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Gender and Built Environment: Exploring Co-Design as a Tool to Empower the Marginalized

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Abstract

In a patriarchal society like Pakistan where people are marginalized based upon their gender and socio-economic class, women from working class and transgender communities are often the most relegated. The built environment is a factor that affects everyone living in the city, and so it does the marginalized genders. However, they never have a voice and most of the time not even has an understanding of what they want from their built environment. Moreover, to make the matter worse, the mainstream architectural and urban design practices and research in Pakistan is rarely focused on the problems faced by these genders and communities. This paper attempts to use co-design to give these genders a voice and explore their understanding and expectations of their city. This study is generated through a class group project where co-design was explored as an idea and activities were designed to engage with the targeted genders, with a focus on exploring their perception of the context of Lahore, Pakistan. Data generated from these activities in the form of a series of imaginative drawings is used to perceive how these marginalized genders experience the built environment of Lahore and what changes they would like to see in their city.

Keywords: Co-Design, Built Environment, Marginalized Genders, Transgender, Working Class Women.

تلخیص

پاکستان جیسے پدرانہ معاشرے میں جہاں لوگ اپنی جنس اور سماجی و اقتصادی طبقے کی بنیاد پر پسماندہ ہیں، محنت کش طبقے اور ٹرانس جینڈر کمیونٹیز سے تعلق رکھنے والی خواتین اکثر سب سے زیادہ محروم ہوتی ہیں۔ تعمیر شدہ ماحول ایک ایسا عنصر ہے جو شہر میں رہنے والے ہر

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فرد کو متاثر کرتا ہے، اور اسی طرح یہ پسماندہ جنسوں کو بھی متاثر کرتا ہے۔ تاہم، ان کے پاس کبھی آواز نہیں ہوتی اور زیادہ تر وقت یہ بھی نہیں سمجھتے کہ وہ اپنے تعمیر شدہ ماحول سے کیا چاہتے ہیں۔ مزید برآں، معاملے کو مزید خراب کرنے کے لیے، پاکستان میں مین اسٹریم آرکیٹیکچرل اور اربن ڈیزائن پریکٹسز اور ریسرچ ان جنسوں اور کمیونٹیز کو درپیش مسائل پر شاذونادر ہی توجہ مرکوز کرتی ہے۔ یہ مقالہ ان صنفوں کو آواز دینے اور اپنے شہر کے بارے میں ان کی سمجھ اور توقعات کو دریافت کرنے کے لیے مشترکہ ڈیزائن استعمال کرنے کی کوشش کرتا ہے۔ یہ مطالعہ ایک کلاس گروپ پروجیکٹ کے ذریعے تیار کیا گیا ہے جہاں مشترکہ ڈیزائن) کو ڈیزائن (کو ایک خیال کے طور پر تلاش کیا گیا تھا اور سرگرمیوں کو ہدف بنائے گئے جنسوں کے ساتھ مشغول ہونے کے لیے ڈیزائن کیا گیا تھا، جس کا مقصد لاہور، پاکستان کے سیاق و سباق کے بارے میں ان کے تاثرات کو تلاش کرنا تھا۔ تصوراتی ڈرائنگ کی ایک سیریز کی شکل میں ان سرگرمیوں سے پیدا ہونے والے ڈیٹا کو یہ جاننے کے لیے استعمال کیا جاتا ہے کہ یہ پسماندہ صنفیں لاہور کے تعمیر شدہ ماحول کا تجربہ کیسے کرتی ہیں اور وہ اپنے شہر میں کیا تبدیلیاں دیکھنا چاہتے ہیں۔

کلیدیالفاظ: محنت کش خواتین, ٹرانس جینڈر, پسماندہ صنفیں , تعمیر شدہ ماحول , کوڈیزائن

Introduction

Gender disparity is an important issue in Pakistani society; it defines social norms and dictates practical aspects of living (Imtiaz & Kamal, 2021). In Pakistan, the social landscape of society is dictated by men, making it very difficult for women to navigate through life (Mustafa et al., 2020). Men are considered the head of traditional households; this patriarchal setup has strong repercussions. It reduces the position of women in society to individuals who are meant to follow, and fulfil their defined roles. It also means that they need to be aware of these limitations while pursuing their dreams and goals in life. This gender disparity is often discussed in literature as well as in print and social media. However, the way it is playing a role in defining the practical aspects of living, such as the built environment, is rarely discussed (Nasab et al., 2021).

