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UNDERSTANDING GENDER INEQUALITY IN BUILT-IN WARDROBE

Sub theme: Goal 5-Gender Equality

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Abstract

There are no two people similar with the same lifestyle and choice of attires. The size and layout of the built-in wardrobe tend to vary depending on the number of belongings and each person's lifestyle. Before anyone starts to plan a built-in closet, paying attention to the needs of the users, according to their individual habits is important. Bearing in mind gender as one of the important aspects of designing a built-in wardrobe in bedrooms, the requirement and anthropometric data of male, female, and neutral gender should be noted to understand what type of compartment is required by the end user.

As a research process to understand the lifestyle, body types, and heights of different genders an online questionnaire survey and an in-person interview for the collection of empirical data can be conducted. Understanding which clothes can be stored folded, and are required to hang. Understanding storage sizes to store garments, accessories, shoes, and bags owned by different genders. Each stuff should find its place in the closet and should be easily identified, and movable.

This research will help to understand how gender inequality in built-in wardrobes creates discomfort for different genders. As Counter-intuitively designed approaches that aim to 'design for everyone can be more prone to bias.'

Keywords

Gender Equality; Built-in Wardrobe; Requirement; Space; Design; empirical data.

1. Introduction

Gender neutrality is making a big impact in fashion, with no one having to feel left out. As androgynous fashion becomes more popular, many different styles of clothing are available that can be used for men and women. There is a new trend of gender-fluid fashion, which means many things. One of these is that you might need to update your wardrobe.

Understanding gender equality in built-in wardrobes by the designers is more important than Blurring the lines between what is ‘girly’ and what is ‘manly’. Gender-fluid fashion is starting to overtake our wardrobe and we have no clue! As the changing fashion, trends, and individual choices, wardrobe designs should be made, considering the client’s needs and interests.

This research focuses on how understanding gender equality in built-in wardrobes is necessary to be considered in the changing lifestyle. The research will help understand how gender inequality in built in wardrobes has affected the end user and how considering genders while designing will help in better usage and accessibility of the wardrobes by the client.

2. Methodology

An online questionnaire survey was conducted to understand different choices of different genders. The survey was conducted with people of different age groups to understand their preferences regarding built in and movable wardrobes.

2.1 Questionnaire Survey

First, a search engine was used to conduct an internet survey. The problems faced by the end user while using built in wardrobe were examined. The survey helped in understanding the impacts of built in wardrobes on different genders with different lifestyle who are using built-in wardrobe.

Secondly, the questionnaire survey helped clarify how users get affected by design of the wardrobe which is designed without considering or understanding gender equality.

2.1 Analysis

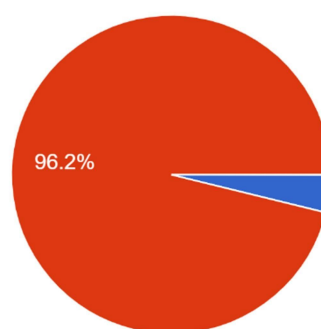


Figure 1: [What is your height?]

This survey was conducted from the age group between 19 to 30. According to the responses 96% of the users are above 5 ft whereas, only 1 person seems to be below 4 ft which makes the user difficult to use the shelf above their reach.

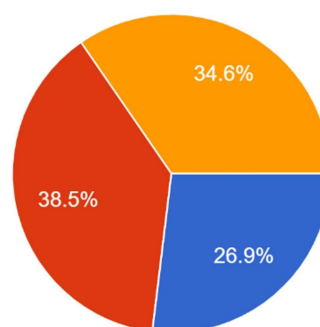


Figure 2: [Does your door bang when opened together?]

Out of 26 respondents only 29% of users face the issue of door banging. 34% of them sometimes face this issue. And 37% of them don't face the problem. Which means majority of them have smooth functioning of door opening and closing.

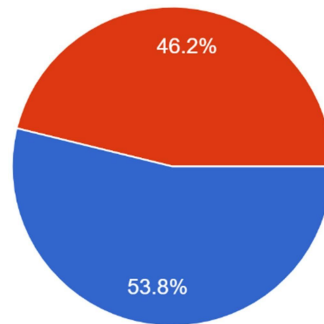


Figure 3 : [Is there enough space to walk when closet is opened?]

