



# The Relationship between Physical Framework and Behavioural Disorders in Women (Case Study: Narges Ladies' Park in the City of Qom)

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**Abstract:** Since women are present as half of the citizens of the city and the main groups, paying attention to their demands and needs comprehensively and in all areas of the city including spatial, social, economic and management framework is necessary. Therefore creating such spaces seems necessary for spending leisure time for women. In fact constructing parks for women is a response to the need which is because of limitations or personal preferences, some sociologists argue that this can lead to discharge emotions in women. In this study, the method is quantitative and qualitative and the methods of study are survey, interviews and photography. In this article, the relationship between the physical framework and behavioral disorders in women was addressed and Narges Park in Qom was analyzed. The park has positive features including the placement of the site in the residential neighborhood and also has some weaknesses, including a lack of privacy for women in East and Southeast areas of the center and the proximity to residential apartments. According to conducted observations and interviews, female referents have the full consent of the park and were satisfied with a sense of security and freedom far from men. Following the observations and studies to complete the paper, the design of the physical environment from five aspects were studied including safety, social accountability, visibility and readability of suitable access, privacy and environmental factors.

**Keywords:** Women, Physical Environment, Ladies Park, Narges Park

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## 1. Introduction

The best way to perceive urban space is a closer look at the design of the space in history. Edmond Baken, one of the well-known urban designers, argue that the essence of studying the works of architecture and urbanization is spatial feature and quandary continues to exist in urban and architectural spaces unless it is understood, because spatial features are the essence of socio-cultural relationships and social activities of citizens. The aim of studying the city is discussing the terrestrial, worldly and material aspect of the construction in the whole structure of the city. In general, if urban planning and architecture consider the women, may reduce the crimes. Women often feel bad in the urban space due to being minority and not belonging to the urban space. To eliminate the insecurity of women, feeling the second must disappear and women should be visible in urban areas and shouldn't be considered as second-class citizens. Some spaces

may create a feeling of danger or nonconformity for a particular gender. Finally, it can be a kind of illness and limitations of behavior in space. In developed and developing countries, there is evidence of resistance to the needs of women in management and urban design (Kamali, 2010). The need to presence and existence for all groups, regardless of gender, age, income, occupation, etc is essential. Public spaces, in general and urban spaces, in particular, are the most important means in order to enhance civil society because of the physical and social functioning (Reza Zadeh and Mohammadi, 2012).

Nowadays, women became more aware of their "being" in the society and urban and architectural space by deep social, economic and cultural changes and new awareness toward the difference between people and their way of life in different societies and the need to find suitable spaces with this sort of

being made women feel that they live in a world in which almost all images are according to the position and governance of men by opening new gates to the world along with awareness of being different and accepting it. This has more power in societies which emphasize on Masculism and impose more pressure on women (Culture and Research Magazine: 5).

Half of the population of every society consists of women and planning for their leisure time and recreation according to the norms and religion of the country must be considered by experts. Since women are the most influential group on public health, paying attention on their health and recreation has direct impact on the health of society.

## 2. Methodology

The method includes collecting and analyzing information conducted by library, field study, observation and interview and the information is used according to the research. In the initial stage, the basic analysis of the texts, articles, theses and Internet resources is done to develop the theoretical foundations. In order to understand the characteristics of Narges Ladies' Park, arguably sources including maps and aerial photos were evaluated. To supplement this information, the recognition of the current situation of environmental, physical, and visual and landscape is done through observation and photography. The studied sample of Narges Park is in Qom. The park covers an area of twelve hectares. This park was built as an exclusive complex for women in Qom and was granted to the municipality in 2007.

Collecting data is done through observing the frequency of women presence in different landscapes of Narges Park and interviews with women who were in the park. These observations were documented using a mobile phone camera and 85 images of which 11 photos are archived.

Question research:

The design of the physical environment in Ladies' Park, how can in the behavior women be effective?

## 3. Background

Considering the background and literature, since the subject of ladies park completes this research, it is attempted to study the related history of ladies park. Designing multi-thread environment for women, unlike other countries, is a new issue in Iran. The idea of women's park titled as "Mothers' Paradise", is considered a new thing in Iran (Enaiati Moghadam, 2013: 4, 5).

Mothers' Paradise Park

The park is the first theme park dedicated to women which opened in 2009 in Tehran. Park entrance winding path could prepare all women to exercise and has brought mental freshness by existing fountains.

Pardis Ladies Park

The park opened in 2009 in Tehran. The design is a combination of Persian and modern style. Women have high security in the park, so that the entrance to the park cannot be

seen from outside because of its design and structures.

