

## Architectural Study of Women's Space within Homes: Past and Contemporary

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**Abstract:** This research paper, explores the intricate relationship between the built environment and gender inequalities in Haryana, India. By adopting an architectural lens, the study investigates the allocation of spaces and restrictions experienced by women in both historical and modern contexts. Through a review of leading researchers and cross-disciplinary perspectives, the paper emphasises the need to consider architecture as a mode of inquiry to better comprehend the dynamics of enclosed and restricted spaces. Additionally, the research delves into the significance of combining sociology, anthropology, and architecture to address gender-based disparities and promote social sustainability

**Keywords:** *architecture, anthropology, design, social sustainability*

### Introduction

Architecture encompasses more than just the physical structures of buildings; it also incorporates elements such as walls, views, sound, smell, legal and financial structures, and even microbial interactions. These diverse components interact in intricate ways, influencing the overall ambiance of a space. To achieve truly livable and sustainable buildings and cities in the future, it is crucial to comprehend and harness the synergies between these elements. This necessitates adopting new cross-disciplinary approaches that merge sociology, anthropology, and architecture. When considering what it is to be human, thinking about how we live in the world is intimately related. The architectural form has been the most important analytical category in which to explore the beginnings and ideal forms of human civilization throughout the anthropological discussions of the 19th century, according to anthropologist Victor Buchli (Buchli, 2013). The study of architecture was used by early anthropologists like Lewis Henry Morgan (2003/1881) and Cyril D. Forde (1934) to support the creation of more general comparative theories (Vellinga, 2011).

### Examining Living Spaces for Women

In this paper, top academics from a range of institutions—including universities, architectural schools, businesses, and firms—as well as eminent scholars from around the world—review their

contributions, which have been a major motivation for the growth of architecture's cross-disciplinary disciplines.

The necessity to view architecture as a mode of inquiry to gather information on people and inquiry into the present conditions and potential futures of living in a contained and even restricted place is larger than simply viewing architecture as buildings.

### Ways for Examining Spaces for Women

The study proposes methodological suggestions for architects seeking to better understand women's spaces. These suggestions emphasise the importance of suspending explanations, following concrete paths and connections, using functional and appealing visuals, embracing descriptive techniques, and empowering designers to make a difference. By employing these approaches, architects can gain deeper insights into the socio-spatial dimensions of women's lives

Home, limits, and walls are the main topics of the first section. Walls, windows, balcony railings, and other boundaries in the residential built environment keep residents separate while also forming surprising connections between them. The home's built environment protects residents from the outer world. It also serves as a mediator between the locals and the outside world.

The dual nature of walls is evident in their capacity to both contain and segregate. On one hand, they define the boundaries of a home, safeguarding it

from external elements such as mold and microbes. However, on the other hand, these same walls can also act as barriers, excluding certain individuals from various age-group communities, thereby reinforcing societal norms and notions of "normality" through the creation of isolated spaces. Consequently, homes are not universally experienced as private havens; for some, they may feel like traps or prisons, as the dynamics of power come into play in determining the conditions and individuals with whom they cohabit.

The research accentuates the significance of power dynamics and the processes of inclusion and exclusion, particularly in the context of public spaces. Neighbourhoods, streets, squares, parks, common resource hubs, and community centre's are ostensibly meant for the use of all individuals. However, this ideal of inclusivity is often marred by disparities in actual access and participation. Women, in particular, have been persistently excluded and, at times, discouraged from being present in these spaces, regardless of the time of day or night. This exclusionary practice underscores the need for a more comprehensive exploration of the interplay between power structures, societal norms, and spatial configurations in public life.

#### **Women's Placement in Design Development and Implementations**

This study seeks to address the question of whether urban and public spaces may be created for inclusion through the design of constructed spaces by examining how space and society interact in cities and public settings in various ways.

