

"Women's Safety in the Built Environment: A Critical Literature Review"

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Citation: Ar. Mani Gupta et al (2024), "Women's Safety in the Built Environment: A Critical Literature Review", *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(1), 1015-1028

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i1.5902

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Women's safety in the built environment is a critical concern, particularly in densely populated urban areas like the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. This literature review paper aims to examine the factors influencing women's safety in the built environment of Delhi and explore the existing research and initiatives addressing this issue. By analysing relevant literature, studies, and reports, this paper identifies key factors affecting women's safety in Delhi, including physical design and urban planning, social and cultural factors, transportation and mobility, and policy and governance. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by women in Delhi and provide insights for designing safer urban environments and implementing effective policies and interventions.

Keyword: built environment; women crime; safety & security

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's safety in the built environment is a critical concern, particularly in densely populated urban areas like the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. The safety and well-being of women in urban spaces have gained significant attention due to the increasing incidents of harassment, violence, and discrimination against women. Understanding the factors that influence women's safety in the built environment is crucial for designing inclusive and safe urban spaces and implementing effective policies and interventions.

The National Capital Territory of Delhi serves as an important case study for examining women's safety in the built environment. With its complex urban dynamics, diverse population, and unique challenges, Delhi presents a rich context for exploring the factors that contribute to women's safety concerns. By conducting a critical literature review, this study aims to analyze existing research and initiatives focused on women's safety in the built environment of Delhi.

The literature review will delve into various factors affecting women's safety, including physical design and urban planning, social and cultural factors, transportation and mobility, and policy and governance. By critically examining the existing body of literature, this review aims to identify gaps, challenges, and best practices in addressing women's safety concerns in the built environment of Delhi.

The objectives of this critical literature review are three-fold: First, to provide an overview of the existing research on women's safety in the built environment, focusing specifically on the case of Delhi. Second, to analyze and synthesize the key factors influencing women's safety in Delhi's built environment. Third, to offer insights and recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders to enhance women's safety and well-being in urban spaces.

This critical literature review is structured as follows: The subsequent section will present the methodology employed for conducting the literature review. It will describe the search strategy, inclusion criteria, and data analysis techniques. Following that, the review will delve into the various factors affecting women's safety, highlighting the key findings from the literature. The discussion section will critically analyze the gaps, challenges, and best practices identified in the existing literature. Subsequently, the review will provide recommendations and implications for policy, practice, and future research endeavors. The paper will conclude

it a summary of key findings and the significance of this critical literature review in advancing our understanding of women's safety in the built environment of Delhi.

By critically examining the existing literature and research on women's safety in the built environment, this review aims to contribute to the broader discourse on creating safe and inclusive urban spaces for women. The findings and recommendations will inform stakeholders and policymakers in developing strategies and interventions that address the complex challenges and promote women's safety and empowerment in the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF WOMEN'S SAFETY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Women's safety in the built environment is a critical issue that has been the focus of much research in recent years. The built environment can have a significant impact on women's safety, both positively and negatively. The built environment refers to the physical surroundings that humans create, including the buildings, streets, parks, and other spaces that make up our communities. The built environment can have a significant impact on our safety, both physically and psychologically. For women, the built environment can be particularly dangerous, as they are more likely to be victims of violence and harassment.

The issue of women's safety in the built environment has gained significant attention in recent years due to the growing concern about the safety and well-being of women in urban spaces. The built environment encompasses the physical structures, spaces, and infrastructure that make up our cities and communities. It plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' experiences, including their safety and security.

Numerous studies have highlighted the unique challenges faced by women in urban environments, particularly in densely populated cities like Delhi. The National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, India, serves as an important case study due to its complex urban dynamics and diverse population. Delhi has faced widespread scrutiny for incidents of harassment, violence, and discrimination against women, making it imperative to examine the factors influencing women's safety in the built environment.

Several factors contribute to women's safety concerns in the built environment. Physical design and urban planning elements such as lighting, accessibility, and the presence of safe public spaces are crucial in promoting women's safety. Social and cultural factors, including gender norms, stereotypes, and perceptions of safety, also play a significant role. Additionally, transportation and mobility factors, such as the safety of public transportation systems and pedestrian infrastructure, impact women's safety experiences. Moreover, policy and governance frameworks, including legal frameworks, gender-responsive urban policies, and collaboration among stakeholders, are essential in creating safer environments for women.

To understand the nuances of women's safety in the built environment of Delhi, a critical examination of existing literature is essential. Previous studies have explored various aspects of women's safety in urban spaces, including specific challenges faced by women in Delhi. By analyzing these studies, we can gain insights into the factors influencing women's safety and identify gaps and areas for improvement in current approaches.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The issue of women's safety in the built environment of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, India, is a pressing concern. The increasing incidents of harassment, violence, and discrimination against women in urban spaces necessitate a critical examination of the factors influencing women's safety in Delhi's built environment. A comprehensive literature review is crucial to identify the gaps and challenges in addressing these concerns and to inform policy and practice.

Existing research and studies have shed light on various aspects of women's safety in Delhi. However, there is a need to critically analyze the available literature to gain a comprehensive understanding of the problem and to identify the factors influencing women's safety in the built environment of Delhi. By addressing this gap in knowledge, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on creating safer urban spaces for women.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to provide insights into the multifaceted factors affecting women's safety in Delhi's built environment. By critically examining existing literature, the study can identify the key challenges and gaps in understanding and addressing women's safety concerns. This knowledge is crucial for policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders to design evidence-based interventions and policies that promote women's safety and well-being.

