



18TH URBAN MOBILITY INDIA

CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025

Enhancing Gender-Friendly Public Transport in India

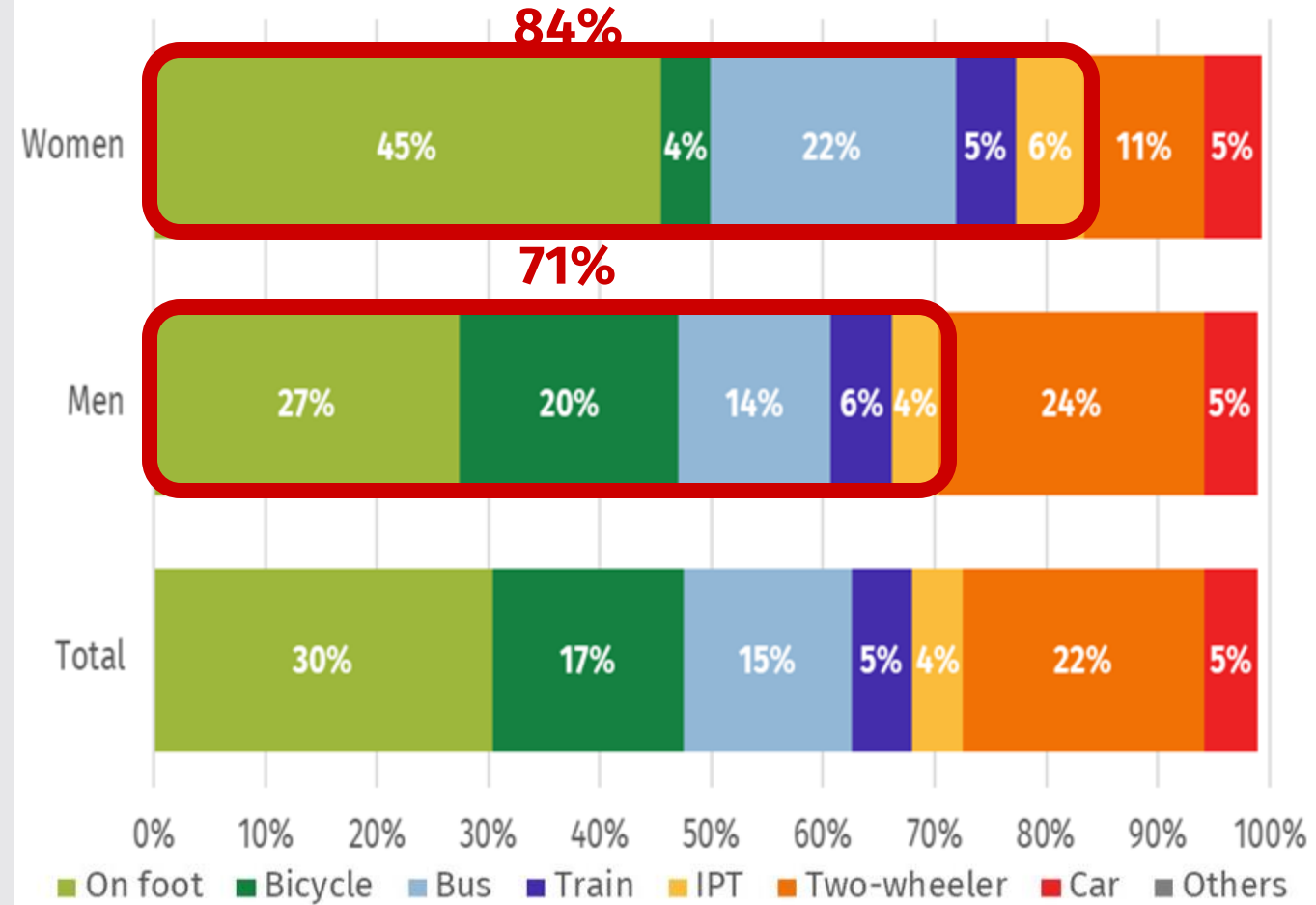


Rethinking mobility because women commute differently

84% of trips taken by women* for work in urban India are by public transport, informal public transport, walk, and cycle, as compared to 71% by men.

