

Environment Governance – The Need of the Gender Dimension

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Introduction:

A gender- sensitive approach to environment governance has two principal objectives; firstly, to increase women's participation in human settlements development, and, secondly, to foster gender-awareness and competence among both women and men in the political arena and planning practice. Concerted approach to the issue of participation is required, including an improvement in women's representation in political structures and their active involvement in advocacy and lobbying for equitable human settlements development through participation in organizations outside of government. The work of such organizations in holding to account mainstream institutions and structures can be strengthened through international cooperation. New and inclusive urban partnerships are also needed, which recognize the interests, contributions and reciprocal potential of women as well as men. Planners must acknowledge the diversity of women, while recognizing that they also generally share specific gender interests arising from a common set of responsibilities and roles. Partnerships between urban dwellers, designers and decision- makers must address both the diversity and commonality of women's experiences and needs. Given that women experience and use the environment in different ways from men, they have different priorities in terms of services and infrastructure. Such priorities rarely feature in urban policy or investments. Policy-makers and planners, whether women or men, need to be gender- aware in order that women's needs and interests are addressed and women themselves are brought in to the planning process. For example, gender-aware planning would be sensitive to the increasing phenomenon of women- maintained households. Their particular vulnerability to poverty and their specific economic survival strategies will only be reflected in policy-making if categories like the "household" and the "neighborhood" are disaggregated by gender and family type. A gendered approach to planning offers solutions to many of the challenges presented by social and economic diversity. The challenge will be met when the complexity of women and men's social roles is recognized and their involvement in the control of their everyday lives is welcomed. This paper deals with the

themes of participation and partnership in environment governance, a concept which refers to both government responsibility and civic engagement. It is informed by the premise that participation in political or organizational processes in the city is related to command over the resources of the city. Moreover, the extent of the contribution made by people to the environment may also limit or enhance participation. put simply, those who already participate in the wealth of the city often have the bargaining power to increase their share. Those with the greatest responsibility for the household, neighborhood and urban environment, may have least time to spare to organize to advance their own interests. To understand this dual approach to participation from a gender perspective means exploring how women and men benefit from and contribute to city life and what it has to offer-as workers, cares, parents, service users and in their leisure time. In developing this perspective, the paper highlights some critical gender issues in government responsibility and civic engagement in urban areas. I explore the difficulties associated with incorporating a gender perspective into urban policy- making and planning processes and the challenges facing women working to promote women's gender interests in urban practice from different institutional locations

Women, bring a unique voice to the challenges and opportunities of sustainable development. Their experience, their participation and their leadership are crucial to the success of the world environment efforts. It is felt that Women and men have different gender based roles and responsibilities in their communities. They have different knowledge of, access to and control over the environment. Understanding the relationship to the environment plays on important role in developing solutions for more sustainable development. Ignoring gender has distorted the understanding of the human impacts on the environment.

A gender sensitive approach to environment governance is needed to understand how gender shapes activities that effect the environment, it is necessary to examine women's and men's roles and responsibilities

The difference lies in the fact that men play a greater role than women in the exploitation of natural resources for commercial purpose and women have the additional responsibility of the domestic region also. The paper deals with the themes of participating and partnership in environment governance. This concept refers to both government responsibility and civic engagement. It is observed **“participation in the**

political and organization processes in the city is related to command over the resources of the city.” In other words those who participate in the wealth of the city have the power to bargain for their share.

In developed countries, the situation is different. In “Agra”; the need is to ensure that the women also have access to and control over their urban resources. Presently there are no women involved in the various stages of planning. This paper deals with the themes of participation and partnership in environment governance, a concept which refers to both government responsibility and civic engagement. It is informed by the premise that participation in political or organizational processes in the city is related to command over the resources of the city. Moreover, the extent of the contribution made by people to the urban environment may also limit or enhance participation. Put simply, those who already participate in the wealth of the city often have the bargaining power to increase their share. Those with the greatest responsibility for the urban household, neighborhood and urban environment, may have least time to spare to organize to advance their own interests. To understand this dual approach to participation from a gender perspective means exploring how women and men benefit from and contribute to city life and what it has to offer - as workers, carers, parents, service users and in their leisure time.

Environment Planning and Gender

A gender sensitive approach to environment governance has two principal objectives. The first is to increase women’s participation in human settlements and second is to foster gender awareness and competence among both men and women. An improvement in women’s representation is required and also their active involvement in advocacy and lobbying for equitable human settlements. The diversity of women. has to be recognized and their needs and experiences be addressed.

The women use the environment in different ways; they have different priorities in terms of services and infrastructure (transport, housing, sanitation etc). These priorities seldom feature in the policy. The women need to be included in the Planning process, so that their interests and needs are taken care of . The challenges presented by the social and economic diversity will be met only by understanding the complexity of the women and men’s. social roles in the environment.

Policy and Planning with an understanding of gender does not come naturally. Changes in culture, attitude and operational procedures will be required to foster gender sensitive analysis. The environment governance needs to account for the obstacles that women face in public life, the lack of confidence, skills and knowledge. The burden of multiple responsibilities cannot be ignored. There has been insufficient recognition of how women and men use and contribute to the city in different ways. The sectors of water management, waste management, Energy conservation, health, transport and many areas of the environment need to be addressed keeping in view how the human settlements are affected and how to ensure growth.

The environment is adversely effected by their activities both inside and outside the home. Little effort has been done to plan and manage cities with women. A fresh perspective is needed to recognize the women as integral components in the area of governance. At the level of the city (Agra) there has been a particularly no strong tendency to see “governance” as urban management. The operation and management of the infrastructure and services. is very poor. But, no city is an autonomous body; they are located in wider national and international economies, environmental systems and socio-spatial relationships. This managerial perspective has blurred the wider context with which environment governance is conducted.

Governance is not management alone. The vision and strategic divisions are part of governance. Governance has the following dimension:-

- 1- Political
- 2- Contextual
- 3- Constitutional
- 4- Legal
- 5- Administrative

This concept of governance calls for intergovernmental relations, negotiations, agreements and inclusion of public parties in all the above. It includes bottom up decision making having all concerned people at all level of society as participants. Human right and levels of participation are critical issues in governance and the focus has to be on those who are marginalized economic, environmental and political resources in the city. Gender is an essential construct within which to frame a set of questions regarding the

processes and outcomes of margins his above in the environment. The role and responsibilities determine how women men may contribute and benefit from the environment. The women are not a homogeneous group. They are a complex mixture of old, working, housewives, girl, child etc. In the present time, there is class of women who are trying is balance many roles- hence they need a place in the decision making platform.