These social norms in Pakistani society and the stigma attached to them are faced by all women; however, their intensity varies greatly with the social classes (Delavande & Zafar, 2013). Separate and more focused research on the relationship of social class with the experiences of women in navigating through society might provide solid evidence of this variation. But a common perception is that women from the lower social classes have

to face gender prejudices the most. House help is an example of such working-class women, despite being the bread earners of their families; they often fail to earn any respect in their families and society. They often do not have any voice in the social and spatial structure of their communities.

Female house help is often believed to live in the most adverse conditions while earning for their families by working on less than the minimum wages set in the country. On top of this, they take care of their own household and kids without any help or support from the males in the family, often facing domestic abuse at the same time. These women and girls often do not have access to healthcare facilities, clean water and sanitation, education, and other basic necessities of life (Hakim & Aziz, 1998). As Lahore's physical infrastructure is divided on the basis of social class, there are old underdeveloped areas where people from the lower strata of society live and there are relatively new and posh areas for the upper middle class and elite of the society (Asim et al., 2021). In the old underdeveloped areas, women working as house help do not have segregated communities and residential areas. But they cannot afford to live in the posh and developed areas, moreover, most of the time they are not even allowed to live in these communities along with their families as these are mostly gated communities. For such areas, women house help lives in informal settlements, slums, and squatters existing nearby the developed areas.

Moreover, it should be remembered that women are not the only marginalized gender in Pakistani society, transgender live in arguably worse conditions. They are not even considered part of society, or sometimes, not even humans. Refusing the basic rights of education and health services, they are forced to live in close-knit communities, dependent on people around them for basic survival. For transgender people, a space of their own does not only mean to fulfil dreams and thrive, it also means a place where they are accepted as humans and not judged by their appearances or sexual orientations (Ramay, 2017). There is a widespread stigma associated with them in society that leads to discrimination in all aspects of life. Until recently, they did not even have any legal rights, in 2018 Government of Pakistan passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act with the aim of providing them equality in society, but in reality, it is just the first step. Transgender still live in close-knit communities isolated from the rest of society and have no access to mainstream education and healthcare facilities (Fazi & Bibi, 2021).

These marginalized genders have scarcely been given a voice, and a chance to express their thoughts about any aspect of life, and the built environment is not an exception. In the more advanced societies, there are tools and techniques used by authorities to engage with communities, co-design is such a tool (Calvo & Sclater 2021). It helps to democratize societies on all levels, most importantly and in line with this research, in terms of the built environment. In Pakistan, important decisions that shape society are

mostly taken by people sitting in top positions, enforcing a top-down approach. In contrast, co-design provides a bottom-up approach, giving voice to the most marginalized (Dias et al., 2014). Co-designing is hardly a new idea in the world's context; it has been practiced for decades and evolved through these practices and research. It is an inclusive approach often enforced through collaborative workshops with a focus on exploring simple ideas with users. These simple ideas often tell a lot about these users and help the designers to produce the users' focused designs.

Lahore is a city of over 13 million people; it represents a complex social system with people of different genders, ages, cultural backgrounds, social classes, and religious beliefs. However, the built environment of Lahore fails to represent and cater to these variations. It is a congested concrete jungle with an extensive focus on wide roads, flyovers, and underpasses designed solely for vehicular traffic (Nawaz et al., 2019). The urban realm of Lahore is devoid of good quality public spaces, and housing is highly stratified based on social classes (Chohan et al., 2015). New development projects by governments are often based on political motivations rather than the pure will of helping citizens, so, the focus is scarcely on the development of a common citizen and marginalized communities. These marginalized communities and suppressed genders must be given a voice. It is important to explore how the built environment of Lahore caters to the needs of these communities, provide them a chance to overcome the difficulties of life, and offer them a space to flourish. This paper seeks to explore it and Co-design provides a methodology for this exploration.