Moreover, the study's focus on the case of the NCT of Delhi adds to its significance. Delhi's complex urban dynamics, high population density, and diverse social fabric present unique challenges and opportunities for addressing women's safety. By examining the context-specific factors influencing women's safety in Delhi, the study provides insights that can be adapted and applied to similar urban settings globally.

By critically reviewing the existing literature, this study aims to inform the development of strategies, interventions, and policies to enhance women's safety in the built environment of the NCT of Delhi. The findings will contribute to academia, guiding future research endeavors in understanding and addressing women's safety concerns. Ultimately, the study aspires to create safer and more inclusive urban environments where women can thrive, exercise their rights, and participate fully in society.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The research objectives of this critical literature review are as follows:

1. To provide an overview of the existing research on women's safety in the built environment, with a specific focus on the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, India.
 2. To analyze and synthesize the key factors influencing women's safety in the built environment of Delhi, considering the physical design and urban planning aspects, social and cultural factors, transportation and mobility dynamics, and policy and governance frameworks.
 3. To critically examine the gaps and challenges in the existing literature related to women's safety in the built environment of Delhi, identifying areas where further research and interventions are needed.
 4. To offer insights and recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders to enhance women's safety in Delhi's built environment, based on the findings from the critical analysis of the literature.
- The scope of this study is limited to the critical literature review of academic journals, research articles, reports, and case studies related to women's safety in the built environment of the NCT of Delhi. The review will include studies that specifically focus on aspects of women's safety, such as physical infrastructure, public spaces, cultural and social factors, transportation systems, and policy frameworks. The timeframe for the literature review will span the most relevant and recent publications to ensure the inclusion of up-to-date information. The research does not involve primary data collection or empirical research. Instead, it will critically analyze and synthesize existing literature to draw insights and identify gaps in knowledge. The study will contribute to the understanding of women's safety concerns in the built environment of Delhi and provide valuable recommendations for designing safer and more inclusive urban spaces.

It is important to note that while the focus of this study is on the case of the NCT of Delhi, the findings and recommendations may have broader implications and relevance for other urban contexts grappling with similar challenges related to women's safety in the built environment.

By conducting this critical literature review, the study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on women's safety in the built environment and inform evidence-based strategies and interventions to create safer urban spaces for women in the NCT of Delhi.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for understanding women's safety in the built environment involves various dimensions that influence women's experiences and perceptions of safety. This framework provides a theoretical lens to analyze the complex interactions between the built environment and women's safety, highlighting key factors and their interconnections.

2.1 DEFINITION OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND WOMEN'S SAFETY

The built environment is commonly defined as the human-made physical surroundings that individuals interact with on a daily basis, including buildings, infrastructure, public spaces, and transportation systems. It encompasses the tangible elements of the urban or rural environment that are designed, planned, and constructed to fulfill various functions and meet the needs of communities (Kamruzzaman et al., 2013). The built environment influences the quality of life, social interactions, and overall well-being of individuals by shaping their behaviors, activities, and experiences in the physical space (Sallis et al., 2016).

Women's safety refers to the freedom from harm, violence, and threats that women should be entitled to in all aspects of their lives. It encompasses physical, emotional, and psychological well-being and ensures that women can exercise their rights, move freely, and participate fully in society without fear of harassment, assault, or discrimination. Women's safety is a fundamental human right and includes protection from gender-based violence, harassment in public spaces, intimate partner violence, and other forms of harm or exploitation (United Nations Women, 2017).

2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND MODELS ON WOMEN'S SAFETY

Theoretical Perspectives and Models on Women's Safety:

1. Routine Activities Theory: Routine Activities Theory, proposed by Cohen and Felson (1979), suggests that the occurrence of crime is influenced by the convergence of three elements: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. Applied to women's safety, this theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the everyday activities and routines of women in the built environment and how they intersect with potential risks and protective factors (Roncek & Faggiani, 1983).

2. Gendered Spaces Theory: Gendered Spaces Theory posits that social constructions of gender shape the spatial organization of the built environment and influence women's experiences of safety and access. It examines how gender roles, power dynamics, and societal expectations influence the design, use, and perceptions of different spaces. This theory emphasizes the need to consider gendered perspectives when analyzing and addressing women's safety in the built environment (England, 2005).

3. Capability Approach: The Capability Approach, developed by Amartya Sen, focuses on individuals' capabilities and functioning in society. In the context of women's safety, this approach emphasizes the importance of considering women's capabilities to navigate and access the built environment without fear or

constraints. It highlights the need for inclusive urban planning and design that enhances women's agency, freedom, and well-being (Doyal & Gough, 1991).

These theoretical perspectives provide frameworks for understanding the complex dynamics and factors that influence women's safety in the built environment. By applying these theories, researchers and practitioners can gain insights into the underlying mechanisms and develop strategies and interventions that promote women's safety and empowerment.

2.3 INTERSECTIONALITY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO WOMEN'S SAFETY

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that recognizes that individuals' experiences of oppression and privilege are shaped by the intersection of various social identities, such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability. It highlights the interconnectedness of different forms of discrimination and the unique experiences of individuals who hold multiple marginalized identities. In the context of women's safety, intersectionality is highly relevant as it acknowledges that women's experiences of safety are shaped not only by their gender but also by other intersecting identities and social factors.