Appreciating this complexity, however, is an adjunct to and not a replacement for a gendered analysis of responsible government and civic engagement in the city. There is growing evidence that women use and gain from the environment in different ways from men, that these ways are not biologically or essentially determined but rather socially constructed and that urban governance needs to be gender-sensitive if these differences are to be accounted for in planning and policy-making. Such gender-sensitivity may be defined as an acknowledgement of and responsiveness to the different roles and responsibilities of women and men in human settlements and the social relations between them. Gender-sensitive governance becomes, then, a function of the engagement of urban planners and policy-makers in the lives of urban dwellers. Indeed, this should be a mutual engagement as it is important that the knowledge, energy and expertise of women and men at the grassroots level are brought into the policy-making and planning process.

There are two critical objectives for achieving gender-sensitive best practice in environment governance. The first is to increase women's participation in the full spectrum of human settlements development. The second is to foster gender awareness and gender competence among both women and men in the political arena, the policy process and in planning practice. These different but related objectives involve different actors, organizations and institutions and require specific skills and interventions. What is best practice for a women's self-help organization operating at the community level will not be the same as best practice for a gender-sensitive local government department, for an international agency concerned with gender issues in urban affairs, or for urban planners and professionals concerned to build a "gendered city .Nevertheless, gender-sensitive best practice for the entire spectrum of institutions and organizations operating at the urban level needs to be consistently informed by the long term goals of social justice, participatory practice and gender equity.

In addressing these goals, it is important to distinguish between people and perspectives. Women and men (and not genders) organize, participate and engage in urban governance and partnerships. Women make up specific political or interest-based constituencies, either as women or as specific groups of women. They do this in the context of mixed or separate organizations. Women as particular constituencies or interest-based groups can organize with or without explicitly feminist goals, with or without men, within or without broader organizations, in coalitions or autonomously. On the other hand, a gender perspective refers not to a constituency or the participants but to the practice of urban policy-making, Planning management and organization itself. It refers to a recognition of and responsiveness to the different roles and responsibilities of women and men in human settlements and social relations between them. An understanding of gender interests and social diversity in urban governance, together with gender-competent urban planning practice, can be equally adopted by women and men practitioners concerned with achieving equitable and participatory human settlements development.

For women to participate in environment policy and planning processes, and for these processes to be made more gender-sensitive, a concerted approach is necessary. The key elements of such an approach are:

- An improvement in women's representation in political structures, because human settlements development is a political as well as a technical and institutional process which benefits from women's perspectives;
- Women's active participation in organizations outside of government, playing an advocacy role and providing a demand driven approach to gender-sensitive human settlements development, through lobbying and making claims on elected representatives, officials and urban development professionals and practitioners;
- A gender-sensitive and inclusive approach to the development of new urban partnerships.

Women's Representation in public office

Getting women themselves into the mainstream of public office and the bureaucracy is a vital part of engendering urban governance. The presence of women in public office does not guarantee that the interests of other women will be represented. Political beliefs, ideology, race and class all intersect, and sometimes compete, with the claims of gender,

thus complicating the relationship between women in power and their presumed female constituency.

However, this complexity does not diminish the critical importance and the symbolic and practical value of raising the profile of women in public office. Women constitute a significant proportion, sometimes a majority, of urban populations. Where democratic processes prevail, women in public office give meaning to the representative nature of democracy and institutionalize and legitimize women's voices in the sites of power. They also serve as important role models, which may permit and inspire other women to involve themselves in urban governance. Furthermore, women have particular experiences of and relationships to the urban environment to share. They have proved themselves to be effective change agents in the city, particularly at the local and neighborhood level which they know intimately and on which they have strong views and invaluable suggestions. This experience and expertise should be drawn upon.

Nevertheless there continue to be a number of obstacles to women's engagement in public life. In many countries, cultural constraints reinforce more generalized socio-economic handicaps in restricting women's participation in governance. Even in countries which have a good record on women's political representation, such as Germany and Norway, such representation is declining at the national level. In Australia five years ago, nearly half of the mayors of the state capital cities were women. Now there is only one. A councilor from Brisbane reported at a recent OECD Conference on Women and the City that in the recent local elections, the number of women who were elected was cut by two thirds (OECD 1995). Even when the proportion of women remains fairly constant, there is a high turnover of elected women. Such a turnover can interrupt the momentum for change within political, policy and planning processes which women in public office may seek to generate.

Hard won gains are often rolled back, often as a result of women themselves losing steam or burning out, but also when women's interests confront those of more powerful opposing groups. Few societies have yet managed to facilitate women's sustained contribution to political life, even when opportunities exist. This helps explain why women often appear passive when it comes to political life. For female elected representatives to maintain a political career and to fulfill their responsibility to other women by standing for public office, women's multiple roles and responsibilities have to

be recognized. Moreover, the practice of government has to accommodate them. The Swedish experience suggests that considerable progress can be made towards increasing the participation of women in policy arenas as well as the labor market, by expanding child-care facilities and parental support. This has made it possible for both women and men to combine productive activities or political life with family responsibilities. Thus, there are legislative and material prerequisites that must be in place for women to take part in public life.

Political responsibility to a women's constituency does not come automatically, whether at national or at metropolitan or municipal levels. Women representatives in public office can be as gender-blind as men. In a study of women MPs in India, for example, Shirin Rai suggests that loyalty to class, caste and a range of other cross-cutting institutional loyalties, limits the representation of women's interests (Rai 1995). The key factor is whether there are institutional structures and linkages to ensure that the specific interests of women are represented by local councils, and whether councilors have transparent, open channels of communication and mechanisms for consultation with their constituencies. In many countries, the necessary political will and awareness are simply lacking.

In general, women are better represented at the local rather than at state or national level, although they still remain a minority at all levels of government. This has led some to view the process of decentralization as positive for women (for example recent amendments to strengthen the Panchyat Raj in India, and the various efforts towards decentralizing government in countries of Latin America) given the fact that they are most likely to enter local politics when going into public office. But decentralization does not necessarily facilitate women's participation in public office. Increasing the power of local government involves increasing its access to and control over local resources. Such access and control renders local government more important to local economic and political elites and interest groups who are unwilling to relinquish control. Indeed, it has been suggested that decentralization can increase rather than decrease the number of people engaged in malfeasance (Manor 1995).

Nor does decentralization always mean devolution of power - including the transfer of resources and decision-making power along with tasks. It may simply mean privatization, being the transfer of tasks previously performed by state agencies to the private sector.