The importance of architectural processes for innovation, involvement, and design is further emphasised. The study's goal is to delve deeply into these processes by exploring how co-creation and participation develop, how well-informed insight into inclusive social conceptions and social constructions of architectural renderings can influence design decisions, and how these processes can be driven by co-creation and participation. As essential components of the

architectural creativity, it encompasses planning, piloting, financing, and constructing procedures. All become components of what forms the built environment. These show a blend of research and practise efforts, with the creative element providing hunches and tentative intuitions of what might be the most telling features of a group of people and what might be tribal (Barth, 1999), and the specific element to guide the studies we conduct.

Sarah Pink, a well-known design anthropologist, offers her concluding thoughts on potential future views and advancements in this area. She claims that Global human efforts must shift towards being more active and involved as a result of developing technologies and global challenges. A movement in impetus and a method of interaction are urgently needed, and architectural design can play a crucial part in achieving these goals. In his discussion of scenarios involving the unbuilt, the prototype, and building activity, Pink (2006) demonstrates how future-focused architectural anthropology could pay attention to various creative factors present in the situations where architecture as a practise and process is involved. To disclose experience, imagination, disparities, and potential constructive directions moving ahead, researchers and practitioners from various disciplines can collaborate.

#### **Current Status of Women in Haryana**

"Status of women refers to the position of women in a society in relation to men. A number of studies have defined women's' status by taking into account factors such as education, health, employment, salary and nature of work. An individual woman's status in a society, however, can be determined by her composite status which can be ascertained in the context of control that she commands over her own life. Such control is derived from her access to knowledge, economic resources and the degree of autonomy enjoyed by her in the process of making decisions and choices at crucial points in the life cycle" (Sipla 1975, Bhargawa and Saxena 1987). Geographically, men and women share the same space, yet they are not treated equally.

**Table 1 : Overall Sex Ratio in Haryana**

Sr. No.	Sex Ratio	2001	2011
1	820 – 840	Panchkula, Panipat, Sonipat	
2	840 – 860	Kaithal, Jind, Hisar, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Faridabad, Palwal	Sonipat, Gurgaon,
3	860 – 880	Ambala, Yamunanagar, Karnal, Bhiwani, Gurgaon, Mewat	Panchkula, Kaithal, Jind, Hisar, Yamunanagar, Rohtak, Faridabad, Palwal Panipat, Jhajjar,
4	880 – 900	Sirsa, Fatehabad, Rewari	Kurukshetra, Ambala, Rewari, Karnal, Sirsa, Bhiwani, Mahendragarh
5	900 – 920	Mahendragarh Mewat,	Fatehabad
	State average	861	877

Source: Census of India 2001 and 2011.

#### **Facts Pertaining to Women's Status in Haryana**

India is a daughter-deficient and son-surplus nation with 940 girls for every 1,000 boys. The weakest state is Haryana, with 877 females for every 1,000 boys (down from 900 in 1966). According to the NITI Aayog report from 2018, the birth rate of girls has decreased in 17 states, including Haryana.

##### **(i) Sex Ratio:**

The son is given priority in the family in Haryana, which adheres rigidly to the patriarchal structure. The ratio of male to female births changed between 1966 and 2011, from 158,149 to 129,868 to 296,328 to 248,292. Female foeticide cases are increasing, and the state is disregarding Supreme Court directives by failing to submit a quarterly report on childbirth that includes the gender ratio. In contrast to Gujarat, Punjab, and Rajasthan, where there are 2,100 boys per 1,000 girls, Haryana has 2,300 males as the last child born in the family, according to the Economic Survey of India 2018.

##### **(ii) Literacy and Education:**

In comparison to the national average of 65.74 percent, Haryana has a literacy rate of 76.64 percent. The male to female ratio is 85.38 to

72.74. There were 143 primary schools, 232 middle schools, and 570 high or secondary schools for girls in 2011. In comparison to 29,650 male teachers and 10,767 female teachers in 1966, there are 7,705 male teachers and 68,002 female teachers today. Girls enlist at a significantly lower rate than males do, and the percentage of girls from Scheduled Castes is the lowest. Around 49.3% of female students leave school before graduating. Compared to the national average of 3.5%, girls participate in sports at a rate of 4.2%.