Velayat Park (city for a woman)

When Velayat park was built with its facilities in 2012, it was considered as a city for women, because it has the facilities for women.

## 4. Female Spaces and Ladies Park in Cities

In our cities, the sustainable female spaces are limited and completely intangible. Because of cultural reasons, entering men changes their function, adds the factor of control and finally reduces its natural and happy form. In traditional insight (presence of women) requires rules that are made by men and governance of men over women. As we see, still most men and even traditional women, consider the presence of women temporary and their presence out of the specified time and place is not accepted. The first restriction on women in urban spaces is in relation to freedom of body and freedom of their presence. So to start the recognition of the status of women, her position has to be evaluated as an individual and a body in architecture and urban space (Najafi, 2005: 79).

In Western societies, the transparency of their presence and accepting the majority and the difference in urban spaces and avoiding convergence and following a single pattern made by the power which has made the society more legible is one of the most important factors of women presence. As a result, they receive more transparent behavioral reaction from the community. This transparency which makes the women distinct from different points of view in Western societies and moves toward meritocracy has not been obtained easily. Western women have had many struggles in this way (Najafi, 2005: 79-80).

In the 19th century the unwanted, uncontrollable and increasing presence of women in western public spaces, cities was opposed by many citizens who thought that the presence of them promotes prostitution, especially when women alone were present in the community and were not under the support of men. Entering women in male fields and public spaces in the 19th century was another sign of the warning of the arrival of uncontrollable mass (marginal) to beautiful space of bourgeoisie. So in both cases, the methods adopted to counter the threat of mass repression on the sidelines of the same attitude that the female element was done beyond the control of traditional society (Najafi, 2005: 80). In our spaces, the desire to control and on the other hand the tendency to avoid non-homogeneity and clones and freedom of movement and creativity of citizens and especially women and youth has limited them in the society. Women should be able to participate so that their presence is natural in all public areas. This presence is more significant when it leads to freedom in action and new insights, difference acceptance, flexible behavioral insights and its reflection in architecture and female architecture must look equal as masculist architecture. Women should dare to come out of marginalization (Najafi, 2005: 80-81).

In last year, the women responsibility was more at home because of different reasons, but today women have more leisure time especially housewives. This has made them more interested in public spaces, but these spaces meet this need though other ways due to the lack of these spaces (Mikaeeli, 2009). Human needs urban environment so that he could be relieved. He needs the areas in which have a particular state and the path which ends in a place and the places which are unforgettable (Pakzad, 2010: 106). Although urban spaces in major cities are very attractive, at the same time they are full of insecurity, fear and strangeness. That's why most urban areas are attractive to women, not men, because for them the prosperity and security is not enough. Perhaps one contributing factor that makes women feel marginalized is how urban spaces limit women's mobility and makes them face fear and insecurity (Mahdizadeh, 2009 : 17).

What is certain is that today, thanks to the emergence of a new form of expression of life, people always seek time, speed and comfort requirements. Because daily life, technology and the busy pace of urban growth is such that the most significant problem is the spiritual deficiencies in people. Human pays attention to daily activities and sometimes forgets his mental needs (Enaiati Moghadam, 2013: 8). Living in small apartments without open spaces in big cities, limits the use of light and natural and green environments for citizens especially for women and unfortunately this limitation is such that the residents in big cities are deprived of seeing nice landscapes from their windows. Even though these kinds of problems cannot be measured, the physical damages caused by these conditions can be observed and measured. That's why green spaces such as parks are necessary.

One of the new approaches for the satisfaction and security of women in urban areas is the separation of men and women in public spaces and providing facilities and specialized services for them. For several years the ladies park project are implemented for the welfare of women in some cities. Parks and green spaces are very important for women as the most important recreational centers, which are of great importance in urban sustainable development and improving the quality of women's lives in addition to medical and psychological aspects (Heidari Chiane et al. 2015). One of the features of public spaces is unrestricted access for the public. This definition means that all segments of society in each group, age, gender, etc. have access to these spaces without any restrictions (Roofi, 2014). Urban parks play important role as places with recreational areas for leisure, relieving from psychological pressures, and enhancing social relations between people, mental, emotional and psychological education of children, which in turn reduces social tensions by creating spaces for self-expression and people participation. Observing social security, being trapped, not having adjacent buildings to the ladies park, are the main features of these centers, also other predicted facilities in these centers are: sunlight, female employees and guards, water supply, electricity, gas, telephone, bathroom, nursery, playground, gym, pool, cycling and walking tracks, buffet and restaurant, library, chapel, auditorium and pavilions and fixed and

portable benches for friendly meetings.