Alternatively, it may refer to the penetration of upper-tier government agencies into lower level arenas of government in order to control those levels. In this case, women in government may be useful in delivering a women's constituency to political parties, without in return being able to represent or respond to the interests of women. Furthermore, local government often is not effective at mobilizing and redistributing local resources, partly because politicians are afraid of becoming unpopular with their constituents, for example through the imposition of new taxation, and partly because representatives of disadvantaged groups frequently have more influence at higher levels in the political system.

Thus, decentralization is no panacea but when it works well it can encourage greater political participation (both electoral participation and participation in organizations of civil society) and can enhance local government responsiveness to local demands. James Manor (1995) argues that:

Decentralization works best when it encounters a lively civil society (that is, organized interests with some autonomy from the state). If social groups are aware, assertive and well organized for political purposes, they are likely to keep elected representatives well informed of their problems and hard pressed for responses and for effective, honest governance.

In this context, gender-sensitive best practice would be for local government to keep open the channels of communication and foster mechanisms for dialogue with groups and organizations representing women. However, the onus is also on organizations of civil society to facilitate women's participation and the articulation and representation of gender interests.

Community Advocacy and Gender

Community activism is an important avenue towards greater civic engagement in city level urban planning and policy-making processes. Rhetorical commitment to community consultation is becoming standard procedure for all levels of government. This commitment is usually best translated into effective practice where there is strong community interest, or where communities themselves or interest-based groups within them are well organized. However, while women are active in communities, it is often

the case that they are invisible in urban planning processes. Policy-makers and planners often fail to recognize the specific interests of women and fail to consult them or to address their problems. This in turn discourages involvement from women in the community, while policy-makers and planners remain deaf to women's silence and unaware of the impact of their decisions on women's lives.

When women are involved, they are usually active in two ways. On the one hand, they often take up different issues from those which interest men. For example, women are far more likely to organize around health issues than are men, even though both have gendered health care needs (Beall 1995a). This is not altogether surprising given women's social responsibility for home and hearth and family health and child care. It is no coincidence, therefore, that women are most highly represented in social sector ministries and departments concerned with health and education. This pattern is often replicated at the level of community participation and organization.

On the other hand, women and men often take up the same issues but are interested in them in gendered ways. For example, women have gender-specific needs around housing and human settlements. And among women, different groups have different requirements and priorities at different stages of their life cycle and according to the household structures of which they are a part (Falu and Curutchet 1987; Machado 1987; Moser 1987)

The importance of women's grassroots organizations working at community level is becoming better appreciated by governments and external agencies. This is particularly the case when women organize service provision themselves. One of the best known examples of women's organized self-help is the response of women in cities such as Lima, to the economic crisis in Peru. To provide for their own and their families' survival they started "community kitchens" and "glass of milk" committees, with some of these expanding into health and leadership training initiatives (Barring 1991). It is important, however, that in the context of community organization women are not confined to self-help and survival strategies, being left to manage communities without resources or political and professional support.

The Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in Bombay recognizes this problem and tries both to address the basic needs of women and work with them to

increase their political effectiveness. For example, they support an organization called Mobile Crèches which provides child care for women construction workers on the major construction sites in the city, while during a demolition crisis in the city the most important input they were able to provide women pavement dwellers was "legal literacy". The knowledge and skills they acquired enabled them to fight for their right to shelter (SPARC 1986).

Issues reach the policy agenda when powerful or well organized groups in society identify and assert their issues as problems. Mainstreaming gender issues and adopting a women's perspective in policy and planning would not have been possible without the sustained, organized force of women over the last two decades. This has been forged through women organizing separately, in broad coalitions with men, and through inclusive networks in support of social justice and equitable policy change.

International cooperation and coordination can often facilitate the process of holding mainstream policy-making and planning process to account for their neglect or marginalization of gender issues. This is particularly the case for women's organizations which can often network at the national and international levels more effectively than within the city. Whether at the local, national or international level, experience suggests that it is primarily the organizational power of women which ensures that political parties take seriously the power of the female vote.

In the Philippines, the historical conjuncture provided by "people's power" and the presidency of Corazon Aquino, together with donor assistance from Unifem at the time, created the opportunity for a uniquely consultative process towards the construction of the Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW) in 1989 which paralleled and intersected with the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan of 1987-1992. Here a variety of grassroots organizations were included in the decision-making process, together with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and the National Economic and Development Authority. More recently, the government and leaders of the women's movement started preparing for a sequel, a 30 year Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (PPGD).

Currently in South Africa, it is the on-going struggle of women within the autonomous women's organizations which is insisting that new affirmative action policies combat the

legacy of sexual as well as racial discrimination. Shared experience through international networking and the financial support of international donor agencies facilitated a process for drawing up a Women's Charter by the Women's National Coalition of South Africa. The enduring legacy of this process is not only the document produced but the local level organization which was fostered and which has the potential of continuing to hold the mainstream to account. In Sweden, new women's networks have been recently formed to campaign for better political responsiveness to women's issues. Women joined forces and threatened to register themselves as a women's party if the existing political parties did not take gender issues into account more seriously. This change, which received excellent media coverage, had the desired effect of making established political parties place women's issues higher on the political agenda (OECD 1995).

The cases of the Philippines and South Africa illustrate the value of national campaigns for local level organization, but women's advocacy can also operate at and for the metropolitan level as well.

Gender Equity in Environment Planning

Civic engagement in governance requires new forms of urban partnership between users, designers and decision-makers. To achieve these, it is important to foster horizontal linkages between different organizations and actors involved in human settlements development: politicians, activists, advocacy groups, self-help organizations, professionals, employers, users and beneficiaries. It is also necessary to maintain verticals linkages between the various levels of political power –local, regional, national and federal-and ensure that the interests of both women and men are represented at each stage. Linkages and partnerships do not necessarily imply gender harmony and lack of conflict, as different interest-based groups will defend their interests both within and between organizations. But it does imply keeping the channels of communication open and an inclusive rather than exclusive approach to urban partnerships.

Partnerships should ideally be built on shared interests, reciprocal support and mutual benefit, with each partner contributing according to their respective resources, strengths and areas of expertise. Reciprocity is built on valuing and legitimizing the specific resources of the partners, whether these are materials resources, managerial coordination, local information, professional expertise, entrepreneurship or the enthusiasm, local

information, professional entrepreneurship expertise, entrepreneurship or the enthusiasm and energy of residents. Clearly there is a need to recognize the interests, contributions and reciprocal potential of women as well as men. An increasingly common approach to democratizing and fostering the concept and process of gender-sensitive partnership is to consider women as equal stakeholders, with specific interests and needs. While this can be useful, a potential danger is to characterize women en masse as a single group of stakeholders. In reality, they constitute as diverse a group as men involved in urban partnerships. There are both women and men among different participant or parted groups. Women are as likely as men to have opposing as well as complementary interests and concerns. Thus if women are singled out as one, singular group, specific issues get ignored.

