Abstract

AN ANALYSIS OF PLAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN LIVING IN HIGH-RISE HOUSING IN INDIA: A CASE STUDY OF URBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOUSING IN PUNE METROPOLITAN AREA

By

Sruthi Atmakur-Javdekar

Adviser: Professor Roger Hart

This dissertation aims to identify the combinations of spatial arrangements and physical features that influence young children’s access to play and the quality of their play opportunities in a heterogeneous sample of high-rise housing in India. Using Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development as a theoretical lens, the study examines two large umbrellas that contribute to young children’s play opportunities in high-rise housing developments: (1) The play environment that is made available for children by developers and design professionals; and (2) Parents’ and caregivers’ ways of using the designated and undesignated spaces based on their own play values and beliefs. A Baseline Study of 63 housing societies and Case study research of seven varied high-rise housing environments in a fast growing suburb of Pune metropolitan area supported the documentation and analysis of play opportunities for young children from middle-class families living in high-rise housing developments. Specifically, the Case study research included in-depth field studies and interviews with developers, design professionals, city planners and Indian middle-class families. Further, I supplemented the analysis of each case study by adapting Lefebvre’s Production of Space as an analytical framework to examine the Conceptualized, Actual and Experienced spaces to represent the Produced Space of children’s play. Study outcomes include the development of a comparative visual assessment chart, i.e., Array of Play Diversity, Design Principles and Improvement Practices to help design professionals and developers provide an appropriate range of play elements, materials and surfaces to support young children’s play. Analysis and findings from this study generate knowledge to create better housing environments for children, thus, building a case for high-rise housing developments as an acceptable and a desired form of housing for families with young children.