##### **(iii) Health and Child Care**

According to the State nutrition fact-sheet, which the Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar presented on December 17, 2017, the health status of women in Haryana is that 71.1% of them (compared to 56.1% in 2006) had anaemia. Anaemia affects 63.1 percent of non-pregnant women and around 55.5% of expecting mothers. According to statistics, 62.7 percent of girls and 29.7 percent of boys between the ages of 15 and 19 are anaemic (49.3% of girls are very weak). Girls' average health only affects 25.6% of them. Additionally, there is very little prenatal healthcare. Male sterilisation is 17 times lower than that of females. The national maternal mortality rate is 55 per lakh, compared to 73 per

lakh for women.

**(iv) Crimes against Women**

Haryana is notorious for its crimes against women, and it accounts for more sexual offences in India (2.4%) than Punjab and Himachal combined. Women suffer from spousal abuse in about 32% of cases. Furthermore, since 2015, 93 occurrences of rape and 88 cases of child sex abuse had each been reported. When it comes to gang-rape instances, Haryana stands fourth in the nation. The largest number of domestic violence, dowry deaths, rapes, and molestation crimes (28,839) were reported in Karnal, and the least number of cases were reported in Jhajjar, between 2015 and 2017.

**(v) Work Participation**

"Compared to Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, and West Bengal, Haryana's women's employment rate is significantly lower at 28.8%. The Socio-Economic Census Report, 2015 states that women head about 12 percent of households, the majority of which are extremely impoverished. In the Hindu Succession Act of 1956, Haryana was one of the States that objected to the idea of daughters sharing property. In 1977 and later in 1979, the State Assembly passed resolutions to alter the Act, but the Centre did not take them into consideration. With regard to Muslim women, the revised Act of 2005 is mute. Men still hold 70% of the world's arable land. The percentage of women working in government positions is 9%, compared to fewer than 3% in the private sector.

**(vi) Political Representation**

In Haryana, the percentage of women in politics increased from 4.93 to 14.14 between 1967 and 2014. A powerful tool to combat ingrained biases is increased female involvement in politics.

**Some Highlights on Women's Status**

Most districts of Haryana have experienced considerable change during the period from 2007-08 to 2015-16. The major findings of the study (Jyoti 2022) are as follows -

- (i) In 2007–08, the Panchkula district ranked top in terms of all indices of women's

status, but in 2015–16, women's status in this district significantly declined.

- (ii) In terms of overall indicators, Nuh district had a ranking of 20 in 2007–2008 and a ranking of 21 in 2015–16. The fact that this district placed lowest in the state indicates that the situation of women did not improve.
- (iii) When compared to the previous year, 2015–16, the position of women in these districts—namely, Bhiwani, Faridabad, Hisar, Jhajjar, Kaithal, Kurukshetra, Sonipat, and Yamunanagar—had significantly improved.
- (iv) When compared to 2007–2008, the general status of women in these districts—Fatehabad, Gurugram, Karnal, Panchkula, and Sirsa—declined in 2015–16.
- (v) In terms of general women's status, these districts—Ambala, Jind, Mahendergarh, Panipat, Rewari, Nuh, and Rohtak—almost enjoyed stability in 2015–16 and 2007–08.