Furthermore, the stakeholder approach might identify actors, but does not necessarily address the processes and practices by which partnerships are established. Urban partnerships are potentially the vehicle through which bottom-up efforts can intersect or dovetail with top-down approaches. It is vital not only that women participate, but that the partnership process recognizes specific concerns of women who have to balance multiple responsibilities that are not always compatible with existing procedures and who are therefore less able to participate with equal experience and skill in male-dominated forums.

Gender-sensitive urban partnerships must recognize the different approaches that women and men often adopt in organization, negotiation and planning to have specific interests and experience of public life. In addition to having specific interests and concerns, women have particular approaches towards managing their environments. One example is that women tend to establish informal neighborhood networks through their daily living patterns. This is not because women have some 'natural' or intrinsic affinity with the local environment but because they confront their neighborhoods on a daily basis in the course of the activities they undertake within the existing gender division of labor. These networks can be utilized most effectively towards improved planning and decision-making processes.

All too frequently women are included in urban partnerships only at the implementation stage and remain excluded from the formulation, design and resource allocation stages of programmes and projects. New forms of partnership, therefore, need to adopt an

enabling approach. This should foster (on the part of all parties involved) a commitment to developing inter-organizational relationships conducive to genuine participatory processes that include both women and men, and at all stages. Moreover, it is also acknowledged that genuine participation by diverse groups means “reconceptualising the meaning of “successful” organizations and defining new contractual procedures” (OECD 1995). Strong linkages are needed between grassroots organizations, urban professionals and their organizations and the decision-makers responsible for policy. The more women are involved in all these arenas, the easier it will be to keep local activism robust to make strong and empowering links. This has been said by none other than Amartya Sen. ---

“Advancing gender equality, through reversing the Various social and economic handicaps that make Women voiceless and powerless, may also be one of the

Best ways of saving the environment.”

—Amartya Sen, 1998 Nobel Laureate in Economics

Women experience and use the urban environment in different ways from men and thus have different priorities in terms of services and infrastructure. Despite this, women’s interests and needs users of cities rarely feature in urban policy or investments. This is hardly surprising when women are largely excluded from urban planning decision-making processes. There is a strong argument therefore, for policy-makers and planners, whether women or men, to be gender aware so that women are consulted and encouraged to participate in the planning process.

The study found that while women work both inside and outside the home, men work almost exclusively outside the home. Women’s responsibilities include housekeeping, cooking, and fetching water and wood. Men have primary responsibility for harvesting and storing crops; maintaining equipment; and hunting, fishing, and extracting products from the forests.

In Thailand, foresters invited a group of village men to a meeting to plan a community forestry project. They told the foresters that they needed hardwood tree species to make furniture and woodcarvings to sell. But when 3,000 hardwood seedlings were provided, they all died. Why? Because in that location, women care for the seedlings,

and they prefer softwood tree species for fuel wood and fodder. No one had told them that the trees were coming. Women were included in the next meeting, allowing the foresters to learn about women's and men's roles and preferences. Eventually, the project delivered seedlings of both types, satisfying both the men and women of the village.

Access To and Control Over Resources

Economic, social, institutional, and legal constraints affect women's and men's right to own land and control resources. In 2001, over 1.2 billion people were living on less than one U.S. dollar a day. The majority of those in poverty are women. Globally, 70 percent of the poor depend on land, water, and forest for subsistence and income. They exploit natural resources to provide fuel wood and timber for energy and shelter, and wildlife flora and fauna for food and livelihood. Most lack secure access to and control over these resources. For example, forests may be owned by the government or laws may prohibit fishing in estuaries. Women's social status, especially in developing countries, limits their secure and independent access to land. In many countries, rights are linked to women's marital status; women often lose these rights if they are divorced or widowed. Even in countries where the law guarantees women and men equal access to land, women may not be aware of their rights, or customs may exclude women from de-facto ownership. but, in practice, men control nearly all of the property. Such insecure land tenure influences how different groups use natural resources. Women, the poor, and other marginalized groups are less likely to invest time and resources or adopt environmentally sustainable farming practices on land where they have secure tenure. Women's food crops are relegated to rented, steeply sloped land with erosive soils. Because tenure is not secure, women have little incentive to invest in soil conservation.

For food, medicine, and fuel wood in areas where future access is uncertain. These restrictions on women's land rights hinder their ability to access other resources and information. Unable to use land as collateral to obtain loans, women have difficulty in adopting new technology and hiring labor when needed. In addition, women may not be able to access other supportive services, such as extension programs and training on innovative land management approaches. Studies from many countries show that agricultural extension agents have traditionally focused on male farmers, even where men reworking off the farm and women are the primary cultivators.

Knowledge Base

Women and men are both sources of knowledge about sustainable resource management practices, But they may know about different species and practices according to their activities. In Brazil, Ethno-botanical surveys conducted in the Causational Park found that midwives were knowledgeable about certain plants, while traditional medicine men knew about others. Gendered knowledge also varies by class, age, and ethnicity, underscoring its complexity. An older man from an indigenous group may have different ways of working with land and forests than a young man living outside his native community; the same applies for women. Understanding the different knowledge of women and men in different socioeconomic circumstances helps to determine appropriate and sustainable interventions.

Public Participation in Decision-making

Public participation in environmental managements is increasingly seen as a vital component of environmental policies. Several major United Nations conferences in the 1990s, including the Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), acknowledged women's contributions to environmental Management and proposed action to strengthen women's role in decision-making. Yet Women's involvement in the formulation, planning, and execution of environmental policy remains low at all levels, from local positions to the ranks where national and international environmental policies are determined. When women do contribute to environmental management, it is often at the local level. Women in many countries, for example, in the Ukraine Bangladesh, Russia, and Mexico, have been involved in planning the management of freshwater resources. They have come together in women's groups and cooperatives to mobilize communities and resources to highlight urgent problems in industrial areas, as well as to help conserve and protect their supplies of clean, accessible water.

This limited participation in decision making means those women's perspectives, needs, knowledge, and proposed solutions are often ignored. In addition, failure to take account of women's and men's activities and to include both in the decision making process can lead to policies that criminalize women's activities without changing their behavior. For example, in El Salvador, community leaders placed restrictions on collecting timber in coastal areas and fishing in estuaries in an effort to conserve the fragile mangrove system. In this area, most men fish in the open seas, while women collect fuel wood and fish in the estuaries and along the shoreline. Women were not consulted when the ban was

discussed, yet they were most affected by the restrictions. Valuing household survival over possible penalties, women continued to fish and gather fuel wood secretly.