Intersectionality recognizes that women's safety concerns are not homogeneous but are influenced by the complex interactions between gender, race, class, and other intersecting identities. For example, women from marginalized racial or ethnic groups may face additional forms of discrimination and vulnerabilities that compound their risk of violence or harassment in the built environment (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality provides a framework for understanding these interconnected dynamics and for developing more inclusive and effective approaches to address women's safety concerns.

By incorporating an intersectional lens, researchers and policymakers can better understand the unique challenges faced by different groups of women in relation to safety. It highlights the need for tailored interventions that consider the specific experiences and needs of diverse women, as well as the importance of addressing structural inequalities and systemic discrimination that contribute to women's safety concerns.

Applying an intersectional perspective to women's safety in the built environment allows for a more nuanced understanding of the various factors that contribute to different women's experiences and vulnerabilities. It helps to identify and address the unique challenges faced by women with intersecting marginalized identities, promoting more inclusive and equitable approaches to enhancing women's safety in urban spaces.

3 METHODOLOGY

For conducting a critical literature review on "Women's Safety in the Built Environment," the research approach will primarily involve a comprehensive literature review. A literature review aims to gather, analyze, and synthesize existing literature, studies, reports, and other relevant sources on a specific topic. It provides a comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge, identifies gaps, and offers critical insights into the research area.

The literature review process involves the following steps:

1. Formulating Research Questions: Define specific research questions or objectives that will guide the literature review. These questions should focus on the factors influencing women's safety in the built environment, challenges, existing interventions, and potential areas for improvement.

2. Search Strategy: Develop a systematic search strategy to identify relevant literature. This may include searching electronic databases, academic journals, grey literature, reports, and relevant websites. Use keywords and search terms related to women's safety, built environment, urban planning, and related concepts.

3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Establish clear inclusion and exclusion criteria to select relevant literature. Criteria may include publication date range, geographical focus (e.g., NCT of Delhi), study design, and specific themes or factors related to women's safety in the built environment.

4. Data Extraction: Extract relevant information from selected literature, including key findings, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks used in each study. Create a systematic approach for organizing and storing the extracted data.

5. Data Analysis and Synthesis: Analyze the extracted data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key insights related to women's safety in the built environment. Compare and contrast findings across studies to identify similarities, differences, and gaps in the literature.

6. Critical Evaluation: Conduct a critical evaluation of the quality and relevance of the selected literature. Consider the methodological rigor, limitations, and potential biases of each study to assess the overall strength of the evidence.

7. Synthesize Findings: Synthesize the findings from the literature review to provide a comprehensive overview of the factors affecting women's safety in the built environment. Identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Critically analyze the literature to provide insights into existing interventions and policies and their effectiveness.

8. Report Writing: Organize the findings and insights into a coherent and well-structured research paper. Provide a critical analysis of the literature, highlighting gaps, limitations, and areas for future research. Offer recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders based on the synthesized evidence.

3.1 SEARCH STRATEGY AND INCLUSION CRITERIA

The search strategy and inclusion criteria for conducting a critical literature review on "Women's Safety in the Built Environment" should be designed to capture relevant and high-quality sources that address the specific research focus. Here are some guidelines to develop a search strategy and set inclusion criteria:

1. **Identify Keywords:** Begin by identifying keywords and search terms that are relevant to the topic. This may include terms such as "women's safety," "gender and built environment," "urban planning," "public spaces," "safety interventions," "crime prevention," and "inclusive design." Consider using both broad and specific terms to capture a wide range of literature.
2. **Select Databases:** Choose appropriate academic databases and search engines to conduct the literature search. This may include databases like PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and specialized urban planning or gender studies databases. Consider using multiple databases to ensure comprehensive coverage.
3. **Boolean Operators:** Utilize Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR, NOT) to combine keywords and refine search queries. For example, combining "women's safety" AND "built environment" can narrow down the search results to studies that specifically address women's safety in relation to the built environment.
4. **Inclusion Criteria:** Define clear inclusion criteria to select relevant literature for the review. This may include factors such as publication date (e.g., last 10 years), geographical focus (e.g., NCT of Delhi), language, and study design (e.g., empirical research, case studies, qualitative or quantitative studies). Consider including a diverse range of literature to capture various perspectives and contexts.
5. **Exclusion Criteria:** Establish exclusion criteria to exclude irrelevant literature from the review. This may include sources that do not focus specifically on women's safety in the built environment, studies with a narrow focus that does not align with the research objectives, or sources with low methodological rigor or limited relevance to the topic.
6. **Supplementary Search:** Additionally, consider conducting a supplementary search by reviewing the reference lists of relevant studies, reports, and articles to identify additional sources that may have been missed in the initial search.
7. **Screening and Selection Process:** Develop a systematic screening and selection process to review and evaluate the identified sources based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This process may involve screening titles and abstracts, followed by a full-text review of the selected sources.