The respondents being of mixed genders had different lifestyle 53% of them had enough space to walk in the room whereas the remaining 41% of them didn't had enough space.

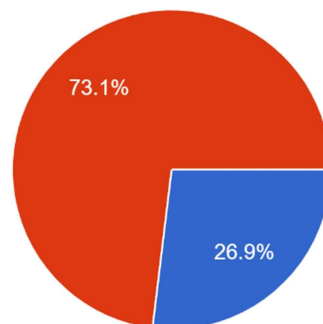


Figure 4: [can you easily use the top compartment of the wardrobe?]

When asked about easy accessibility 73% of the users couldn't reach the top most compartment easily. Hardly, 26% of them could easily access the compartment. This shows why consideration of body type and heights is necessary while designing the wardrobe for a particular person.

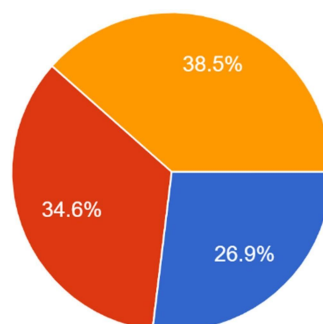


Figure 5: [Do you experience the problem of smelly or door swelling in wardrobes during monsoons?]

There are times when wardrobes smell due to water seepage or some other reasons the analysis shows that 38% of the respondents don't always face the issue but have experienced it. Whereas, 26% have not faced the issue. 34% of them have not experienced smelly wardrobe.

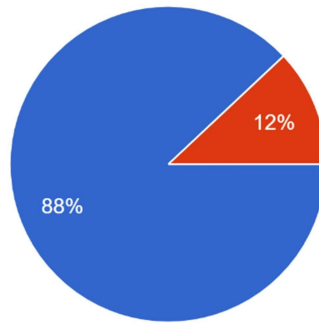


Figure 6: [Do you struggle while cleaning every corner of the wardrobe?]

When it comes to cleaning female seem to be more concerned about it, the survey replicates that 88% of the users struggle cleaning the wardrobe.

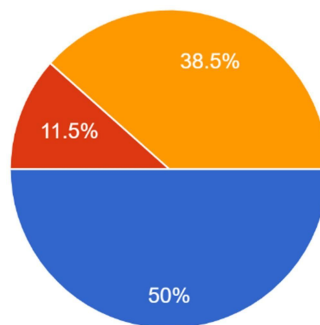


Figure 7: [Do you think maintaining built-in wardrobe Is difficult and expensive as compared to free handling wardrobes?]

Maintenance of wardrobes Is the most important thing 50% of the users find maintaining built in wardrobes difficult and expensive. 38% respondents say that it maybe difficult and expensive.

Table 1: [Do you prefer built-in wardrobe or movable [free-handling] wardrobe?]

NAMES	BUILT-IN/ MOVABLE	NAMES	BUILT-IN/ MOVABLE
MANASWI 19	MOVABLE WARDROBE	SHIVA 20	BUILT-IN WARDROBE
KRUPA 30	BUILT IN WARDROBE	SHIVANGI 21	BUILT- IN WARDROBE
VIBHA 20	NOT SURE BUT MOSTLY BUILT- IN WARDROBE	SANA 23	BUILT-IN WARDROBE
ISHA 20	BUILT-IN WARDROBE	VARSHA 20	BILT-IN WARDROBE
AYUSHI 19	BUILT-IN WARDROBE	SRUJANA 22	MOVABLE WARDROBE
MRUNAL 19	BUILT- IN WARDROBE	OLIVIA 20	BUILT-IN WARDROBE
FARHAAN 20	BUILT- IN WARDROBE	SAMRUDDHI 20	BUILT-IN WARDROBE
SAFA 20	BUILT- IN WARDROBE	RIYA 22	BUILT-IN WARDROBE
NAINA 21	BUILT-IN WARDROBE	MINA	BUILT IN WARDROBE
JIYA 22	BUILT-IN WARDROBE	MAHESH 19	MOVABLE WARDROBE
JAY	BUILT IN WARDROBE	VEDIKA 20	BUILT IN WARDROBE
MEERA 21	MOVABLE	JUI 20	MOVABLE

	WARDROBE		WARDROBE
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3. Empirical Data

As mentioned above an In- person interview was conducted. The interview was conducted with the age group between 19 to 30 to understand the advantages and disadvantages the interviewee faces due to lack in gender equality while designing the wardrobe.