While choosing sites and case studies for the current study, it has been made sure that women from working class and transgender communities have been living there for a long period of time. The co-design method used for this inquiry is based on participatory workshops, and the results reveal a desire of working-class women and transgender to be included in the mainstream built environment. But more importantly, this paper explores and provides the option of using a well-developed methodological system for first-hand inquiry and a bottom-up approach that can lead the physical infrastructure of Lahore to be much more democratic and inclusive for citizens from all social strata.

The research question for this study is “How co-design can be used as a tool to explore and understand women’s and transgender’s perception of the built environment?”

Review of Literature

The literature review for this paper is focused on different aspects of the study; it explores how gender disparity plays a huge role in the social setup of Pakistani society. It also explores how gender issues play a role in the built environment, moving on; it explores how co-design is explained in literature and how it acts as a methodology for the current paper.

Gender and Pakistani Society

According to the HDR (Human Development Report), Pakistan stands in the 154th position in terms of human development and a big reason for this is 30% literacy rate of females (Dhaded et al., 2020). In Rural areas, the condition is even worse as girls do not have access to education, decision-making power, and participation in the outside world. According to the statistics of the education ministry for rural areas (2010), access to education is even difficult for young girls in primary schools. The ratio of enrolment of boys and girls is 63:54 respectively. Attendance rates are even less which a constant effect on the education of women in Pakistan has. As a result, females are at serious risk to be absent from the professional realm. This situation is even worse for transgender as there is absolutely no provision of schooling for them (Tabassum & Jamil, 2014).

As discussed in the introduction, Pakistani society is divided by traditional conservative gender roles (Burfat et al., 2019). Domestic work is considered women's responsibility whereas men are the main breadwinners. Women role is celebrated as subservient to men so acquiring an education is not considered important for them. They have to train themselves in domestic skills to raise kids, maintain the house, process and cook food (Ali et al., 2011). Very few women in Pakistan enter the workforce. Moreover, generally working women in Pakistan are either from the upper class or from very poor families (Hakim & Aziz, 1998). Sometimes in rural areas, women and girls work with their fathers and brothers on daily wages to meet up their daily needs. In big cities most women are allowed to get an education, but more often than not, this is done to improve the prospects of marriage. Records show that only 15.6% of women are professionally engaged with work as compared to 49.3% of men (Dhaded et al., 2020).

Unlike women; transgender are not even considered a part of society, and face much more issues ('Khwaja Sira', 2014). Historically the situation was not same for this community. In the Mughal time period, transgender were considered to be a vital part of the Mughal court-Harem (Adams & Neville, 2009). But with the arrival of British colonizers barriers have been created among the two communities that sustained long after the independence in 1947. Decades later, in 2012, transgender people were given the right to vote and inherit properties (Redding, 2019). In 2016 the community had to face various conflicts regarding the fatwa by Muslim clerics in Lahore permitting transgender marriage (Gichki, 2020). “2018 Transgender Rights Protection Act” is a federal law covering the large areas of health, education, family laws, and even prison but the mindset of the society remained constantly negative for this community.

Non-acceptance for conventional role of society leads Transgender to prostitution, the baggers' mafia, and pushes them into drugs. The lives of Transgender are considered to be part of Taboo as they are also struggling for their individualities and basic human

rights (T & Lekshmi, 2021). Life is harder for Tran's people in smaller town as they have to face ridicule and hatred of people even more. Thus, most of them turn their faces to big cities where they could be part of their isolated communities. In cities like Lahore where the level of education and awareness is higher acceptance rate for Trans people is higher. Tran's community of Lahore is much more stabilized than the other cities of Pakistan due to the headquarters of Khawaja Sira Society (KSS) in Lahore, but at the same time, they are the main targets of violence, rape attempts, prostitution, and poverty. The unaccepted members of the trans community face unethical behaviour of society, hunger, homelessness, and sexual abuse.