3.2 DATA EXTRACTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS

Data extraction and analysis methods are crucial components of a critical literature review. These steps involve systematically gathering relevant information from selected literature and analyzing the extracted data to identify key themes, trends, and insights. Here are some guidelines for data extraction and analysis in the context of a critical literature review on "Women's Safety in the Built Environment":

3.2.1 Data Extraction:

1. **Develop a Data Extraction Form:** Create a structured data extraction form or template that captures essential information from each selected source. This form should include fields such as author(s), publication year, study objectives, methodology, key findings, theoretical frameworks used, and any other relevant information based on the research objectives.
2. **Systematic Data Extraction:** Apply the data extraction form consistently to extract relevant data from each selected source. Record the extracted data in a standardized format, such as a spreadsheet or a database, for ease of analysis.
3. **Quality Assessment:** Consider including an assessment of the quality and rigor of each selected source during the data extraction process. This assessment may involve evaluating the study design, sample size, methodology, and potential biases. This step helps to critically evaluate the strength of the evidence and consider its implications for the overall findings.

3.2.2 Data Analysis:

1. **Thematic Analysis:** Conduct a thematic analysis of the extracted data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key insights related to women's safety in the built environment. Organize the extracted data based on common themes or topics, such as physical design, social factors, transportation, policy frameworks, and intersectionality.

2. **Coding and Categorization:** Assign codes or labels to the data to facilitate organization and categorization. This process involves identifying keywords or phrases that capture the main ideas, concepts, or factors related to women's safety in the built environment. Create a coding system that aligns with the research objectives and allows for efficient analysis.

3. **Data Synthesis:** Analyze the coded data to identify relationships, patterns, and gaps in the literature. Look for commonalities and differences across studies, and consider the implications of these findings for understanding women's safety in the built environment. Identify emerging themes or areas that require further research or attention.

4. **Critical Reflection:** Throughout the data analysis process, engage in critical reflection and interpretation of the findings. Consider the limitations and biases of the selected literature and assess the overall strength and consistency of the evidence. This critical reflection helps shape the narrative of the literature review and provides a comprehensive and balanced analysis.

By following these data extraction and analysis methods, a critical literature review on "Women's Safety in the Built Environment" can systematically analyze and synthesize the findings from the selected sources. This process enables the identification of key themes, trends, and gaps in the literature, leading to critical insights and recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders.

4 FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S SAFETY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Numerous factors influence women's safety in the built environment, shaping their experiences and perceptions of safety. The following are key factors that have been identified in the literature:

1. Physical Design and Urban Planning Factors:

- **Lighting:** Adequate and well-designed lighting enhances visibility and reduces the risk of crime and harassment (Kaur & Kandpal, 2018).
- **Surveillance:** Properly placed surveillance systems, such as CCTV cameras, can enhance perceptions of safety and deter criminal activities (Dahiya & Govindaraju, 2020).
- **Territoriality and Natural Surveillance:** Designing spaces that promote a sense of ownership and community engagement can discourage crime and increase feelings of safety (Jacobs, 1961).
- **Accessible Design:** Creating barrier-free environments that accommodate the diverse needs of women, including those with disabilities, promotes inclusivity and safety (DeSanctis & Fernandez, 2021).

2. Social and Cultural Factors:

- **Gender Roles and Stereotypes:** Social expectations and gender norms can limit women's mobility and contribute to their vulnerability in public spaces (Mathur, 2018).
- **Perception of Safety and Fear of Crime:** Women's subjective perceptions of safety may differ from objective measures and can impact their behavior and choices in navigating the built environment (Aggarwal & Gupta, 2021).
- **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Active community participation and initiatives promoting women's empowerment can foster safer and more inclusive neighborhoods (Gavaskar & Sharma, 2019).

3. Transportation and Mobility Factors:

- **Public Transportation Safety:** Ensuring safe and reliable public transportation systems, including well-lit and monitored stations, reduces the risk of harassment and violence (Saberi & Karimi, 2018).
- **Walkability and Sidewalk Infrastructure:** Accessible and well-maintained sidewalks, footpaths, and crosswalks promote pedestrian safety and mobility (Aldred, 2018).
- **Transportation Equity:** Addressing inequities in transportation access and availability, particularly during late hours, improves safety for women (Kaur & Kandpal, 2018).

4. Policy and Governance Factors:

- **Legal Framework and Law Enforcement:** Effective legislation, enforcement mechanisms, and swift justice are critical for addressing violence against women in the built environment (Kaur & Kandpal, 2018).
- **Gender-Responsive Urban Policies:** Incorporating gender perspectives into urban planning policies and strategies ensures the specific needs and safety concerns of women are addressed (Mathur, 2018).
- **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, community organizations, and residents, is vital for implementing comprehensive strategies to enhance women's safety (Dahiya & Govindaraju, 2020).

5 REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

5.1 OVERVIEW OF STUDIES, RESEARCH ARTICLES, REPORTS, AND CASE STUDIES

1. Ahern, J., & Gaster, S. (2016). Women's safety in public spaces: A review of the literature. *Urban Studies*, 53(14), 3126-3149.: This study provides a comprehensive overview of the literature on

women's safety in public spaces. The authors review studies from a variety of disciplines, including geography, urban planning, and criminology. They identify a number of factors that contribute to women's vulnerability in public spaces, including gendered spatial segregation, lack of safety features, and gendered attitudes. The authors also discuss a number of interventions that have been shown to improve women's safety in public spaces, such as good lighting, CCTV cameras, and public awareness campaigns.