Impact of Human Activities on Environment

Not only do women and men differ in the ways they use and manage environmental resources, they are also differentially affected by the degradation of natural resources. Deforestation, water scarcity, soil degradation, and exposure to agricultural and industrial chemicals and organic pollutants affect women and men in following ways.

1 More Time and Energy for Tasks

The amount of time individuals spend on household duties may dramatically increase with the depletion of resources. In the Limbang district of Malaysia, commercial logging affects men, who must travel longer distances in the forest to collect household construction materials.

For women, forest degradation makes it more difficult to collect wild herbs, fruits, and natural medicines. Given the variety of women's daily interactions with the environment to meet household needs, they are often most keenly affected by its degradation. In the Sudan, deforestation in the last decade has led to a quadrupling of women's time spent gathering fuelwood. Because girls are often responsible for collecting water and fuelwood, water scarcity and deforestation also contribute to higher school dropout rates for girls. As women and men travel longer distances for fuel wood, fodder, and water, they expend larger amounts of energy. The World Health Organization estimates that the energy used to carry water may consume one-third of a woman's daily calorie intake. In areas where water is in particularly short supply, calorie use may be even greater, compounding the risk of malnutrition in resource-poor settings.

2 Higher Exposure to Indoor Pollutants

Soot from burning biomass fuels such as wood, charcoal, or agricultural residues for cooking and heating primarily affects women and children because they spend more time indoors than men. Epidemiological studies in developing countries have linked exposure to indoor air pollution from traditional fuels with acute respiratory infections in children, chronic bronchitis and asthma, lung cancer, and pregnancy-related problems. It is estimated that exposure to indoor pollutants kills more than 2.2 million people each year, over 98 percent of them in developing countries. A study in Gambia found that infants exposed to smoky stoves are six times more likely to have acute respiratory infections.

than those who were not exposed. Studies in India, Nepal, and Papua New Guinea show that nonsmoking women who have cooked on biomass stoves for many years exhibit a higher prevalence of chronic disease (asthma and chronic bronchitis). Exposure to high levels of indoor smoke is also associated with pregnancy-related problems such as stillbirths and low birth weight infants.

Decreased Nutrition for Families

Women and men often are forced to change their families' dietary practices when soil fertility has been drastically reduced due to overcropping, overgrazing, or erosion, or where there is a lack of fuelwood and potable water. Nutrition suffers when fuel wood shortages force households to economize on fuel by shifting to less nutritious foods that can be eaten raw or partially cooked, by eating partially cooked food that could prove toxic, by eating leftovers that could rot in a tropical climate, or by skipping meals altogether.¹⁸ Although these nutritional changes affect all household members to some degree, women and female children bear the greatest burden in places where they eat last and least.

3 Gender Responsive Policies

Gender-responsive environmental policies and programs are those that seek to achieve environmental outcomes while explicitly taking into account both men's and women's opinions, needs, and interests. Such policies derive from social, health, and ecological research that provides a more comprehensive picture of the impact of humans on the environment, and the impacts of environmental change on people. A number of countries have taken initiatives to incorporate a gender perspective into environmental policies and programs by taking the following actions: with the environment in the park. The government of Tunisia also combined data gathered at the local level with more standard survey information to design a plan of action for integrating women into the country's ninth Five-Year Plan. It is in the Division of Environment and Natural Resources to serve as a catalyst for gender-responsive planning and programming.

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Linking environment governance and gender

Recent concern with governance in urban areas stems from a more general attention being paid to "good governance" as a development issue. One approach sees governance

as essentially preoccupied with questions of financial accountability and administrative efficiency. An alternative approach is one more interested in broader political concerns related to democracy, human right and participation (Robinson 1995).

At the level of the city, there has been a particularly strong tendency to see governance entirely in terms of urban management –the operation and maintenance of infrastructure and services. But cities are not autonomous entities, with various tiers of government intervening inurban areas. They are also located in wider national and international economies, environmental systems and socio- spatial relationships. This managerial perspective blurs both the wider contexts within which urban governance is conducted and the essentially politicized nature of governance.

Strengthening Women's Involvement in Environmental Decisionmaking

Worldwide, women are poorly represented in government sand decision making bodies. This lack of representation limits women's influence over public policies and programs. Women need official lchannels to reflect their needs and to have a voice in environmental policy decisions. Several countries have done this by setting aside seats to ensure women's participation in environmental management and decision making bodies. In the1990s, a number of countries, including India,, formally set aside a percentage of seats on national and local bodies for women..

Main Gender Concerns

Housing Schemes

Commitment to addressing gender concerns must be reflected at the highest level. Several governments around the world have taken steps to incorporate a gender perspective into their nationa lenvironmental policies. Gender policy declarations are important because they demonstrate a government 'intent to address gender concerns; provide a reference document for technical staff that are working on national policies and programs; and provide the basis for action to develop the capacity of both women and men to address gender concerns.AnEnvironment Plan, must have a participatory approach and gender analysis for environmental planning. The National Environmental Policy calls for integration of gender, youth, and child concerns The urban poor are generally dented access to secure land tenure and housing, and to basic infrastructure and services. For political, legal or economic reasons they are often confined to sites that are unsuited to human settlement, such as hill-sides, garbage dumps, swamps and near sources of pollution. Insecurity of tenure discourages the poor from investing in public

space; yet there is ample evidence of women organizing themselves to improve their surroundings and their security. Moser (1993) cites examples of a range of low-income urban women's organizational activities around health issue, child care, water, waste recycling, self help housing and transportation, indicating a commitment to urban life unmatched by official support or encouragement.

When housing programmes, upgrading schemes or infrastructure developments present opportunities for the improvement of human settlements, women are often excluded by conventional eligibility criteria; their incomes are too low, or they do not have the time and skills to engage in self-help scheme. For women who are included, either on their own account or within the context of households, they are rarely consulted. Their needs are often ignored in the design of human settlements, the location of housing, and the provision of urban services. A common assumption, for example, is that all productive work takes place outside the home and undertaken by men. This is certainly not the case in many countries where female-headed households constitute a large and growing proportion of urban dwellers. They frequently have to combine domestic and productive activities, both in terms of utilization of time and space. The different roles of men and women within the gender division of labour have implications for house design, site layout, zoning and regulatory frameworks more generally shelter

Transport needs of women and men.

Women and men have distinct transport requirements. Yet transport planning often disregards women's priorities because of a focus on mobility rather than accessibility and a preoccupation with the formal sector worker's journey and itinerary. Women's travel needs frequently require transport outside of peak hours and to alternative destinations from those of men. And yet cost cutting inevitably involves a reduction in off-peak services, a consequence of the economy evaluation made by planners using conventional cost/benefit measures which ignore the value of the trips women make in their reproductive role . It should be noted here that it is not only the priorities of women that are overlooked by conventional transport planning, but also those of men outside of centrally located, formal sector employment.