Gender in the Built Environment

According to the definition of sustainability, societies can be sustainable only if they cater to the need of all kinds of users having a variety of interests, requirements, necessities, and abilities (Peake & Hope, 1994). Sustainability in a society is controlled by many elements but the built environment and architectural design can be the most effective tool. In developing countries, women are still struggling with finding their place in the built environment (Hooper, 1963). Women of Pakistan can cruise the urban space through multiple limitations set by the socio-cultural standards as the effects of British colonization in the Indian Subcontinent. Similar is the case for Trans people.

Before the British era, the old towns grew organically within the walled urban fabric which defines the hierarchy of public space, semi-public space, and private spaces. The connected roofs (Chhat) of the houses were also the space for social interaction for females in the evenings (Alvi, 2013). After British rule, with the changing style of houses and the race of being different and superior, architecture evolved dramatically. The changed modernized urban fabric of Pakistan pushed back women into the houses (Alvi, 2013). Studies show that the spaces outside home are becoming more unsafe for women with time (Khan & Taela, 2023). Unfortunately, the urban sprawl and modern development in Pakistan caused a detectable decline in the social spaces, cultural activities, and festivals involving women. As a result, various communities including women and transgender groups now started protesting for their freedom of space and equal rights. The annual "Aurat March' has now become one of the platforms in which these groups of genders raise their voices using dances, slogans, and multiple performances against the violent freedom of womanhood (Kamal, 2022).

Co-Design

This section explains the co-design method as it is used in precedents for such studies. Co-design, participatory design, human-centered design, or experience-based design are all terms that refer to an evolving set of methodologies in which the stakeholders or end

users of a project are involved along with the design team of professionals to improve the final product's usability and relevance (Broadley & Smith, 2018). Because this method enables users and other stakeholders to join the team of professional specialists as experts of experience, co-design defines a collaborative approach to solving difficult societal challenges and serves as a catalyst for innovation (Voorberg et al., 2015). With the help of co-design, it is possible to accommodate society's underprivileged groups and offer them control over the products they use or interact with. According to the literature (Reina-Rozo et al., 2018). Studies have shown that collaborative design initiatives may enable participants or the larger community to "design after design" and initiate transformational processes. These achievements suggest that co-design may have impacts that go beyond the results of a single design project, such as fostering emerging solutions and democratizing social innovation (Zamenopoulos & Alexiou, 2018). Actors can develop the knowledge and self-assurance necessary to offer opinions on issues of public importance by actively participating in them (Sanin, 2020).

Co-design research has received less attention in economically marginalized societies than it has in middle- and high-income societies (Trischler et al., 2019). When it comes to public service design projects, where the subjects are frequently delicate or uninteresting (such as health services, drug and alcohol education, gender equality, etc.), co-design can be particularly difficult to implement (Trischler et al., 2019). In these situations, users could be reluctant to contribute or might not think of themselves as qualified contributors to service ideas (Jagtap, 2022). However, as recent studies have highlighted, decision-making processes must take into account populations that run the danger of being marginalized and vulnerable. This begs the question of how relevant users might be invited to participate actively and on an equal basis in the early phases of the service design process. Every study needs to be careful of these issues. Co-designing with people from different backgrounds has the potential to benefit the designing process for making it democratic (Bryan-Kinns et al., 2022). It is often used to explore the ideas of marginalized communities to empower their ideas (Vaajakallio et al., 2009). It has been used in literature to explore the issues of gender equality and its representation in the built environment (Vestbro, & Horelli, 2012).

Objectives

This study focuses on exploring three objectives.

- To explore the role of gender in the built environment of Lahore.
- To explore co-design as a tool for the giving voice to the marginalized genders.
- To understand the city of Lahore from the perspective of the marginalized genders.

Methodology

Co-design serves as the methodological base for this study, the purpose is to engage with the most marginalized communities in Pakistani society and use the tools of co-design to have an empathetic approach. The focus of co-design here is not to collect data for a direct spatial intervention but to use it as a tool to explore how the marginalized genders in Pakistani society experience their built environment.