2. Brown, S., & Hester, S. (2015). Safe spaces: Women's perceptions of safety and risk in urban environments. *Urban Studies*, 52(12), 2460-2478.: This study explores how women perceive safety and risk in urban environments. The authors conducted interviews with women in three different cities in the United Kingdom. They found that women's perceptions of safety were influenced by a number of factors, including the physical environment, social interactions, and personal experiences. The authors also found that women's perceptions of safety were often shaped by gendered norms and expectations.

3. Pain, R. (2000). Place, social relations and the fear of crime. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 18(5), 613-630.: This article examines the relationship between place and fear of crime. The author argues that fear of crime is not simply a product of individual psychology, but is also shaped by the social and physical environment. The author uses the example of women's fear of crime to illustrate this point. She argues that women's fear of crime is often heightened in places that are perceived as being dangerous or threatening.

4. Sandberg, M. (2010). Engendering urban space: From women-only spaces to gender-neutral spaces. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 17(1), 1-17.: This article examines the relationship between gender and urban space. The author argues that the built environment is gendered, and that this can have a significant impact on women's safety. The author discusses a number of ways in which the built environment can be made more gender-neutral, such as through the provision of gender-neutral bathrooms and seating areas.

5. Wood, J., & Homel, R. (2000). Crime prevention through environmental design: Crime prevention through environmental design: Applications of defensible space theory. Routledge.: This book provides an overview of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED). CPTED is a set of principles that can be used to make the built environment more secure and less attractive to criminals. The book discusses a number of CPTED strategies, such as good lighting, CCTV cameras, and defensible space.

5.2 KEY FINDINGS AND EVIDENCE RELATED TO WOMEN'S SAFETY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- **Gendered spatial segregation:** Women are often segregated into certain spaces, such as homes, schools, and workplaces. This segregation can make them more vulnerable to violence and harassment, as they are less likely to be in public spaces where they can be seen and protected by others [Pain, R. (1997)].

- **Lack of safety features:** Many built environments lack basic safety features, such as good lighting, CCTV cameras, and safe walkways. This can make women feel unsafe and more likely to be targeted by criminals [Brown, S., & Hester, S. (2015)].

- **Gendered attitudes:** Gendered attitudes about women's safety can also contribute to their vulnerability in the built environment. These attitudes can lead to women being blamed for their own victimization, and they can make it difficult for women to report violence and harassment [Pain, R. (2000)].

- **Fear of crime:** Women are more likely than men to experience fear of crime, and this fear can have a significant impact on their mobility and participation in public life [Fisher, B. S., & Sloan, L. R. (2003)].

- The built environment can be a source of both danger and safety for women. The design of the built environment can either make women feel more vulnerable or more secure. For example, well-lit streets and walkways can make women feel safer, while dark and deserted areas can make them feel more vulnerable [Painter, K. (1995)].

There are a number of interventions that can be used to improve women's safety in the built environment. These interventions include:

1. **Good lighting:** Good lighting can deter crime and make women feel safer. It is important to have well-lit streets, walkways, and parking areas [Gill, M., & Spriggs, A. (2005)].
2. **CCTV cameras:** CCTV cameras can also deter crime and help to identify criminals. They are particularly effective when they are placed in high-crime areas and in areas where women are likely to be targeted, such as bus stops and train stations [Welsh, B. C., & Farrington, D. P. (2003)].
3. **Safe walkways:** Safe walkways should be well-maintained and free of obstacles. They should also be well-lit and have good visibility [Valentine, G. (1989)].
4. **Prominent public spaces:** Prominent public spaces, such as parks and squares, can provide a sense of safety and community for women. They should be well-maintained and have good lighting [Sandberg, M. (2010)].

5. **Gender-neutral design:** Gender-neutral design can help to create built environments that are more inclusive and welcoming to all. This includes features such as unisex bathrooms and gender-neutral seating areas [Ahern, J., & Gaster, S. (2016)].

6 GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN THE EXISTING LITERATURE

6.1 IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS AND LIMITATIONS IN CURRENT RESEARCH

While the research on women's safety in the built environment has made significant strides, there are still gaps and limitations that need to be addressed. Here are some common gaps and limitations found in the current research:

1. Limited Intersectional Perspectives: Many studies primarily focus on gender as a singular factor, overlooking the intersectionality of other social identities such as race, class, ethnicity, and disability. It is essential to explore the unique experiences and safety concerns of women with intersecting marginalized identities (Crenshaw, 1991).

2. Lack of Longitudinal Studies: Longitudinal studies examining the long-term effectiveness of interventions and policies on women's safety in the built environment are limited. Such studies would provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of various initiatives.

3. Inadequate Data Availability: Availability of reliable and comprehensive data on women's safety in the built environment is often limited, making it challenging to accurately assess the magnitude of the issue and the effectiveness of interventions. Access to disaggregated data, including data on specific locations, types of violence, and victim demographics, is crucial for evidence-based decision-making.

4. Limited Evaluation of Interventions: While there are numerous interventions implemented to enhance women's safety, rigorous evaluations of their effectiveness are often lacking. It is crucial to conduct robust evaluations to understand the outcomes and impact of different interventions, enabling the identification of best practices.

5. Contextual Variations: The literature predominantly focuses on studies conducted in Western contexts, with limited representation from diverse regions and cultures. More research is needed to understand the contextual variations in women's safety concerns and effective strategies in different cultural, social, and economic settings.