#### ***4.1. The Physical Environment Regarding Security Criterion***

Security is a basic and essential right to life of all people and citizens in the society (Zabetian and rafi eian 2008: 54). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs in 1968, security just like physiological needs of humans is one of the essential needs of human existence, and directly depends on the health and well-being of mankind (Zabetian and rafi eian 2008: 49). One of the ways to create security is through interferences in cities and architectural spaces, and the spirit is more important than the physical aspect of every place which is caused by social relations which are dependent on each other meaning that the physical framework affects the behaviors and behaviors affect the way of using urban and architectural space (Zabetian and rafi eian 2008: 49). Security is a basic need in all areas of interest to all users, especially for women. Without feeling safe, women do not pay attention to higher needs (Haji Ahmadi Hamedani, 2010).

The most important factors affecting women's security in the park are the following:

- The spaces of Ladies Park should not have hidden corners and angles.
- Ability to view and control all areas of park through management and security of the park.
- Light supply
- Stability, order, and freedom from fear and anxiety.

#### ***4.2. The Physical Design Regarding the Criterion of Socialization***

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need to establish social interactions is the third place under the title of "belonging and love ". This place can be considered as the first step of high level needs of human which is considered as the basis of higher needs. In this stage, the person feels the absence of friends, spouse and children and is interested in having relation with people and having a place in group or family and for some reasons such as caring and responsibility for home and family this importance is doubled (Haji Ahmadi Hamedani. 2010)

Where women are alone with people who are different, it is like they are far from the space, even though people should not be like them (Franck & paxson 1989). Obviously, the kinds of people who form the local features in a space affect the women's preferences in selecting effective space (Franck & Paxson, 1989). Many women have more tendencies to participate in groups with the same gender and next to other women. So being in a group reduces the feeling of fear and threat. Most theorists believe that women are not easily threatened in groups (Marion Roberts, 1998).

#### ***4.3. The Physical Environment Design According to the Criterion of Large Vision and Good Access***

Many new green spaces do not have readability. These often do not remain in memory and moving areas are confusing.

Similar axes, uniform areas of lawns and repeating elements in all sectors have exacerbated the situation. But in successful examples of landscape design and use of materials and elements to create a variety of moods particular, we see the creation of knowledge and the spatial character.

The following must be considered in designing and constructing urban spaces for women:

1. The materials should not be used in pathways that inhibit women's movement, especially with the carriage, cart, etc.
2. The floor covering should not be barriers for the movement of carriages and carts.
3. Urban furniture arrangement in the trails should be such that should not prevent movements of carriages, carts, etc.
4. Communication and visual and physical permeability through urban space index can improve the quality of urban space for women.

#### **4.4. Designing the Physical Environment According to Criterion of Privacy**

The issue of privacy and the veil for confidentiality and protection of women is one of the most important principles of Iranian architecture in the creation of architectural space. The word literally means privacy, around and where it is necessary to protect and defend. The privacy creates border zone, but the goal is not separation. The observance of the veil in different levels of Iranian architecture is fully taken into account. Such that in the design and construction of buildings, visual hijab, audio hijab and behavioral hijab are focused (Jalili, 2010).

#### **4.5. Environmental Factors are Important Factors in the Design of the Physical Environment Which can be Effective in Women's Behaviors**

According to the psychology and valid Islamic narrations, it has been noted that water and the streams and rivers create relaxation and peace in human such that doctors and religious consultants recommend going to the rivers and streams to those who are mentally in suffer.

Water is one the vital and main elements in parks because some of it is used for irrigation, plants protection and some of it is used to create beauty in design. The water fall and drop, has waves and splashes and can create excitement. Water creates a feeling of mental peace, feeling of innocence and holiness

## **5. Case Study: Narges Park in Terms of Physical Framework**

In this article we have tried to evaluate the effect of physical environment on the behaviors of women in the park located in the holy city of Qom.

Qom is Iran's first city to accept Shiite and it is in the center of Iran and currently has two parks for women. Narges Park is located in residential neighborhoods: Zambil-Abad, Salarie and Bonyad. This park is 12 hectares as a specific complex for women in Qom and was granted to municipality in 2007 and in addition to educational and cultural courses, it provided the

conditions for women that they can play and do sports in an open space with peace of mind, so that many families are interested that their daughters do exercises in such places. Specifying this complex to women creates the condition for inviting and encouraging them to exercise. In this complex, control and monitoring security, ethical issues, camping, occasions and etc are done in the best way so that ladies can enjoy and exercise without worries and obsessions.

#### **5.1. The Design of the Physical Environment Regarding Security Criterion**

Spaces in Ladies Park should not have hidden corners and angles. The best advantage of this park is its high security. In addition to female guards during the day and male guards at night, we can refer to its design and not having hidden angles and corners so women do not have the fear and worry to move in these spaces. As shown in Figure (1) we can observe this matter in Narges Park.