**Suggestions for the Way Forward**

There is an urgent need to improve the status of women in Haryana. Some suggestions about how to achieve this are -

- a. Gender-Inclusive Rural Housing: Design and construct rural houses that cater to the specific needs and safety of women, providing them with secure and empowering living spaces.
- b. Safe and Accessible Pathways: Plan rural pathways and roads with consideration for women's safety, ensuring well-lit and accessible routes for their daily activities.
- c. Women-Centric Community Spaces: Establish community centers in rural areas that offer services and support tailored to women's needs, encouraging their active participation in community life.
- d. Women-Friendly Public Amenities: Improve the design and maintenance of rural public amenities, such as water facilities and sanitation, to enhance

- e. women's comfort and convenience.
- f. Engaging Women in Planning: Involve women in the decision-making processes for rural development, ensuring their voices are heard in architectural and sociological planning.
- g. Socio-Cultural Awareness Programs: Conduct sociological initiatives that address traditional norms and beliefs affecting women's lives, promoting gender equality in rural communities.
- h. Skill Development Initiatives: Provide training and skill development programs in rural areas, empowering women with the knowledge to participate in architecture and construction-related activities.
- i. Women's Participation in Agricultural Spaces: Encourage and support women's involvement in agricultural planning and management, integrating their perspectives in rural landscape design.
- j. Promote Women-Led Initiatives: Facilitate

and promote women-led projects that aim to enhance rural infrastructure and community development.

- j. Women's Cooperatives for Sustainable Growth: Foster women's cooperatives to address local architectural and sociological challenges, fostering sustainable growth and empowerment in rural Haryana.

#### **The empirical overview of women's Position**

Data was collected from rural areas to better understand the current status of rural women.

#### **Special Attributes of Village and Data Collected**

There are 8000 people living in Bhatol Village overall. The distribution of the village of Bhatol's caste-based population, which is divided into the Bhatol Jattan and Bhatol Rangran sectors, is shown in the table below.

**Table 2 : Population of Bhatol Village**

Sr. No.	Caste	Number
1	Jaat	6089
2	Balmiki	742
3	Chamar	910
4	Khaati	80
5	Pandit	63
6	Luhaar	14
7	Naayi	60
8	Kumhaar	42
	Total	8000

The composite number of voters in Bhatol Jattan and Bhatol Rangran is 4021 of which the Males are 2201 and the Females are 1820.

#### **Bhatol Jattan**

The village of Bhatol Jattan is situated in India's Haryana province's Hansi Tehsil, Hisar district. It is

located 40 kilometres from the district headquarters in Hisar and 17 miles from the tehsildar office in Hansi, the sub-district

headquarters. Bhatol Jattan is the name of the village's gramme panchayat.

The village's overall geographic area is 1158 hectares. 3964 people call Bhatol Jattan home, including 2116 men and 1848 women. The literacy rate in the hamlet of Bhatol Jattan is 63.67 percent, with 73.02 percent of males and 52.98 percent of females being literate. In the settlement of Bhatol Jattan, there are roughly 740 homes.

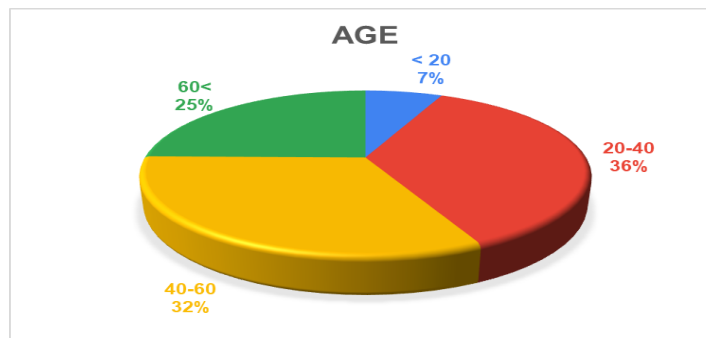
#### **Bhatol Rangran**

The Indian state of Haryana's Hansi tehsil is home to the village of Bhatol Rangran. It is located 40 kilometres from the district headquarters in Hisar and 16 km from the sub-district headquarters in Hansi (tehsildar office). The gramme panchayat of Bhatol Rangran Village is called Bhatol Rangran. The village covers a total area of 644 hectares.