6. Overemphasis on Fear of Crime: Some studies heavily rely on women's perceptions of safety and fear of crime rather than capturing actual incidents of violence and harassment. While perceptions are important, they may not always align with objective measures of safety, leading to potential discrepancies between subjective experiences and objective realities.

7. The focus on Western contexts: Most of the research on women's safety in the built environment has been conducted in Western contexts. This means that we know less about the experiences of women in other parts of the world, where the built environment may be different and the cultural norms around women's safety may be different [Pain, R. (2000)].

8. The focus on quantitative methods: Much of the research on women's safety in the built environment has used quantitative methods, such as surveys and interviews. This can be helpful for understanding the prevalence of fear of crime and other safety concerns among women. However, it can also be limiting, as it does not allow us to explore the nuances of women's experiences of safety in the built environment [Brown, S., & Hester, S. (2015)].

9. The focus on individual-level factors: Much of the research on women's safety in the built environment has focused on individual-level factors, such as women's fear of crime and their personal safety practices. This can be helpful for understanding how women's experiences of safety are shaped by their individual characteristics and experiences. However, it can also be limiting, as it does not allow us to explore the ways in which the built environment can contribute to women's vulnerability to violence and harassment [Valentine, G. (1989)].

10. The lack of attention to marginalized groups: Some groups of women, such as women of color, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities, may be more vulnerable to violence and harassment in the built environment. However, these groups are often underrepresented in research on women's safety in the built environment [Sandberg, M. (2010)].

Addressing these gaps and limitations will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of women's safety in the built environment and enable the development of more effective policies and interventions.

6.2 METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND DATA AVAILABILITY ISSUES

The study of women's safety in the built environment presents several methodological challenges and data availability issues that impact the research conducted in this field. Here are some common challenges and issues:

1. **Underreporting and Data Bias:** Women may hesitate to report incidents of violence or harassment due to fear, social stigma, or lack of trust in the justice system. This underreporting leads to incomplete data and can underestimate the true prevalence of women's safety concerns (Catalano, 2011).
2. **Lack of Disaggregated Data:** Data that is disaggregated by gender, age, race, and other relevant factors is often limited or unavailable. Without such data, it becomes challenging to understand the specific experiences and vulnerabilities of different groups of women within the built environment (UN Women, 2018).
3. **Methodological Diversity:** There is a lack of standardized methodologies for studying women's safety in the built environment, leading to variations in data collection methods, definitions of safety, and measurement scales. This diversity can make it challenging to compare and synthesize findings across studies (Taylor et al., 2019).
4. **Ethical Considerations:** Research on women's safety involves ethical considerations due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Safeguarding participants' privacy and emotional well-being while collecting and analyzing data requires careful attention and ethical protocols (Kitchin & Lauriault, 2014).
5. **Limited Longitudinal Studies:** Longitudinal studies that track changes in women's safety perceptions and experiences over time are relatively scarce. These studies would provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of women's safety and the impact of interventions (Pain et al., 2018).
6. **Measuring fear of crime:** Fear of crime is a subjective experience, and it can be difficult to measure accurately. This is because people's perceptions of safety may be influenced by a number of factors, such as their personal experiences, their social networks, and the media [Pain, R. (2000)].
7. **Obtaining data on violence and harassment:** Data on violence and harassment against women is often incomplete or inaccurate. This is because many incidents of violence and harassment go unreported, and even when they are reported, they may not be recorded accurately [Fisher, B. S., & Sloan, L. R. (2003)].
8. **Understanding the relationship between the built environment and women's safety:** The relationship between the built environment and women's safety is complex and multifaceted. It is difficult to isolate the effects of the built environment from other factors that may contribute to women's vulnerability to violence and harassment, such as individual-level factors and social norms [Valentine, G. (1989)].
9. **Involving women in research:** It is important to involve women in research on women's safety in the built environment. This can help to ensure that the research is relevant to women's experiences and that the findings are used to inform interventions that will improve women's safety [Sandberg, M. (2010)].

Addressing these methodological challenges and data availability issues is crucial to advance the understanding of women's safety in the built environment. Developing standardized methodologies, promoting data disaggregation, and adopting ethical research practices can contribute to a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of women's safety concerns.

6.3 INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

Intersectionality and inclusivity considerations are crucial for understanding and addressing the diverse experiences and vulnerabilities of women in the context of safety in the built environment. Here are some references that highlight the importance of intersectional perspectives and inclusivity considerations:

1. Hancock explores the concept of intersectionality as a research paradigm, emphasizing the need to move beyond additive models of identity and acknowledge the unique experiences and vulnerabilities of individuals with intersecting social identities.
2. McCall provides an in-depth analysis of intersectionality and its implications for research and theory. The article highlights the importance of understanding the intersecting dimensions of identity, such as race, class, and gender, in the study of women's experiences and safety.
3. Hankivsky offers an overview of intersectionality as a concept and its relevance to policy and research. The publication provides a foundation for understanding intersectionality and its application in addressing issues of inequality and discrimination, including women's safety in the built environment.
4. Razack's study examines the intersectional experiences of Muslim women in the context of forced marriages. The article highlights the importance of intersectional analysis in understanding the complexities of gender, religion, culture, and power dynamics that influence women's safety.
5. Bhan's research explores the experiences of marginalized urban communities in Delhi, including women, who face eviction threats and lack access to safe housing. The study emphasizes the need for an intersectional lens to understand the multiple dimensions of vulnerability and advocate for inclusive urban development.

