

Design of Safe Shelter & Skill Development Centre in Maharashtra: Healing & Empowering Through Space.

Minal M upase¹, Dhanashri Pande²

¹Student, Sipna School of Planning and Architecture, Amravati, India

²Asst. Professor, Sipna School of Planning and Architecture, Amravati, India

Abstract— This research focuses on designing a shelter and skill development center which combines of safe shelter for homeless or women in distress and needy, medical facilities as well as skill development training which can help them to rebuild their future and lives. The idea is not only providing them physical safety, emotional, physiological & medical support but also to teach them valuable skills which will help them to learn grow financially to reintegrate into the society again. The research paper concludes with such existing centers and highlights how designing strategies, planning & architectural elements can heal psychologically, emotionally, physically and also by providing vocational trainings like tailoring, handicraft, computer trainings, culinary courses etc. Which helps them to rebuilt lives, self-esteem, got empowerment, greater economic independence for strong future. This dual approach not only provides them support, protection, economic independence, but also it helps breaking the cycle of abuse, improved public health, reduction in gender inequality, reduced crime against women, awareness between women also help to rebuilt and shape a good future.

Keywords: Safe shelter, Vocational Training, Empowerment center Skill development, trauma recovery, livelihood support.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women across the world faces range of challenges which includes economic dependency, domestic violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking, etc. and it is neglected often due to fear, stigma or lack of support. These issues highlight the urgent need for safe space that not only provides protection but also empowers women to rebuild their lives with safety, dignity and independence. A Women safety shelter and skill development component, legal aid and basic necessities the skill development components empowers women financially services enhance self-reliance, growth, independence and reduce the risk of women returning to abusive environment due to economic or social pressure. This research paper aims to explore the structure, effectiveness and social

impact of such center, how integration of safety and initiatives for empowerment contributes to long term recovery and sustainable development for women.

II. BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Women facing persistent threats from domestic violence, sexual abuse, economic dependency etc. globally despite legal actions and awareness champaigns, access to safe space and support systems remains limited, especially for women in rural and undeserved communities. Traditional shelters often provide only immediate safety needs overlooking the long-term goal of self-reliance empowerment. To fill this gap designing of a space which combines safety shelter with skill development centres have emerged as a promising solution. Traditional shelter models often focus on functionally and security but overlooks consideration for physiological comfort, privacy and community integration. Architecture plays on vital role in this area, for that are secure yet welcoming, private yet connected and therapeutic yet practical.

III. IMPORTANCE OF DESIGNING

Designing for such centers more than basic planning and functionally, a well-planned space thoughtful spatial planning such as separate zones for accommodation counselling, training, childcare, learning, recreation. Which can enhance the sense of dignity, independence and well-being among users. Integrating designing principles of trauma care design, natural lighting, ventilation, spaces recreation which enhances mood, provides peace, brings social integration makes sure that the built environment itself becomes a tool for recovery and empowerment.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PAPER

The main aim of the research paper is to know that how architectural design with skill development

opportunities supports the victim women to overcome and live with dignity and peace. It tells how spaces and environment offers psychological, physical improvements encourages individuals and enhance independence and development.

V. SIGNIFICANCE

This paper is significant as it manages the urgent need for architectural solutions that prioritize safety and empowerment both for women in distress or crisis. By addressing the integration of shelter design with skill development training spaces, it highlights how architecture goes beyond functionality to support healing, self-reliance and dignity. It contributes in it by proposing the needs and desires of users, trauma based and culturally sensitive design strategies which can influence architect and planner to design more impactful space that can decrease the trauma and pain and can heal and changes lives for the user group.

VI. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- To explore and design a safe, integrated and healing environment for women affected by violence or social, economic issues.
- To unite skill development facilities within the shelter to promote long term empowerment and economic issues.
- To design need and desirable space for women psychological and physical needs.
- The scope combines of designing skill development programs, educational programs, and psychological and socially integrated well-being of the user group.

VII. METHODOLOGY

Research approach:

This research adopts qualitative and user centred approach to understand the architectural and social elements involved in safety shelter and skill development centre for women.

Combining case studies, analysis, literature review, an observation to know the architectural needs of women in such conditions.

The research focuses on knowing house spatial design can address safety, privacy, dignity and empowerment.

Data collected through -

- Architectural case studies and analysis of existing shelters and training centres.
- Interviews and user feedback from residents of shelter, staff and designer.
- Evaluation of shelter environment through user centric lens.

The approach is wide ranging integrating perspective from architecture, gender studies, needs and desire of users, safety, emotional well – being, aiming to propose inclusive suitable environment and identify key design aspects that influence the success of centre.