There are 2767 people living in Bhatol Rangran, 1450 of whom are men and 1317 of whom are women. The literacy rate in the hamlet of Bhatol Rangran is 59.78 percent, with 68.69 percent of men and 49.96 percent of women being literate. The village of Bhatol Rangran has roughly 529 homes.

The purpose of this poll was to examine how women's roles and spaces have changed throughout time. The inquiries and answers gathered were based on the subjective experiences of the participants. For instance, questions about water facilities focused on the respondents' own upbringings and their involvement in housework as children. When women became mothers-in-law, they usually stepped back from labor-intensive home duties and took on a more advising role.

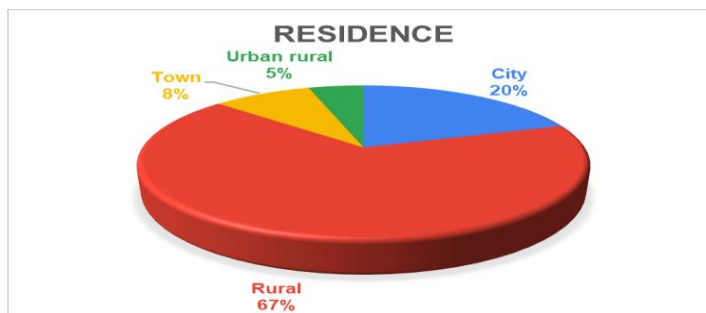
**Figure 1: Age Distribution**



The responses received from the women showed that the larger majority of the women were in the age group of 20 to 40 years old (36 percent). The

next majority group belonged to 40 to 60 years old (32 percent).

**Figure 2: Residence Location**



On examining the residence location it was found that a large proportion (67 percent) lived in the

rural areas and only 20 percent lived in the city or urban location. Another 8 percent belonged to

small towns and 5 percent were living in semi-urban areas.

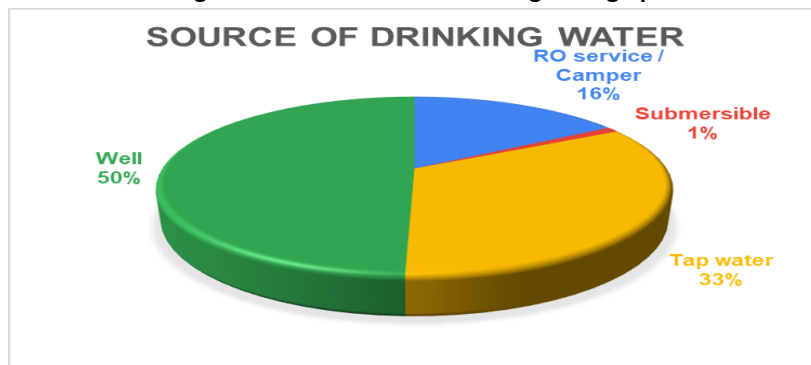
**Figure 3: Location of Toilet Facilities while growing up**



The respondents were asked to report on whether or not they had a toilet within the premises of their home. There were 51 percent who reported

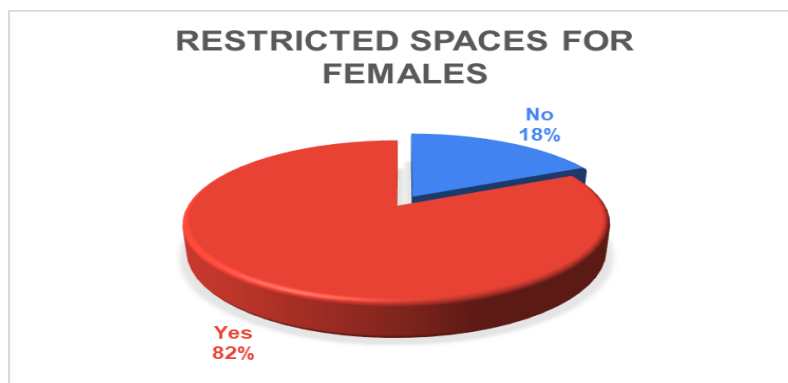
that they did not have access to a toilet within the homestead premises. They were resorting to open defecation.