Source: author. 2015

**Figure (1).** All areas of the park are clear.

#### **5.2. The Design of Physical Environment According to the Criterion of Socialization**

There are many pavilions in every part of the park which increases the sense of friendship and companionship in women. And encourage them to come to these places and helps them with their social interactions



Source: author. 2015

**Figure (2).** There are various pavilions around the park.

Mehr House for retired women equipped with facilities such as; family counseling, educational classes (including classes, sewing, blue embroidery, carpet weaving, etc.), could fulfill their leisure time and affect positively their spirits and had impact on social interactions of women. Mehr House is located in the entrance of the park for the easy access of retired women and there is a café on a corner of the Mehr house.



Source: author. 2015

**Figure (3).** Mehr House in Narges Park .



The temporary pavilions for the exhibitions run by women who are support of the family. The stands include clothes, crafts, homemade food and more. These are made by women. Usually they set them up during Keramat, Velayat and before Norouz.

Setting them up can supply women's need in addition to being a diversity for women and they can help meet women's needs.

### 5.3. The Physical Environment Design Regarding the Vast View and the Readability of Accesses

In Narges Park, the accesses are suitable to go from one point to another and each has a path with high readability. As you can see in the pictures 4 and 5, it is well illustrated and it helps the women who are confused.



Source: author. 2015

**Figure (4) and (5).** vast view and the readability of accesses.

### 5.4. The Physical Environmental Design with Criterion of Privacy

In Narges Ladies Park, as we see in the images 6 and 7, this important issue has not been met, because the park is located in the residential part and is adjacent to other buildings and residential units. So women have to have complete Hijab and only can take off their Chador. This has reduced the presence of women in parts of the park which are adjacent to the buildings.



Source: author. 2015

**Figure (6).** View from residential buildings.



Source: author. 2015

**Figure (7).** adjacent residential buildings.

In the west and north-west part of the park, there is a Seminary. That's because the building is dedicated to women, more women's sports activities are done in this section because of the security.



Source: author. 2015

**Figure (8).** View from the interior of the Seminary to the park.

View to some parts of the park is covered and blocked by some tall trees and some women have freedom and comfort in these parts, especially in the entrance, the view by pedestrians and people is controlled by fences and trees. The women are satisfied with the privacy in the entrance and have good feeling in some middle parts because of the limited view from outside.



Source: author. 2015

**Figure (9) and (10).** Limited visibility of the South and South West ( side entrance ) garden , by planting trees and fences, fence .

### 5.5. Environmental Factors are Important Factors in the Design of the Physical Environment Which can be Effective in the Behaviors of Women

The stream is the reason of ladies activities on both sides of it. Some are walking, some women choose the surrounding green space for sitting and talking and some study in these places, because water and its sound creates a feeling of peace in mind.



Source: author. 2015.

**Figure (11).** the stream along the walking path and green space.

## 6. Conclusions

**Table 1.** Conclusions.

Threats	Opportunities	Weaknesses	Strengths
Enhance the beauty sight of women, and a nice view of the park	Convenient access for women	No embedded elements, statues and indicator elements and attractive open spaces	The site is in residential area and away from the bustle and congestion of the city
Less showing the beautiful environment of the park	Access for retired women and those who have just come to the library, etc.	Lack of use of the inspiring and relaxing elements, such as lack of diversity and removal of vegetation in many places	The library, Mehr house and swimming pool at the entrance
Less presence of women in the private spaces	Create privacy and security at the entrance and the south side of the park Providing security for women  Quiet, safe and clean place	Lack of privacy and freedom in the Middle, East and Southeast parts	Equipped bodies with the fences and trees around the entrance  No hidden corners and angles Away from sound pollution and environmental pollution

## Recommendations

- Enhance the beauty sight of people, placing them in front of park attractions and remove any causes of visual disturbances such as organizing the playground and landscaping the area around the stream as a turning point for the park;
- The use of interesting sounds including the sound of birds and the water in all parts of the park in order to use the sense of hearing;
- Planting tall trees, in areas of the environment with a vision;
- Creating dynamics and attractiveness and in spaces that have been stagnating;

- Taking advantage of the topography and slope of the ground in the design of spaces and access;
- The characteristics of Iranian gardens;
- Sense of comfort with the principles of good design and use of plant;
- Create a sense of movement in women through deepening the landscape and perspective of women;
- Creating variations in color, texture, size and shape of landscape elements;
- Design and construction of various forms of fountains for better comfort of women;
- The use of grass where there is no vegetation, to create soft tissue in the landscape.

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