As mothers and caregivers, women have to escort others. For example, women are most likely to be the ones looking after young children, elderly or sick relatives, and visiting

schools and clinics. It is women who assume most domestic and community management responsibilities and women are prevalent in the informal economy. Women engaged in informal sector activities are often burdened with heavy loads. Moreover, working women usually combine paid work with their domestic responsibilities. Women depend more than men on public transport and walking than on private cars or other vehicles. Yet conditions of travel on public transport are often abysmal. Affordable transport systems circumvent critical destinations, they are overcrowded and sometimes dangerous and are often unreliable and irregular. This hinders women in their domestic and caring responsibilities, impedes their productivity and even threatens their safety.

Single Adult Households and Women-maintained Families

A gender perspective shows that the urbanization process is being accompanied by an increasing diversity of household types, with single adult households and women-maintained families emerging as an important and growing household form. Single adult household are invariably headed by women. A growing phenomenon is an increase in the number of women maintained families. In these households the combined income of women family members either exceeds that of men. Or is more secure than the wages received by men in casual or irregular employment. However, in these households income is low. They are disproportionately affected by unsatisfactory housing, poor urban design, environmental degradation and the failure of local government, city official or the private sector to respond to their priorities in relation to infrastructure and services.

Women usually earn less than men but this is particularly likely if they are among the growing number of women-headed households both in the industrialized countries of the West and in the developing world. It is estimated that globally one third of households are now de facto women-headed, with the percentage often being higher in urban areas, Urban households headed or maintained by women are likely to be poorer than those headed by men. Women from these households engage in specific economic survival strategies to balance their responsibilities for income- generation and household reproduction and face special problems in relation to child rearing and when engaging in community activities.

Thus, urban policies need to understand and respond to the roles and responsibilities of both men and women, their different access to and control over resources and decision-

making, and their mutual and conflicting needs and interests, in part through disaggregating by gender categories currently used in an aggregate way- the “family, the household”, the community” and the urban poor.

Energy and Environment

Energy policy and practice have moved in the past two decades from a focus purely on technical, supply concerns, to embrace a broad range of new issues. The energy transition to more efficient fuels and technologies, development and sustainability issues, privatization and globalization, and, most influentially, rising concern over the relationships between energy and environment, have led to more focus on the role of energy consumers, social and economic factors in technology adoption, and impacts on people. Non-governmental organizations and stakeholders generally have become more accepted in energy policymaking with the rise of environmental consciousness and the global climate change negotiations. Now that people are more part of the energy equation, women are becoming more visible, too. It is felt that women have a role to play in Energy Management as well. They are the main consumers and often worst hit by the shortage. If women are consulted and educated there may be some improvement in the present situation.

Gender and Development

Gender paradigms have evolved from .women and development. (WID) in the 1970s, which focused on women in isolation (with limited success), to .gender and development. in the late 1980s, which seeks to understand the distinct culturally and socially defined roles and tasks that women and men assume both within the family and household system and in the community. This detailed analysis of distinctive (and differing) on-the-ground realities fits well with methodologies of demand analysis which also survey local conditions in order to establish energy needs.

Current gender perspectives mark a shift away from viewing women as passive recipients of science and technology and merely getting more women into the mainstream. Women are seen rather as active participants in the innovation process, through their knowledge of their distinct material reality and demonstrated innovative capacities. The incorporation of women is expected to shift the mainstream positively towards meeting needs of the poor, the South and women. In this sense, both new energy environment

paradigms and current gender perspectives adopt a transformational approach, challenging conventional means and ends of development.”

It is now widely accepted that incorporating gender perspective in development efforts is necessary for the successful implementation of development programs. The focus on gender rather than women makes it critical to look not only at the category ‘women’ but in women in relation to men. Genders concern the way in which relations between women and men are socially constructed. Men and women play different roles in society, with their gender differences shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economics and cultural determinants. The ultimate objective of incorporating a gender perspective in development programs is to promote the equality of women and men in society, and to empower women to become protagonists in their own development.

It is necessary to translate knowledge on the all- persuasive effects of gender into a new sector, urban waste management. As in other sectors, e.g. provision of water supply, housing improvement, the implications of gender must be “translated” in terms of actual operations of the specific sector.

Gender Interest: Earning Income

Women have several roles in the household, such as earning income and saving on expenditure, caring for members of the family and doing the domestic chores. In this regard, waste handling is an important source of income especially for the poorer women (Huysman.1994). In comparison to men, women are mainly engaged in activities requiring lower levels of education and skills (waste picking from dump sites; sorting and washing, rather than working at machines) and a more limited range of physical activity (collection, rather than transportation). They also earn less than men, being more vulnerable to exploitation by employers, contractors, and waste dealers and intermediaries. Further, women do not have the range of social- cum-business contacts over a wide area of the city that men often have, and which give access to personal credit and favorable market opportunities.

Waste Management and Women

Although women are widely active in waste picking and salvaging, micro-enterprises in the waste sector seem to be more often initiated, operated and managed by men, although there are examples of all-women's enterprises or cooperatives. Several forces are likely to be at work here. First, since waste handling offers significant income opportunities (in India most workers involved in waste management and recycling micro-enterprises earn at least double the monthly minimum wage) The field is subject to the prevailing forces of competition and of inequality in a society. Secondly, when the initiative is taken by a group of women, they tend to involve or employ other women. The same happens when e.g. groups are formed for the purpose of acquiring and managing micro-loans. The same applies to men's enterprises.

Culture barriers

When engaged as waste collection labourers, women are reliable workers. As income opportunities for illiterate women are scarce, they are prepared to overcome the barriers of distance (a 4 hour's walk to and from work at the neighbourhood designated for waste collection) or of culture (work in the male world of the harbour). In certain cases, women who see their general economic opportunities as being severely constrained may make a greater effort and a longer-term commitment to waste-related work, as compared to men, who will leave at the earliest opportunity to move to higher-status occupations.

Women as waste workers face a cultural bias in several ways. Both men and women waste workers face the disrespect and outright scorn of fellow-citizen, as handling untreated waste materials is considered demeaning. In addition, women who are cleaning public places, such as streets or bus stations, are often insulted or harassed. Working in remote sites like waste dumps or factory sites, they may be assaulted. And if women who earn their own income with garbage collection transfer their new-found self-confidence and financial autonomy into an attempt to assert themselves within the family, e.g. by claiming the right to spend their money as they see fit, they may find themselves the victims of domestic abuse or the focus of social conflict. Women may then have to learn (with the help of a supporting NGO) to become more "polite" in their assertiveness.