According to responses, women find using a built-in wardrobe more difficult as the heights, body types, clothes preferences, usage of compartments, cleaning etc. of the wardrobe. Females having different types of clothing for different purposes which means that there is need to have different sizes of shelves, hanging space, trays for storing accessories etc. for this reason gender equality while designing built-in wardrobe is necessary. Whereas, men's do not have much of different clothing and accessories to store.

Designers these days do not consider different needs of different genders while designing the interior of wardrobe which eventually brought readymade organizers in the market.

Built-in wardrobe are wardrobes which cannot be moved and once made cannot be changed for years as they are expensive as it is made according to the room size and client's preferences. Considering the genders while designing the wardrobe makes it more functional for the client.

An empirical survey was done by collecting photographs and client requirement data. As seen in fig.8 and fig.9 the built-in wardrobe are full length which has made the female client difficult to access the overhead cabinets and shelves. According to the men's there should have been some hanging space to hang the formal wear. Too many shelves has made the men clients storage more compact. Females find issue in storing all the accessories, Jewelry, hand bags etc.

Storage being the main purpose of wardrobe, it also should be easily accessible and functional for the end user, and it is only possible if the wardrobe is designed with understanding and considering genders.

Anthropometry is one of the important aspects to be considered. As per the data collected the female client couldn't reach the top most shelf whereas the male clients do not have hanging space for formal wear which becomes a disadvantage for the users. The shelves are more convenient for the female clients due to variety in clothing but becomes a drawback for the male users. The survey showcases how built wardrobe has restricted the particular genders usage and ease of accessibility towards their belongings. Accessories need proper storage, according to female clients having drawers in the built-in wardrobe is more safe and accessible whereas accessories like belts, ties, watches, wallet etc. need tray [preferred by few male users].

These were few points that were discussed while the survey was conducted.



Figure 8 : Photo credit: Author



Figure 9: Photo Credit: Author

4. Conclusion

By studying the collected data, it was understood that the wardrobes designed were not designed with the consideration of gender, body type, heights, or the interests or profile of the end user.

4.1 Discussion

Designing wardrobe is like designing a space of the users interest. There are a lot of factors which need to be considered while designing a wardrobe especially built-in wardrobes as it is designed as per clients requirements, space available and design chosen by the client.

Gender is not one of the factors which are considered while designing whereas it should be the first factor to be considered as different genders have different types of clothes, heights, body types. Gender equality is one of the most under rated factors of designing. Analysing the responses regarding online survey showcases that gender are not considered while designing the built-in wardrobes.

While asking to consider gender as one of the aspects the height, body type, lifestyle of the person is equally necessary. Respondents preferring built-in wardrobe have certain reasons such as sleek look, designed according to requirements, space saving etc.

Gender inequality in wardrobes designing is one of the major issues faced by the end user. Designers should consider genders to understand the easy functioning of the wardrobe and better designs. Gender consideration makes it easy to design as it gives a clear idea about clothes and lifestyle of the person.

The five main things a designer should consider when designing a wardrobe are:

- Know the type of clothing
- Proper space planning
- Consider accessibility and functionality
- Consider the most suitable shelving for YOU
- Most important consider the Gender

Summarizing the data, gender discrimination or inequality is not limited upto education, profession or income whereas it is also important to include in design whether a wardrobe or a drawer. It is not only anthropometry or design sometimes it might also be the material used for the wardrobe. Different people have different opinions it is okay to respect all of them.

4.2 Acknowledgement

I would like to express my very great appreciation to Dr Supriya Dhananjay Nene for her valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of this research work. Her willingness to give her time so generously has been very much appreciated. I would also like to thank Ms Isha Desai Mehta, for her advice and assistance in keeping my progress on schedule.

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