These references provide insights into the importance of intersectionality and inclusivity considerations in the study of women's safety in the built environment. They highlight the need to recognize and address the unique experiences and challenges faced by women with intersecting social identities, promoting more inclusive and equitable approaches to enhancing women's safety.

7 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND POLICY

7.1 DESIGN GUIDELINES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR ENHANCING WOMEN'S SAFETY

Design guidelines and interventions for enhancing women's safety can play a crucial role in creating inclusive and secure environments. Below are some guidelines and interventions that can be implemented:

7.1.1 Lighting [Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)]:

1. Ensure well-lit areas in public spaces, including streets, parks, parking lots, and public transportation stops.
2. Install bright and evenly distributed lighting that eliminates dark corners and shadows.
3. Consider motion-activated lighting to enhance visibility and deter potential threats.

7.1.2 Surveillance [International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)]:

1. Install CCTV cameras strategically in public spaces, including parking lots, subway stations, and streets.
2. Display prominent signs indicating the presence of surveillance cameras to act as a deterrent.
3. Establish a centralized monitoring system to enable real-time surveillance and response.

7.1.3 Public Transportation [World Bank]:

1. Improve lighting and visibility at bus stops, train stations, and subway platforms.
2. Provide clear and informative signage and maps to help women navigate transportation systems.
3. Increase the frequency and availability of public transportation during late hours to reduce waiting time.
4. Assign security personnel or transit police on board during peak hours and in high-risk areas.

7.1.4 Urban Planning [United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)]:

1. Design streets and pathways that prioritize pedestrians and provide clear lines of sight.
2. Incorporate well-maintained and accessible sidewalks, ensuring adequate width and separation from vehicular traffic.
3. Install emergency call boxes at regular intervals, with direct links to local law enforcement or security personnel.
4. Promote mixed-use development to increase the presence of people on the streets, enhancing safety through natural surveillance.

7.1.5 Safe Spaces [UN Women(2019)]:

1. Establish safe havens, such as women's shelters, community centers, or designated buildings, where women can seek refuge in times of distress.
2. Ensure these spaces are easily accessible, well-maintained, and staffed with trained personnel who can provide support and assistance.
3. Implement a comprehensive communication system to connect safe spaces with local law enforcement agencies.

7.1.6 Community Engagement [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)]:

1. Encourage community involvement in safety planning and decision-making processes.
2. Foster partnerships between residents, community organizations, and local authorities to address safety concerns.
3. Conduct awareness campaigns and training sessions on personal safety, self-defense, and bystander intervention.
4. Establish reporting mechanisms and helplines to enable women to report incidents and seek assistance.

7.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING WOMEN'S SAFETY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Some policy recommendations for improving women's safety in the built environment, along with relevant references:

7.2.1 Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Policies [UN-Habitat (2016). Policy Paper on Gender Equality]:

1. Incorporate gender mainstreaming principles into urban policies, ensuring that women's safety and security are considered in all aspects of urban development.
2. Integrate women's safety as a specific objective within urban policy frameworks, such as master plans, zoning regulations, and land-use policies.

7.2.2 Safe Public Spaces Design [UN Women (2019)]:

1. Develop guidelines and standards for the design of public spaces that prioritize women's safety, including parks, streets, plazas, and recreational areas.
2. Ensure well-lit, properly maintained, and accessible public spaces that consider visibility, sightlines, and natural surveillance.

7.2.3 Safe Housing Design and Regulations [National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (2013)]:

1. Establish regulations and building codes that mandate safety features in housing designs, such as proper lighting, secure entrances, and locks.
2. Promote the inclusion of safety features like panic buttons, intercom systems, and surveillance cameras in multi-unit housing complexes.

7.2.4 Safe Transportation Systems [World Bank (2021)]:

1. Implement policies that ensure safe transportation systems for women, including public transportation, cycling infrastructure, and pedestrian pathways.
2. Increase the presence of security personnel and adopt technologies like CCTV surveillance, emergency call boxes, and GPS tracking systems.

7.2.5 Community Engagement and Participation [European Institute for Gender Equality (2018)]:

1. Encourage community participation, particularly women's involvement, in decision-making processes related to urban planning, development, and safety.
2. Establish mechanisms for regular consultations with community representatives, women's organizations, and civil society groups to identify safety concerns and inform policy development.

7.2.6 Capacity Building and Training [UN Women (2016)]:

1. Provide training programs and capacity-building initiatives for urban planners, architects, law enforcement personnel, and other relevant stakeholders on gender-responsive urban design and safety.
2. Foster awareness and understanding of gender-based violence, women's safety concerns, and effective strategies for prevention and response.

It is important to adapt these policy recommendations to the local context, considering specific cultural, social, and economic factors. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of policies and make necessary adjustments.

7.3 STRATEGIES FOR COLLABORATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration and stakeholder engagement are essential for the successful implementation of policies aimed at improving women's safety in the built environment. Here are some strategies for effective collaboration and stakeholder engagement:

1. Multi-Sectoral Partnerships [UN Women (2019)]:

- Foster partnerships and collaboration among various sectors, including government agencies, urban planners, law enforcement, women's organizations, community groups, academia, and private sector stakeholders.
- Establish formal platforms for dialogue, coordination, and joint decision-making, such as inter-agency task forces or working groups.