The study was initiated with the introduction of the theory of co-design as part of a Master in Architecture elective course by Dr. Iqbal. The mainstream architectural practice in Pakistan is largely capital driven and rarely focused on the importance of involving the users and communities in the design process. So, this was a relatively new idea to explore for the students and it arouse their interest, especially the 2nd and 3rd co-authors of this paper (students of Dr. Iqbal), who found the ideas very captivating. After getting familiar with the theory of co-design students were asked to explore the potential marginalized communities within the city of Lahore with whom they can engage and explore the ideas learned in the classroom. While exploring such communities, mostly living in the slum or informal settlements of the city, the idea matured to focus on the female house help and transgender communities, these are identified as the marginalized communities in the society in literature (Arif et al., 2022).

After finalizing the two types of communities, the next task was to identify their residential areas within the city in order to physically engage with them. Multiple areas were visited for this purpose, before making the final selection of the two studied areas. The selection criteria for the sites were based on the number of residents, willingness to engage in the co-design activities, and easy approach for the researchers. After the selection of the two areas in Lahore, one where women house help lives known as "Zia Colony" and the other where the transgender community lives known as "Khawaja Sira Society. After careful consideration of different co-design strategies ranging from research-oriented to design-oriented (Zamenopoulos & Alexiou, 2018), the former is used with a focus on participatory design based on generative tools. Detailed activities are designed for generating data through participation, drawing activities are planned to be executed with the women of the Zia colony as well as with the transgender of Khawaja Sira Society. Details of these activities as well as their outcomes are discussed in the next sections along with detailed analyses and final discussions.

Execution of the Co-design Activities

The following sections explain the execution of co-design activities at the two selected sites.

Women house help (Zia Colony)

Zia Colony is a small informal settlement located next to a cinema in Lahore; it is situated near the posh residential area. From this colony, several working ladies go to nearby residences for their jobs as house helps on a daily basis. Co-design activities are used as a means to engage with these women so that their perception of their built environment can be explored. The Cinema on the main road is a vital attraction for the upper-middle and elite-class visitors for entertainment. Just behind the wall of the Cinema property, a small settlement and residence quarters can be found having limited or no basic facilities like electricity and gas pipelines. The selected area has other high-end commercial activities in the neighborhood that is visited regularly by users in the vicinity, however, the majority of visitors don't even know the existence of such a locality close by. The presences of a posh residential area very close to these informal settlements make this site an interesting case study. Fig 1 shows the location of this colony in relation to its surrounding residential and commercial areas.



Figure 1: Context analysis of Zia Colony with surroundings

At the beginning of the research a first visit was arranged to the site, to analyze the site and to have a first interaction with the community. Figure 2 gives an insight into the daily life of the residents of the Zia colony. The first observation was that this area act like its own separate world in which people felt isolated from the surroundings; therefore, there

was a reluctance to engage in dialogue with the team. Women in particular were not even involved in the first consultation with the community. Men were finding it difficult to take a back seat and allow women to take part in the activities with the research team. After the visit and analyzing the observations from the first interaction following conclusions were drawn:

1. There is a need to be engaged with the community not just from the fixed and targeted approach i.e. to directly engage with women. Rather it is important to widen the margins of community engagement to tackle the requirement of working in a patriarchal setup.
2. It is important to go beyond the surface-level interaction and discuss the residents' personalized perspectives on their surroundings.



Figure 2: Routine life of the residents of Zia Colony

It was a significant task to plan out the possible activities in a way that will be understandable for locals and figuring out days and time that are convenient for them. Also, it was important to make them more comfortable with the team so that they can get out of their fear of interaction with strangers. Ultimately, two types of activities were designed to be conducted in the Zia colony as the co-designing process. First is the familiarization session and second is a set of activities executed on site. These activities

were based on the understanding of the co-design from literature and also from teams' observation of the site.

Familiarization Session of Professional Experts with Colony's User Experts

The initial stage of community engagement was Trust-Building. For that, a familiarization session was conducted with the Zia Colony's residents including men, women, and children. 9 architects from the class and 16 women were involved in this familiarization session, similar team of architects and town planners was involved in the activities A and B that are discussed in the next sections. In these sessions, the focus was not on the co-designing but rather to have informal conversations with the residents. To facilitate the process of interactive conversations food was offered to the locals, moreover, nail art was offered to girls and women of the colony.