VIII. LITERATURE REVIEW

EVOLUTION OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN: Early shelters prioritized security and emergency housing often overlooking accessibility, human dignity in built environments, privacy and emotional well-being. Universal design has evolved prioritizing principles led to more user friendly, flexible spaces which support immediate safety and long-term empowerment. These centers are designed not just as shelter but as inclusive environment that enhances self-sufficiency, dignity of all women.

IX. CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSIS

1. LITERATURE CASE STUDIES:

Women empowerment shelter,



Karnataka, India.

Location: Bijapur, Loni, Karnataka, India.

Establishment year: 2022.

Facility type: Accommodation facility, training and skill development, healthcare facilities, childcare facilities.

Area covered: 3acres, 130,680sq ft

Administered by: Mis ere or organization.

Capacity:150 women.

POSITIVE ASPECTS:

- Integrated and multifunctional design: It serves multiple purposes like it provides accommodation for 150 women and girls, provides education and skill development centre, has community gathering space. This approaches growth, community integration and empowerment.
- Sustainable and climate responsive architecture: The centre is situated in hot, arid region, so it consists of some sustainable features:
- Rain water harvesting, biogas plant, use of natural ventilation, use of flora etc.
- Dedicated educational spaces: which includes spacious classrooms, training rooms, activity rooms which supports women and community integration.
- Natural elements: site is planted with local trees like mango, tamarind, neem other flowering trees which are self-sustaining in dry climate, it provides good environment beneficial for mental well- being.

Negative aspects:

- Water scarcity challenges: Despite water management systems, the centre location is in a region with less rainfall which poses ongoing challenges with water supply.
- Remote location and accessibility: The centres location is in a remote village which may limit access to outer resources like healthcare, employment opportunities which obstructs the reintegration of users into society.,

2. LIVE CASE STUDIES:

Astha foundation, Amravati, India.



Location: Dastur nagar, Amravati, Maharashtra, India.

Established :2012

Facility type: Accommodation, training and job opportunities.

Area covered :1000sq ft

Capacity:10-15women

POSITIVE ASPECTS:

- As it is private organization at residential building it gives homely environment to the victims, which can help them to heal faster.
- As it is accommodated for less user group so proper attention can be provided towards every user.
- As it is a residential building style it supports better airflow, natural lighting sources which promotes comfort and better mental well-being.

Negative aspects:

- Limited sources for employment.
- As it is located in residential areas it is problematic in emergency situations.
- No proper private classrooms, training rooms are provided.
- No private rooms are provided for critical users.
- Not proper space segregation is done.

X. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Feature	Studio PPBA Shelter	Aastha Foundation Amravati
Design Focus	Healing & Empowerment	Rehabilitation & Training
Layout Style	Courtyard, fluid, open	Zoned, structured
Material Palette	Natural & local	Conventional construction
Sustainability	High, climate-responsive	Basic, functional
Emotional Impact	Calming, residential feel	Functional, institutional
Flexibility	High	Low to moderate
Public Engagement Capacity	Encouraged 150 women	Limited 10-15 women

XI. ANALYSIS FROM CASE STUDIES

Data collected from live case studies, visits, highlighted poor infrastructure, lack of privacy and minimal skill development training opportunities. In contrast literature case study emphasized dignity, comfort, and education.

The analysis revealed that environments with natural light, open spaces and learning zones showed better behavioral outcomes among user groups.

XII. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Sense of Safety and Security

What this means:

The building should make women feel physically and emotionally safe the moment they enter. This includes having secure entrances, clear boundaries between public and private spaces, and protected outdoor areas.

Architectural outcome:

- Gated entries, secure perimeters
- Secluded sleeping areas
- Visibility for staff (without making residents feel watched)
- Controlled access points

2. A Healing and Calming Environment

What this means:

Women in crisis need spaces that reduce stress, anxiety, and trauma. The architecture should feel gentle, not institutional or harsh.

Architectural outcome:

- Use of natural light, soft colours, and natural materials
- Quiet corners for reflection
- Courtyards or gardens for fresh air and peace
- Avoiding cold, sterile environments

3. Empowerment Through Functional Spaces

What this means:

Skill development requires spaces that support learning, creativity, and productivity. The centre should feel like a place of growth, not just shelter.

Architectural outcome:

- Flexible classrooms or training rooms
- Spaces for tailoring, computer training, cooking, etc.
- Workshop areas connected to community or market zones
- Display or retail areas to sell products made by residents

4. Encouraging Community and Connection

What this means:

Being around others with shared experiences can build confidence and reduce isolation. Architecture should encourage women to meet, talk, and support each other.

