

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title: **Class, Gender, and the Transformation of Public and Community Spaces in Indian Urban Metropolises**

Project Number **HSS0506**

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IITB Department:

Humanities and Social Sciences

Research Academy Themes:

Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address?

(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)

1. Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture
2. Infrastructure Engineering
3. Clean Energy
4. Water
5. Nanotechnology
6. Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research
7. **Humanities and Social Sciences**

The research problem

Define the problem

The nature of the urban household, family, kinship, and gender relations interface with women's presence in public spaces at different points of time. Other than perceptions and reality of safety and security, the transformation of infrastructure, the nature of formal and informal governance of public spaces also play a role in influencing women's presence in public spaces. In cities like Mumbai, political, ethnic, and neighbourhood associations transform and take control of public spaces using formal and informal strategies which influence both women's abilities to traverse and use public spaces such as streets, gardens, and playgrounds; these transformations in control and governance of public and community spaces also may influence household and family decisions regarding women's autonomy and freedom to use these spaces for household activities, and for recreational, health and fitness, leisure, and other activities. Temporally specific events such as festival or political events mobilize men and women take control of public spaces,

and convert them into community spaces. Contrary to stereotypical views of ethnic conflict and caste/class based exclusion, the picture that emerges is a complex one of negotiation, and gradual incursion into and use of public spaces by men and women of different classes over a period of time, resulting in both restrictions on and expansions of access to public spaces for women.

Project aims

Define the aims of the project

1. To understand the changing nature of access to public space for women of different class, caste, and ethnic backgrounds, and its relevance for issues of safety and security
2. To explore how families and households restrict or expand women's opportunities to access and use public spaces for different kinds of activities, and the reasons for the same
3. To assess the role of neighbourhood level dynamics of public and community spaces as influenced by political, neighbourhood, and ethnic mobilization by different class groups, and the contestations over uses of public space: the gender implications of these processes.

Expected outcomes

Highlight the expected outcomes of the project

A better and more nuanced understanding of women's access to public and community spaces, the implications for safety and security and the expansion or restriction of opportunities for women.

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

Describe how the project will address the goals of one or more of the 6 Themes listed above.

The project addresses the 7th theme that has been added – Humanities and Social Sciences. Urban spaces are undergoing rapid transformation in India, even as there are increasing concerns for women's safety that are not adequately addressed either by state agencies or by academic research. This project hopes to respond to growing concerns regarding women's security issues in the context of increasing violence in urban areas, by coming up with a better understanding of women's actual experiences in the context of rapid urban transformation. Much of urban studies in India ignore these aspects.

Capabilities and Degrees Required

List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.

1. A Masters in any social science discipline (sociology, geography, political science, development studies, urban studies, anthropology). MPhil strongly preferred.
2. Some awareness and experience of ethnographic research techniques
3. A proposal, no longer than 1000 words, with a specific topic and indicating research question, is to be submitted.

Potential Collaborators

Please visit the IITB website www.iitb.ac.in OR Monash Website www.monash.edu to highlight some potential collaborators that would be best suited for the area of research you are intending to float.

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Please provide a few key words relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Urban Public Space; Women's safety and security; Gender and community politics