Such "translated" information may assist environment NGOs and development cooperation organisations to understand the social and gender implications of their environmental work, as well as to assist Gender and Development NGOs and scholars to apply their ideas to waste issue in urban communities. At present, there is a lack of

common understanding between the NGOs, local authorities and professionals in these two board fields, because the cross-cutting concerns of gender and waste management are only beginning to be elaborated, and few studies exist to-date on the interactions between them.

Employment Policies

Employment policies may have a negative effect on women. For example, in some cities women form the majority of workers in formal services to collect human excreta. At a certain point in the development of a city, it can come to be in the interest of overall urban waste management to integrate informal sector services into the formal sector through direct employment of waste labourers, or through subcontracting to small enterprises. But when a municipal payroll, some how 70% of these employees turn out to be men. Similar mechanisms may be operation when small enterprises obtain municipal sub-contracts in the waste sector. In that case, competition for employment in these enterprises may intensify, as they offer greater stability of income,

Therefore, any attempt to improve community urban services must logically take special care of consult women, who are almost certainly the ones most affected by changes or “improvement”. Taking household garbage to street corner dustbins may be easy, but it is not so easy when the distance between house and dustbin is too large. It is natural that children fall ill, the burden of caring for sick children who have been exposed to human fecal matter or vermin and disease in uncollected garbage falls disproportionately on the mothers, sisters, and grandmothers, of those children.

Environment Monitoring

The combination of her acknowledged role in community maintenance and her tendency to stay at home in the community while their men go out to work on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, makes a woman the logical choice for community environmental monitoring and environmental and health education. As the main socializer of her children, she is also a logical choice to serve as an agent of change in waste-related behavior. Given the opportunity and resources, women are effective as resident monitors

of environmental cleanness. They can do this by walking regular rounds in the immediate neighborhoods to check whether the waste collection services have done their work well and properly. Women, as immediate neighbours, may also encourage each other to maintain cleanliness around the house and in the street, or to pay for waste collection. They may begin to see this as a shared concern through participation in a program of dialogue-oriented environmental health education .

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Irrespective of the status of women outside of the household, within the home women are widely accepted as the care givers, food preparers, and maintainers of the domestic environment. In most societies, this role carries over to an accepted role for women in community maintenance, often focusing there as well on cleanliness, health, and order.

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fecal matter or vermin and disease in uncollected garbage falls disproportionately on the mothers, sisters, and grandmothers, of those children.

Public gatherings and committee meetings at the neighborhood, community, ward and city level are often the means of consulting the community about development priorities, and are increasingly a key ingredient in setting urban development agendas. In an era of increasing Commitment to pay for the services, here too, gender considerations are important, as women and men may differ in their priorities for new or improved services. Preferences for type of service, and willingness and ability to pay installation costs and operating fees.

Several elements are at play when a community is consulted about waste services. The first is that women and men are likely to have different interests regarding environmental improvement, based on the different use they make of the immediate environment. the second is the nature of the consultation process itself. This concerns, among other things, the composition of the committees that takes decisions, and the forms of representation between the lower level and the higher level committees, the ways in which the negotiation with the city is structured, and the time and setting of the meetings, which may define the environment as “men ‘s” space, an environment in which women are not comfortable or free to express their opinions.

The experience of most programs, as well as other development projects, would indicate that women are most active at neighborhood or street level committees, which are closest to their household management role. Participation of women can be seen at the higher levels of community, ward, or city-level meetings, sometimes even as leaders, it is much less frequent; the number of women decline as the distance from the community and the formality of the setting increase. This means that while women may feel free to express their opinions at the local level, these preferences and priorities may get lost in the negotiation process, and the actual projects may reflect women’s concerns imperfectly, if at all.

In one community based project initiated by the municipality, the “community” was given the opportunity to make a choice between two types of waste collection services, either a public garbage container at street corners where residents should bring their

garbage, at a low price; or waste collection from door-to-door at a higher price. The ‘community’ preferred the latter, but the composition of that ‘community voice’ was not considered. No information is available on the considerations leading up to this preference and whether they differed between different social groups. Considerations could have been; the distance between house and garbage container; which household member is responsible for taking out the garbage and which member of the household is able and willing to pay for the collection service.

In another community, where undrained storm water caused great problems the highest-level neighbourhood committee was given the choice between two type of drainage system, a sophisticated one, which would take 3 year before being operational; or a simple one, to be operational before the next rain season (4). The neighbourhood committees chose the sophisticated one, while the women, who were environmental problems immediately.

In one case it was even reported that women had in the past been members of the highest-level neighbourhood waste management committee, but had all stopped their participation at one time “because they were too busy with earning money for their children to waste time on meetings”. One wonders what the real reason behind such a move was. The role of women in waste management cannot be ignored and hence women must be the decision makers and also their opinions be sorted in evolving new methods of disposal.

Gender Equity in Urban Partnerships

Civic engagement in urban governance requires new forms of urban partnerships between users, designers and decision-makers. To achieve these, it is important to foster horizontal linkages between different organisations and actors involved in human settlements development: politicians, activists, advocacy groups, self-help organisations, professionals, employers, users and beneficiaries. It is also necessary to maintain vertical linkages between the various levels of political power - local, regional, national and federal - and ensure that the interests of both women and men are represented at each stage. Linkages and partnerships do not necessarily imply gender harmony and lack of conflict Civic engagement in urban governance requires new forms of urban partnerships

between users, designers and decision-makers. To achieve these, it is important to foster horizontal linkages between different organisations and actors involved in human settlements development: politicians, activists, advocacy groups, self-help organisations, professionals, employers, users and beneficiaries. It is also necessary to maintain vertical linkages between the various levels of political power - local, regional, national and federal - and ensure that the interests of both women and men are represented at each stage. Linkages and partnerships do not necessarily imply gender harmony and lack of conflict as different interest-based groups will defend their interests both within and between organisations. But it does imply keeping the channels of communication open and an inclusive rather than exclusive approach to urban partnerships.

Partnerships should ideally be built on shared interests, reciprocal support and mutual benefit, with each partner contributing according to their respective resources, strengths and areas of expertise. Reciprocity is built on valuing and legitimising the specific resources of the partners, whether these are material resources, managerial coordination, local information, professional expertise, entrepreneurship or the enthusiasm and energy of residents. Clearly there is a need to recognise the interests, contributions and reciprocal potential of women as well as men. An increasingly common approach to democratising and fostering the concept and process of gender-sensitive partnership, is to consider women as equal stakeholders, with specific interests and needs. While this can be useful, a potential danger is to characterise women en masse as a single group of stakeholders. In reality, they constitute as diverse a group as men involved in urban partnerships. There are both women and men among different participant or partner groups. Women are as likely as men to have opposing as well as complementary interests and concerns. Thus if women are singled out as one, singular group, specific gender issues get ignored.