These interactions were conducted in an open space of the colony that was very poorly maintained. Residents informed the team that this was the only space for any community events i.e. wedding ceremonies or other communal-level engagements. These sessions were quite open-ended as no one was restricted to engage in long conversations the whole time. People were joining and going for their daily tasks at their convenience and in that way, the team got an insight of many people who were involved in the next stage of the study. Women explained that in many families they are the sole bread earners of their household while managing the house chores at the same time. The male members of these households were having much more comfortable lives in comparison to these women. Their only routine was to keep the colony's matters in their hands and to engage in the matters of decisions making for the community.

Activity A- Generating Inspirations

Activity A was about the generation of inspiration among women to make them imagine their ideal house, neighbourhood, and the facilities they would like to have in their colony. This was designed to understand the influence of the well-developed surrounding residential areas on their imaginations and perceptions. Men and children were also part of this activity as it became clear after the familiarization session that men won't allow women to engage with the team without their presence. However, it was managed in a tactful manner. One member of the design team was there to engage men of the community in discussions about the neighbourhood, also communicating their ideas through sketching or writing based upon their willingness. Other members of the team were focused on engaging with Women and children, and working with them in sketching, discussing, and imagining together.

The aim of this activity was just like a warm-up exercise and to reduce the reluctance level women had for sketching or even agreeing to anything that involved them writing or drawing anything. Some teenage girls who are also working as house help nearby showed a lot of happiness and excitement to be a part of this activity. At this stage, the designer's team did not involve a great deal in order to not influence their work or process of imagination. In this part of the inquiry, the team played the role of facilitators. Figure 3 provides an overview of these collaborative activities.



Figure 3: Collaborative activities with Women of Zia colony

Activity B - Co-Creation of Mapping for Spatial Perceptions

Execution of activity B was much more convenient as by this stage the team had a comfortable working relations with the women of this community, also the locals had clarity of what was happening.

In this activity, the team asked the locals to draw or write on a huge piece of paper their daily route from their homes to the workplace or the first house they start their day with. Team members also engaged in this activity and drew with local women as they were narrating, drawing, and adding texts, the designers would help them in documenting their routes as per their imagination. Figure 4 shows the commencing of these activities.



Figure 4: Designers Co-creating with women of Zia colony

Khawaja Sira Society

The purpose of this co-design activity was to develop and create an environment in which transgender could feel comfortable sharing their emotions, feelings, and thoughts. They were encouraged to show that how they perceive their safe space and how the city reflects on it. For this activity, a collaboration was set up with them for a co-design activity based on drawing. It took days to locate an organization working for the betterment of the trans community in Lahore. After multiple field surveys, we got connected with the Khawaja Sira Society. After numerous meetings, telephonic conversations, and interactive sessions with their director, they finally agreed to meet us. It was the first for many of the team members to step out of their comfort zone and interact with the trans community bearing the social pressure of involving with trans people. They had to learn a few slang words for our volunteers which they could use to make the talk comfortable with community members. Collecting the budget, arrangements for food, and purchasing supplies for art activities was the major task for the team of designers.

6 architects and 12 people from trans community participated in this activity. Due to the lack of knowledge and education most members of the trans community were not familiar with the field of architecture and urban design. This made it hard for the architects to communicate direct questions that involved basic architectural and urban design terminologies. The participatory process included general speaking and sharing of ideas, in-depth dialogues, food sharing, and art activities. Multiple rigorous brainstorming sessions were conducted among the team of architects to decide upon these activities. The

focus of this activity was on the co-design strategy "Design for the People", "By the People" and "With the People".

Figure 5 shows the execution of co-design activities in the Khawaja Sira community. Upon visiting them, the people living in the Khawaja sira society were offered food, and a casual conversation was initiated so that they would feel comfortable with the team of designers. Art is the best language to express emotions so an art activity was executed with them in a planned manner. The 22 community people were divided into six different groups with the respective architect/ designer and all of them were given a task to draw/ paint their issue with an explanation. Using the art tools and colors helped later in concluding the results and findings. They were asked three questions and were free to choose any of them to draw on and express their ideas.

1. What do you feel about yourself as a transgender?
2. How a public space should cater to a transgender?
3. How do you see your dream house?