Architectural outcome:

- Shared kitchens and dining areas

- Common lounges and multipurpose halls
- Courtyards or gathering zones
- Spatial design that gently nudges interaction (but allows privacy too)

5. A Sense of Dignity and Normalcy

What this means:

The shelter shouldn't feel like a prison or hospital. It should feel like a home, with dignity and respect in every design choice.

Architectural outcome:

- Thoughtful design of bedrooms and bathrooms
- Personal storage and privacy
- Warm lighting, simple decor
- Spaces that don't scream "charity" but feel uplifting

6. Adaptability and Long-Term Use

What this means:

The centre should be able to grow and adapt with time—whether for new training programs, workshops, or more residents.

Architectural outcome:

- Modular rooms that can be reconfigured
- Easy maintenance and durable materials
- Spaces that can evolve from dorms to classrooms or offices

Final Thought:

Good architecture doesn't just build walls and roofs—it supports recovery, growth, and independence. For a women's safety and skill centre, the goal is to restore confidence and rebuild lives, one thoughtful space at a time.

XIII. SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES WHICH SHOULD BE ADAPTED:

1. Passive Design for Natural Comfort

Why it matters: Reduces the need for air conditioning and artificial lighting, cutting costs and making the building more pleasant.

Practices to include:

- Cross ventilation: Windows and openings placed to let fresh air flow naturally.
- Orientation: Position buildings to get good sunlight in winter and shade in summer.
- Shading devices: Roof overhangs, pergolas, or trees to protect from harsh sun.
- Thermal mass: Use thick walls or local stone to keep interiors cool.

2. Energy Efficiency

Why it matters: Lowers electricity bills and dependence on unreliable power sources.

Practices to include:

- Solar panels: For lighting, water heating, or backup electricity.
- LED lighting: Energy-saving and long-lasting.
- Efficient appliances: Low-power fans, pumps, and equipment in training rooms.

3. Water Management

Why it matters: Women's shelters need consistent water supply, especially in water-stressed regions.

Practices to include:

- Rainwater harvesting: Collect water from roofs and store it for non-drinking use.
- Greywater recycling: Reuse water from sinks and showers for gardening or flushing.
- Low-flow fixtures: Taps, toilets, and showers that reduce water use without sacrificing comfort.

4. Use of Local and Natural Materials

Why it matters: Supports local economy, reduces transportation pollution, and creates a more human-scaled, warm environment.

Practices to include:

- Mud, bamboo, stone, or compressed earth blocks
- Lime plaster instead of cement (more breathable and eco-friendly).
- Recycled or upcycled materials where possible

5. Green Landscaping

Why it matters: Plants cool the air, improve mental health, and create calming spaces for women recovering from trauma.

Practices to include:

- Native plants: Require less water and care.
- Edible gardens: For nutrition and skill-building.
- Shaded courtyards: Comfortable outdoor gathering areas.

6. Low-Maintenance Design

Why it matters: Saves long-term money and avoids constant repairs—especially important for non-profit-run shelters.

Practices to include:

- Durable flooring and finishes

- Simple construction techniques that local builders can repair
- Modular or adaptable layouts for changing needs over time

7. Waste Reduction

Why it matters: Keeps the environment clean and reduces running costs.

Practices to include:

- Composting pits for organic kitchen waste
- Segregated bins for recyclable materials
- Construction waste management during building phase

Final Thought:

Sustainability in a women's shelter isn't just about green design—it's about creating a safe, healthy, and affordable place to live, learn, and grow. By thinking ahead, these practices can ensure the shelter runs smoothly, respects nature, and supports dignity for decades.

XIV. CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that architectural design plays a crucial role in women safety shelter and skill development center. By integrating vocational training with rehabilitative spaces, centers can foster emotional, psychological, and social growth, helping users to reintegrate into society. The architectural design of a Women's Safety Shelter and Skill Development Centre plays a critical role not just in providing physical protection, but in enabling emotional healing, personal growth, and long-term empowerment. This research highlights how architecture can go beyond shelter to become a powerful tool for recovery, dignity, and social reintegration.

By incorporating trauma-informed spatial planning, sustainable building practices, and flexible programmatic spaces, architects can create environments that are sensitive, inclusive, and future-ready. Elements such as passive ventilation, natural materials, communal courtyards, and skill-training areas are not just design features—they are part of a broader ecosystem of care, safety, and opportunity. Ultimately, a well-designed shelter becomes more than a refuge—it becomes a launchpad. A place where women can rebuild their lives, learn new skills, form supportive networks, and transition confidently into society. Architecture, in this context, is not just about building walls—it's about restoring agency, creating hope, and shaping futures.

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