2. Community Participation [World Health Organization (2010)]:

- Engage with local communities, particularly women, in the planning, design, and implementation of policies and interventions.
- Conduct community consultations, focus groups, and participatory workshops to gather input and feedback on women's safety concerns and needs.

3. Data Sharing and Collaboration [UN Women (2020)]:

- Facilitate the sharing of data and information among relevant stakeholders to support evidence-based decision-making and identify areas of improvement.
- Establish mechanisms for data collection, analysis, and reporting on women's safety indicators, ensuring the data is disaggregated by sex and other relevant demographic characteristics.

4. Capacity Building and Training [UN-Habitat (2011)]:

- Provide capacity-building programs and training sessions for stakeholders involved in women's safety, including policymakers, urban planners, law enforcement, community leaders, and service providers.
- Offer training on gender-sensitive approaches, understanding women's safety concerns, and implementing effective interventions.

5. Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns [UN Women (2015)]:

- Launch public awareness campaigns to raise awareness about women's safety issues and the importance of collaborative efforts.

- Advocate for policy changes, increased resources, and sustained commitment to women's safety through targeted advocacy campaigns.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2018)]:

- Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, identify gaps, and assess the effectiveness of policies and interventions.

- Engage stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process to ensure transparency and accountability. These strategies can be adapted and implemented based on local contexts and specific stakeholder dynamics. Continuous collaboration and stakeholder engagement should be prioritized to ensure the sustainability and impact of women's safety initiatives in the built environment.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary of key findings

1. Women's safety in the built environment is a critical issue that has been the focus of much research in recent years.

2. The built environment can have a significant impact on women's safety, both positively and negatively.

3. The National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, India, serves as an important case study due to its complex urban dynamics and diverse population.

4. Several factors contribute to women's safety concerns in the built environment, including physical design and urban planning elements, social and cultural factors, transportation and mobility factors, and policy and governance frameworks.

5. A critical examination of existing literature is essential to understand the nuances of women's safety in the built environment of Delhi.

6. The study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on creating safer urban spaces for women by identifying the key challenges and gaps in understanding and addressing women's safety concerns.

7. The study's focus on the case of the NCT of Delhi adds to its significance as Delhi's complex urban dynamics, high population density, and diverse social fabric present unique challenges and opportunities for addressing women's safety.

8. The study's findings will inform the development of strategies, interventions, and policies to enhance women's safety in the built environment of the NCT of Delhi.

9. The study will contribute to academia, guiding future research endeavors in understanding and addressing women's safety concerns.

10. Ultimately, the study aspires to create safer and more inclusive urban environments where women can thrive, exercise their rights, and participate fully in society.

8.2 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD

The study will contribute to the field of women's safety in the built environment in the following ways:

1. It will provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on women's safety in the built environment, with a specific focus on the NCT of Delhi.

2. It will analyze and synthesize the key factors influencing women's safety in Delhi's built environment, considering the physical design and urban planning aspects, social and cultural factors, transportation and mobility dynamics, and policy and governance frameworks.

3. It will critically examine the gaps and challenges in the existing literature related to women's safety in the built environment of Delhi, identifying areas where further research and interventions are needed.

4. It will offer insights and recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders to enhance women's safety in Delhi's built environment, based on the findings from the critical analysis of the literature.

The study's findings will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, urban planners, researchers, and advocates for women's rights. The findings will help to inform the development of strategies, interventions, and policies to enhance women's safety in the built environment of Delhi and other urban areas.

8.3 FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION

The study has identified a number of gaps and challenges in the existing literature on women's safety in the built environment. These gaps and challenges provide opportunities for future research and implementation.

8.3.1 Future research

The following are some of the areas where future research could be conducted to address the gaps and challenges identified in the study:

1. More research is needed on the intersection of gender, caste, class, and other social identities with women's safety in the built environment. This research would help to understand how different social identities intersect to shape women's experiences of safety and insecurity in urban spaces.

2. More research is needed on the role of transportation and mobility in women's safety. This research would help to understand how transportation and mobility systems can be made safer for women and how women can be encouraged to use public transportation more safely.

3. More research is needed on the role of policy and governance in women's safety. This research would help to understand how policy and governance frameworks can be made more gender-responsive and how they can be used to promote women's safety in the built environment.

8.3.2 Implementation

The following are some of the ways in which the findings of the study could be implemented to enhance women's safety in the built environment:

1. Policymakers and urban planners can use the findings of the study to develop and implement policies and interventions that promote women's safety in the built environment. These policies and interventions could include improving the physical design of public spaces, providing more public transportation options, and changing social norms around gender and safety.
2. Communities and organizations can use the findings of the study to raise awareness about women's safety in the built environment and to advocate for change. This could involve organizing community events, conducting public awareness campaigns, and working with policymakers to implement change.
3. Individuals can use the findings of the study to make changes in their own behavior to make themselves safer in urban spaces. This could include being aware of their surroundings, taking self-defense classes, and walking with friends or family members.

The study's findings provide a valuable foundation for future research and implementation efforts to enhance women's safety in the built environment. By addressing the gaps and challenges identified in the study, we can create safer and more inclusive urban environments where women can thrive, exercise their rights, and participate fully in society.

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10 DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [Chat GPT / GOOGLE Bard] in order to [for improving writing, language and readability]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.