on one's capability and not based on their 'status'. The ideological differences were never treated with an open mind.

In this backdrop, may one expect both the profession and professional planners to treat all women equally. In profession, there shall be no differentiation between women and women on the basis of their marital or single status. The pregnant, lactating, menstruating and menopausal women shall be treated equally.



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Equal respect shall be accrued to women facing any of such condition in the profession. The need for taking care of one's children shall be treated as equally as taking care of one's old age parents within an institution. The leave for professional growth shall be given as promptly and urgently as it is granted for women to meet their biological needs. Let there be no difference among female based on their social and economic background. These talks are nothing new but even in planning institutions existing since pre-independence era, real independence for female is far-fetched.

There is a need to educate and recruit equal in number both the gender in the planning profession. In each institution, let there be a forum to ensure equal rights and opportunities. The male members' attitude towards female shall be more of equality

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encouraging MIG housing may lead to reduction in the quantum of open spaces and may also reduce area reserved for social facilities and amenities. Hence a balance approach is required to be adopted. The huge amount charged by local authorities towards approval of plans and levy on paid FAR, if reduced will bring down the cost of MIG houses, to make it affordable. It was also suggested that since the model of affordable housing through ownership is not working as per expectations, other alternates like rental housing may also be explored, which may be possible only when private sector is attracted by adequately incentivizing them.

On this occasion the felicitation of Office Bearers (2020 – 21) of ITPI-HQ was also arranged to Shri N.K. Patel, President; Shri V. Ramudu, Vice President; Shri S.B. Khodankar, Secretary General; and also to Shri Pradeep Kapoor, past Secretary General, ITPI. However, Shri Ramudu, Vice President, ITPI could not be present due to prior engagements. While Shri S. B. Khodankar sent his recorded message which was played during the program. Shri Patel, also released the first issue (2021) of Rajasthan Regional Chapter Newsletter.

Shri Ankur Dadheech, Secretary, RRC while reading citation for Shri Pradeep Kapoor, Council Member from RRC; mentioned that Shri Pradeep Kapoor, completed a record 12 terms as Secretary General, of ITPI and was instrumental in construction of buildings for Rajasthan Regional Chapter at Jaipur and Regional Centre at Udaipur, and played the major role for organizing two National Conferences in 1999 and 2017, besides organizing various Zonal Conferences.

and equity in letter and spirit rather than using such words as jargons only in writings for publications or using oratory skills in public forums. The verbal feedback regarding a colleague's conduct shall also be considered and pondered upon seriously for making a female feel safe in an official environment. Each of the male shall have basic etiquette and treat female courteously in an official environment.

This is the high time that male members shall give equal footing to female in the profession. Irrespective of gender, competence shall be the only benchmark for selecting the professionals for a position. Amongst gender, higher level administrative positions in planning institutions such as Town and Country Planning Organization (TCPO), Development authorities, planning education institutions, etc.; shall be in rotation.

He also mentioned that last year on the occasion of Golden Jubilee year of RRC, a Lecture Series was organized by him, in addition a grand finale, in which all the ITPI, Council members also participant.

Shri Pradeep Kapoor in his concluding remarks, on the issue of amendments in the Recruitment Rules of State Town Planning Department, Government of Rajasthan, mentioned that RRC has sent a representation to the Principal Secretary, Government of Rajasthan in the month of January 2021 clearly stating that on the posts of Town Planners only qualified town planners be appointed and for the posts of Assistant Town Planners, B. Plan or M. Plan., candidates from recognized schools by ITPI shall only be made eligible and accordingly Recruitment Rules be amended. He also assured the member that in future, if legal recourse is required to be taken, we will take appropriate steps in the interest of the profession. Shri Pradeep Kapoor, being Chairman of RRC Editorial Board, extended thanks to Dr. Satish Pipralia for his commendable work as editor of the Newsletter and requested all the members to contribute articles and information on other events so as to continue publication of the newsletter, regularly.

Shri B.S. Kanawat, Chairman, RRC expressed his sincere thanks to Shri N.K. Patel for physically participating in the event and to Shri S.B. Khodankar, Secretary General, ITPI for sending a recorded message for the event. He also appreciated the Editorial Board of the RRC under the chairmanship of Shri Pradeep Kapoor for publishing Rajasthan Regional Chapter Newsletter in such a short time, and also expressed his deep gratitude to all the participants for their presence.

COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS' (CAP)

Commonwealth Association of Planners' (CAP)

Commonwealth Association of Planners' (CAP) formed on 23rd September, 1970 to promote co-operation between member organisations and between individuals in the commonwealth, to achieve the most effective contribution by planners to the wellbeing of society, and the creation of a satisfactory environment. CAP is a major global institution in planning and is playing an increasingly significant role in the worldwide promotion of planning as a fundamental part of governance for sustainable human settlement. CAP currently represents over 40,000 planners from 27 countries throughout the Commonwealth including African, Asian, Australasian and Caribbean countries. CAP also has a Women in Planning network and a Young Planners network and plays a leading role in developing the planning profession and planners throughout the countries of the Commonwealth. CAP is also a partner in the Commonwealth Sustainable Urbanisation Program and is actively working with partners.

CAP is celebrating its 50th Anniversary commemoration during November, 2021 and inviting entries for CAP Awards for outstanding planning achievement in the Commonwealth, seek to champion the very best examples of planning practice in the Commonwealth.

Institute of Town Planners, India is the active member and is Vice - President of Commonwealth Association of Planners' (CAP)

The Awards aim to:

- Disseminate outstanding planning practice in the Commonwealth, particularly where applicable across different Commonwealth countries;
- Demonstrate the valuable role that planners and planning have in the Commonwealth in helping to create resilient and sustainable communities and adequate shelter for all; and
- Promote the ways in which the science and art of planning can benefit the public and improve the well-being of society in the Commonwealth.

Award Categories:

- Planning for the climate emergency;
- Planning for cities and human settlements / plan making in the Commonwealth;
- Planning for equitable and inclusive cities and human settlements;
- Planning in response to natural or technological disasters;
- Planning for the conservation of the built and natural environment and cultural heritage; and
- Outstanding Young Planner.

These award will be distributed in November, 2021. Members of ITPI, Planning Organizations/ Departments / Authorities / Local Bodies; and Schools / Institution recognized by ITPI are welcome to send their entries by 9th August, 2021 to CAP, at (annette.odonnel@rtpi.org.uk) under intimation to ITPI. For further details visit <https://www.commonwealth-planners.org>





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Shri N. K. Patel,
President, ITPI
delivering the talk
on 'Affordable
Housing in India'

RAJASTHAN REGIONAL CHAPTER LECTURE SERIES - III (2020-2021)



Shri N.K. Patel, President ITPI releasing the Newsletter of Rajasthan Regional Chapter

Rajasthan Regional Chapter of Institute of Town Planner, India; organized a talk by Shri N. K. Patel, President, ITPI, on 'Affordable Housing in India' with focus on MIG' on 20th March, 2021, at RRC, Building Jaipur.

Shri B. S. Kanawat, Chairman, RRC invited Shri Patel, to make his presentation. Shri N. K. Patel, while delivering his talk defined the term 'Affordable Housing' as a house for which the occupants are paying not more than 30% of their gross income. Referring to the report of Technical Committee of Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, on 'Housing Shortage' he mentioned that there was shortage of around 18.78 million dwelling units in 2012. And further, highlighted that, in addition to this, there exists congested houses, obsolete houses, non-serviced houses and *katcha* houses, which will further add to this figure. To meet this challenge of providing affordable housing, various programs / schemes and policies were initiated by central government like BSUP - 2005, IHSDP - 2005, NUHHP - 2007, RAY - 2011, NULM - 2011, PMAY - 2015, etc., besides state governments has also launched various programs and policies. Under PMAY (Urban) more than 47 lakh housing units are approved in about 10,000 projects with Rs. 73,000 crore central assistance. During his presentation Shri Patel gave following suggestions:

- The revenue generated by local bodies and state government has increased upto 24% per unit which was only 9% in 2010, whereas builders' profit is generally 18 to 20%. To make a housing unit affordable, taxes and levies imposed by the local bodies needs to be reduced, which may also reduce the cost of each unit by 15 % and consequently builders profit will also reduce but the impact on per unit cost will make a house affordable;
- Planning interventions like increasing 25% FSI will result in reduction of the cost of the house, by 23%; and
- Rental housing for urban poor migrants needs to be encouraged because ownership housing is not giving desired results for a targeted segment of urban poor due to higher land prices.

To justify above suggestions Shri Patel, presented various examples for reduction in cost of housing units through planning interventions, financial interventions and policy interventions.

During floor interventions Shri R.K. Tulara, Shri C.S. Parashar, and Shri Pradeep Kapoor, also participated among others. However, some of the participants were of the view that increase in FAR / FSI for

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