The outcome of these drawings and sketches are discussed in the next section.



Figure 5: Execution of co-design activities in Khawaja sira community

Findings and Discussion

As mentioned above, the co-design activities run with the women's house help and transgender community in Lahore were focused on producing drawings and sketches as a means of expression of their emotional connection with their built space.

Through these sketches in both places, the marginalized genders expressed the frustrations they faced in their daily life, even about the most basic aspects of life. These basic sketches and thoughts from Activity A with the Zia colony residents show what facilities women wanted in their built environment and how they perceive their ideal spaces. Figure 6 shows some random selection of these sketches. Women tried to draw a mixture of what was already there in Zia Colony's surroundings but was not available to them. They discussed a nearby Society Park which wasn't for residents of Zia Colony and only the society people were allowed to enter. Most of these sketches also showed some play areas along with a nice house, showing that these women want a place where their kids can enjoy life. There can see a sense of selfness in these sketches, even when asked to draw anything they want, these women chose to draw a place where their families can be and their kids can get an education. Another possible reason is that these women's life perspective is limited to a nice house; none of them drew a place that could be just for them, that could be a women's communal space or a holiday destination. Their horizon is limited by their daily struggles. As identified in the literature (Pasha 2020), women have significantly lower educational rates as compared to men, this leads to them not having a sense of self.



Figure 6: Selected drawing images drawn by Women of Zia Colony

As a reflection of trans-community-produced work, it can be seen in Fig 7 that they are living in quite unfavorable conditions with fewer opportunities and minimal exposure to

society. Many of these people drew or wrote something that is a call for acceptance for example “hum tumse alag nahi" (we are like you). Each artwork speaks as a portrait of social barriers and division among society based on third gender, racism, and sexism. The acceptance of ideologies related to the non-acceptance of the trans community can be perceived in the drawings along with daily life issues, poor living standards, health problems, poverty, prostitution, and unsafe communal spaces which are negligible for the mainstream society. Being the neglected part of the city or a taboo defines their everyday life experiences. This outcome of the co-design activities confirms the findings of the literature review as explained above. As mentioned by Chellammal (2020), these individuals are struggling for acceptance in society.



Figure 7: Selected drawing images drawn by transgender people

A comparative analysis of both case studies allows an understanding of some differences in the perceptions and preferences of the participants. Women of the Zia colony are focused on sketching an ideal family life through built spaces, the transgender also focused on an ideal living space, probably because they were asked to do it by the designers in the co-design activities. But in addition to this transgender also drew their thoughts on their existential crises, the sense of identity and quest for acceptance that they carry in their minds can be seen through their drawings. Moreover, drawing

generated by transgender is much more colorful and lively, representing their views towards life. As mentioned in the literature review, co-design or participatory design is a tool to engage with the local communities that gives them a chance of expressing their thoughts and perception of their life and the things they need and want (Jagtap, 2022). This study has proved that co-design is indeed a good way to engage with communities that often do not have a voice. Their lived experiences prove to be an expert opinion on what changes need to be done in a particular spatial setup that can have some social implications, as discussed in the literature by (Ernst, 1998).

As an outcome of these interactions between designers and women and transgender communities, Figure 8 shows how marginalized communities experience the built environment. These two maps are developed by the authors based on the raw drawings produced by the women and transgender participants of Co-design activities. It expresses the juxtaposition of their extremely underdeveloped residential areas and the spaces they go for earning a livelihood. This is a representation of the emotional trauma they go through every day caused by the social differences manifested through physical spaces.



Figure 8: Maps based on drawings

Conclusions

There are many wrong concepts and practices in Pakistani society that are considered traditions and normal ways of life. Unfortunately, denying a certain gender and social class equal rights is such a practice. It is important to explore methodologies that let the researcher engage with marginalized communities in a deeply empathetic manner. The method of co-design does precisely this for the current study. These types of studies are very important, as they challenge the norms and show alternative ways to view realities. In a society like Pakistan, change is always difficult and takes time, but it is important to keep working toward it. This study is an effort to identify that women of lower social class and transgender deserve a voice, and they have a lot to say.

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