**Figure 4: Source of Water while growing up**



When asked about the source of drinking water the respondents said that there were various sources. There were 50 percent who reported that they were using the water from the well. There

were 33 percent who reportedly used tap water and just one percent used a submersible motor to draw water.

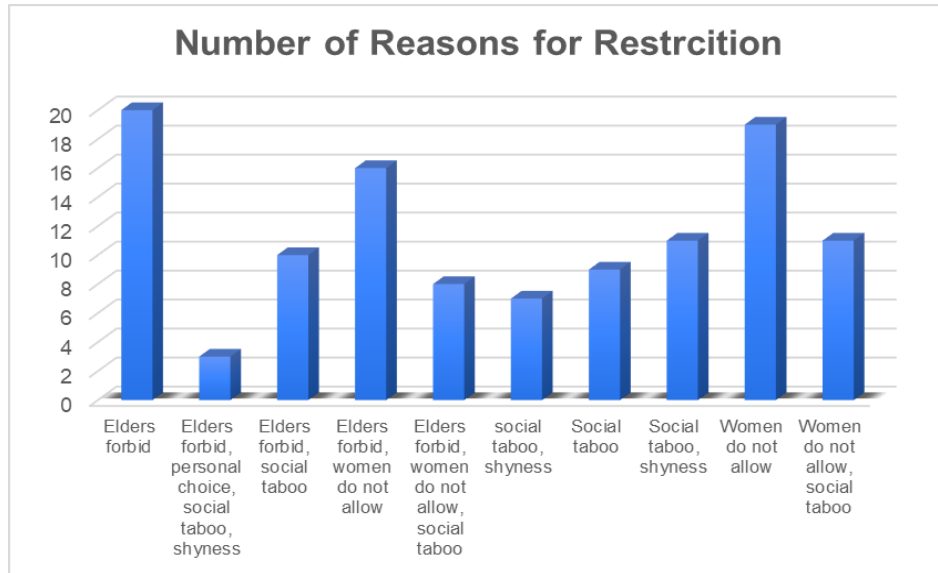


**Figure 5: Restricted Spaces for Females**

The respondents were asked if they felt that there were certain restricted spaces exclusively secluded for women. There were 82 percent who said that they were in agreement about there being spaces

restricted only for women while there were 18 percent who said that they did not believe that there were any restricted spaces segregated for women only.

**Figure 6: Number of Reasons for Restriction**



When asked about the reasons for restriction there were several varying responses. They have been listed as:

- (i) Elders forbade
- (ii) Personal choice, social taboo and shyness
- (iii) Social Taboos
- (iv) Older women do not allow intermingling
- (v) Shyness
- (vi) Women themselves are hesitant

#### **Layout of the Traditional Haveli in Haryana : Capturing Local Spaces**

An architectural examination of the traditional haveli reveals a distinctive division of male and female domains. The Mardana Khan serves as the male domain, located at the front of the Haveli and accessible to visitors. In contrast, the Zenana Khan constitutes the female domain, situated at the rear and reserved for women's daily activities. Seclusion and privacy are reinforced by architectural features such as roof overhangs, windows, bamboo blinds, curtains and pierced screens (jalis). This arrangement reflects the historical role in safeguarding privacy while symbolically encouraging gender based

segregation in public spaces.

#### **Conclusion**

This architectural sociological study highlights the complex relationship between spatial organisation, societal norms, and gender disparities in Haryana. The findings underscore the need for integrated approaches that address architectural design, cultural practices, and policy interventions to foster gender equality and empower women. By recognising the built environment's profound impact on social dynamics, this research seeks to inform strategies for creating more inclusive and equitable spaces for women in Haryana and beyond.

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