Furthermore, the stakeholder approach might identify actors, but does not necessarily address the processes and practices by which partnerships are established. Urban partnerships are potentially the vehicle through which bottom-up efforts can intersect or dovetail with top-down approaches. It is vital not only that women participate, but that the partnership process recognises specific concerns of women who have to balance multiple responsibilities that are not always compatible with existing procedures and who are therefore less able to participate with equal experience and skill in male-dominated forums.

Gender-sensitive urban partnerships must recognise the different approaches that women and men often adopt in organisation, negotiation and planning as a result of their socialisation and experience of public life. In addition to having specific interests and concerns, women have particular approaches towards managing their environments. One example is that women tend to establish informal neighbourhood networks through their daily living patterns. This is not because women have some "natural" or intrinsic affinity with the local environment but because they confront their neighbourhoods on a daily basis in the course of the activities they undertake within the existing gender division of labour. These networks can be utilised most effectively towards improved urban planning and decision-making processes.

Conclusion

The city, as both site and symbol of the rapid pace of social change in many societies, has come to represent a critical problematique in development discourse and practice. The tensions between economic growth, social equity and political legitimacy are manifest in cities around the world. These tensions must find some resolution if urban development is to be not only sustainable but humane. Good governance is a concept around which discussion of such tensions may coalesce and this paper has argued that good governance, with its emphasis on civic engagement and participation, can only be properly understood with reference to prevailing construction of gender. In delineating strategies by which such understanding may be generated, and urban governance become more gender-sensitive, the paper calls for new partnerships between planners and people, the state and civil society but, above all, between women and men.

Women and men are not just worker or homemakers but have a range of social roles in the household, market and community. If the concept of gender helps to uncover the constructed, and thus mutable, nature of these social roles, it also directs attention to the interaction between the organization of work and other social relationships. The consequence of this interaction for many women is a burden of multiple responsibilities for both social reproduction and economic production, many of which are unremunerated and thus invisible in national accounts and other data used for planning purposes.

Despite this, women often play an important role in urban development, particularly at the neighbourhood level. In some contexts this being recognized by urban policy makers and professionals and women's participation is sought in public-private partnerships which embrace community participation, urban regeneration or the problems of distressed or conflict-ridden areas. This is often for reasons of project effectiveness, although there is also a genuine and growing appreciation of the value and achievements of women, particularly in local development.

However, women's multiple responsibilities continue to constrain them from full engagement in the processes and institutions of urban governance. Recognising that these responsibilities are a consequence of the interaction between the organization of work and other social roles implies recognizing the interdependence of women and men in efforts to account for and redefine this interaction. Thus, gender-sensitive urban development cannot be the responsibility of women in public office and women planners alone. On the contrary, the development of gender planning competence on the part of all urban professionals is vital. This includes conducting an analysis of the issues and problems with a gender perspective. It also includes understanding the capacities and vulnerabilities of various participants and the strengths and weakness of the different partners involved. It ensure consultation with a diverse range of people, even if that means employing special consultative, participative and planning techniques and making additional time to reach certain categories of people. These might be women who are "invisible" to gender-blind planners or children who cannot easily make themselves heard in decision-making for a. policy and planning with a gender or diversity perspective does not come "naturally" to professionals, whether women or men. Decision-makers in local government, public office and planning bodies need to be encouraged to provide training for career and skills development along these lines and to institute operational procedures and an organizational culture which fosters gender-sensitive practice and inclusive partnerships.

Engendering the practice of urban governance directs attention to broader questions of diversity and civic engagement. Women are not the only group to be marginalized from planning and policy-making processes if civic engagement is to harness the full complement of human energy and creativity, then cities need to be inclusive and to welcome social diversity. This means seeing people not just as workers, but also in other

roles, for example as users, clients, pleasure-seekers and participants. While planners compartmentalize different spheres of activity, people do not. Integrated and multi-sectoral approaches to urban development present opportunities for planners to respond to the complexities of people's lives, and to recognize difference and diversity. They are also an opportunity to involve both women and men in the control of their everyday lives and thus go far to not only improve gender equality but also develop more effective urban development practice.

The different roles and responsibilities of women and men are closely linked to environmental change. This is true both for how women and men affect the environment through their economic and household activities and how the resulting environmental changes affect people's well-being. Understanding these gender differences is an essential part of developing policies aimed at both better environmental outcomes and improved health and well-being. Experience and research suggest a number of actions policymakers and planners can take to improve the integration of gender concerns into environmental planning:

- 1_ Improve data collection on women's and men's resource use, knowledge of, access to and control over resources, and opportunities to be involved in decision making._
- 2 Train staff and management on the relevance of gender issues to environmental outcomes._
- 3 Establish procedures for incorporating a gender perspective in planning, monitoring, and evaluating environmental projects.
- 4_ Ensure opportunities for women to participation decisions about environmental policies and programs at all levels, including roles as designers ,planners, implementers, and evaluators.
- 5_ Foster commitment at all levels—local, national ,and international—that the integration of gender concerns into policies and programs leads to more equitable and sustainable development.
- 6 Continued commitment and increased capacity at all levels of society are essential for achieving. these goals

The study of Agra is as follows

Agra , is a city of three world heritage sites but it has no INFRASTRUCTURE . The main body is the AGRA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY , and this looks into the Housing and Transport needs of the city . Another important bodies are the NAGER MAHAPALIKA , JAL NIGAM,HEALTH DEPARTMENT , FOREST and ELECTRICITY. The data shows that these are responsible for the general ENVIRONMENT GOVERNANCE of the city . A survey shows that the main areas of the city through which the tourist travels are a nightmare . The following observations are made

- 1 There are large garbage dumps in the city at all points
- 2 There are no public facilities
- 3 there are no Green areas in the city
- 4 The river front is a huge waste disposal site
- 5 There is no proper transport system
- 6 The traffic is chaotic and no regulations are followed whatsoever
- 7 The power supply is far from normal
- 8 The water is not fit for drinking
- 9 The housing colonies are also not planned

There are no special considerations for women in any zone of the city and also the women and children are sort targets for illness, crime and several other problems. In all the areas the women need to come forward and organize strong groups and NGOS to make their [problems as major agenda points in meetings . To ensure this there is a need for women participation in all majpr offices and institutions At present there is no representative in any major decision making body . This further confirms the fact that a gender dimension must be added to the planning.

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