Women make shorter and more trips, which often require them to change, divert, and break their journeys to pick up children, run errands, shop or take on other family obligations.

Women's trips are almost 38% shorter on average than their male counterparts.*



How women and men in urban India travel to work | Source: Census of India, 2011

*Source: [India: Making public transport more women-friendly](#), World Bank

Freedom to move? Still a struggle....

56% of urban Indian women reported experiencing sexual harassment on public transport.*

Sexual harassment in public places is very common. A lot of it happens on buses or while waiting at bus stops.

Poor walking infrastructure is also a major concern for women.



Harassment and safety risks on public transport | Image Source: Cinebuzz Time.com



**Source: India: Making public transport more women-friendly, World Bank*



**CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025**
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7th-9th NOV 2025

A system built without women... change is overdue

Women remain severely underrepresented in India's public transport workforce.

In 2024, only **0.16% of women drivers and 15% of conductors** were in the public bus transport workforce- a stark indicator of gender imbalance.*

Workplace conditions in a male-dominated field like public transport often fail to accommodate the basic needs of women, such as clean restrooms, well-lit depots and bus stops, waiting rooms, and a harassment-free work environment, restricting their access to work.



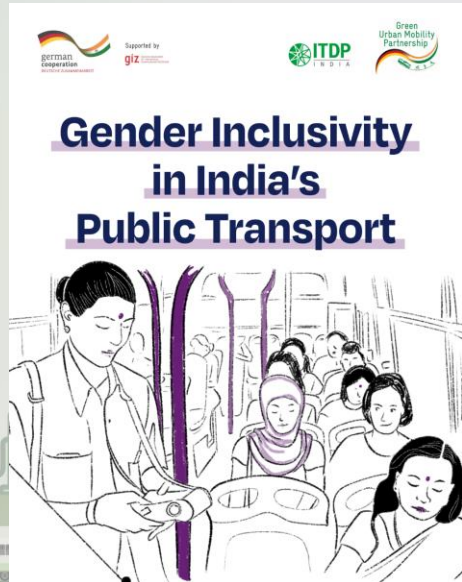
Image Source: Cinebuzz Time.com

*Source: Data calculated by ITDP India team



CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7th-9th NOV 2025

ITDP India in collaboration with GIZ conducted research to understand women's lived experiences in public transport, both as users and employees to increase their participation in public transport.



Location: FGD in Chennai

18TH URBAN MOBILITY INDIA CONFERENCE & EXPO 2025
URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025

Our approach to understand challenges and opportunities

- 1) Conducted a survey in 46 cities with 78,000 women commuters through the Transport4All Challenge, in collaboration with MoHUA.
- 2) Collaborated with ASRTU and conducted 4 focus group discussions with 75 women drivers and conductors in Delhi, Pune, Bangalore, and Chennai.
- 3) Detailed case studies were also conducted for Hubballi Dharwad and Bhubaneswar.



Location: FGD in Pune

This marks the first PAN India consolidated dataset on women's participation and experiences



CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7th-9th NOV 2025

Research Findings

Challenges faced by women passengers & employees in public bus transport



**18TH URBAN
MOBILITY
INDIA**

**CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025**
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025



1. Lack of support system & hostile environment

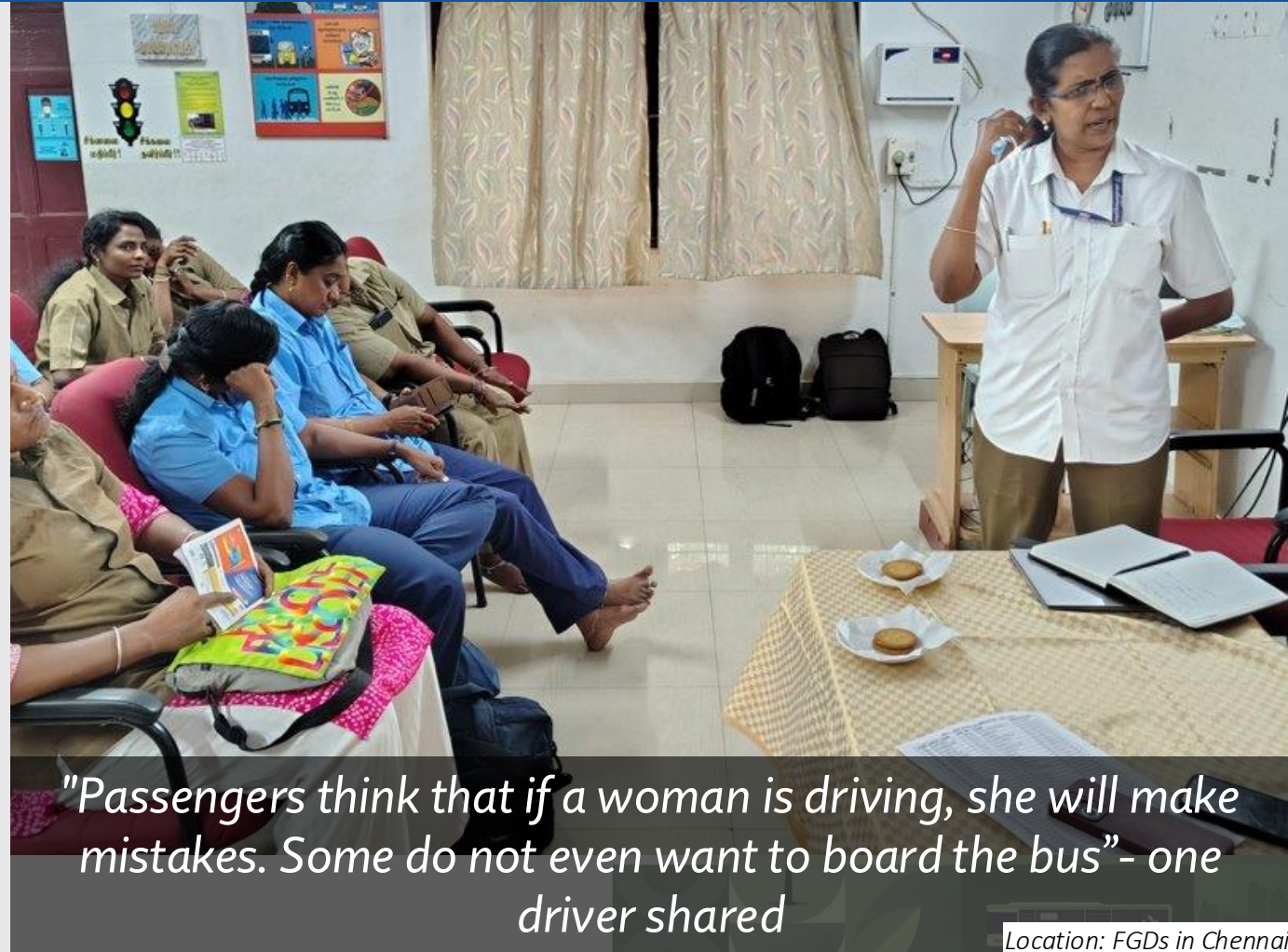
Temporary contracts, even after years of service.

Shift timings are irregular. Women report at 5 a.m. but their duty hours starts when their shift begins.

Women face daily **bias from male colleagues and passengers.**

Long hours of standing and exposure to vehicle vibrations causing health problems.
No healthcare benefit provided.

Yet many persist- for the pride, the income, the impact



Location: FGDs in Chennai

18TH URBAN MOBILITY INDIA

CONFERENCE & EXPO 2025
URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025

2. No toilets, no resting areas while on duty

Many women reported the **lack of basic facilities** such as clean toilets, safe resting areas, and proper changing rooms at depots.

Bus depots are not designed for women's comfort—they often lack lighting, privacy, and seating.

However, the **introduction of electric buses** has been a positive change, as they are easier to handle and reduce physical strain.

“There are no toilets at most bus stops. We must wait until the end of our shift to use the toilet” - a woman conductor



Location: Bus Depot in Delhi

18TH URBAN
MOBILITY
INDIA

CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025

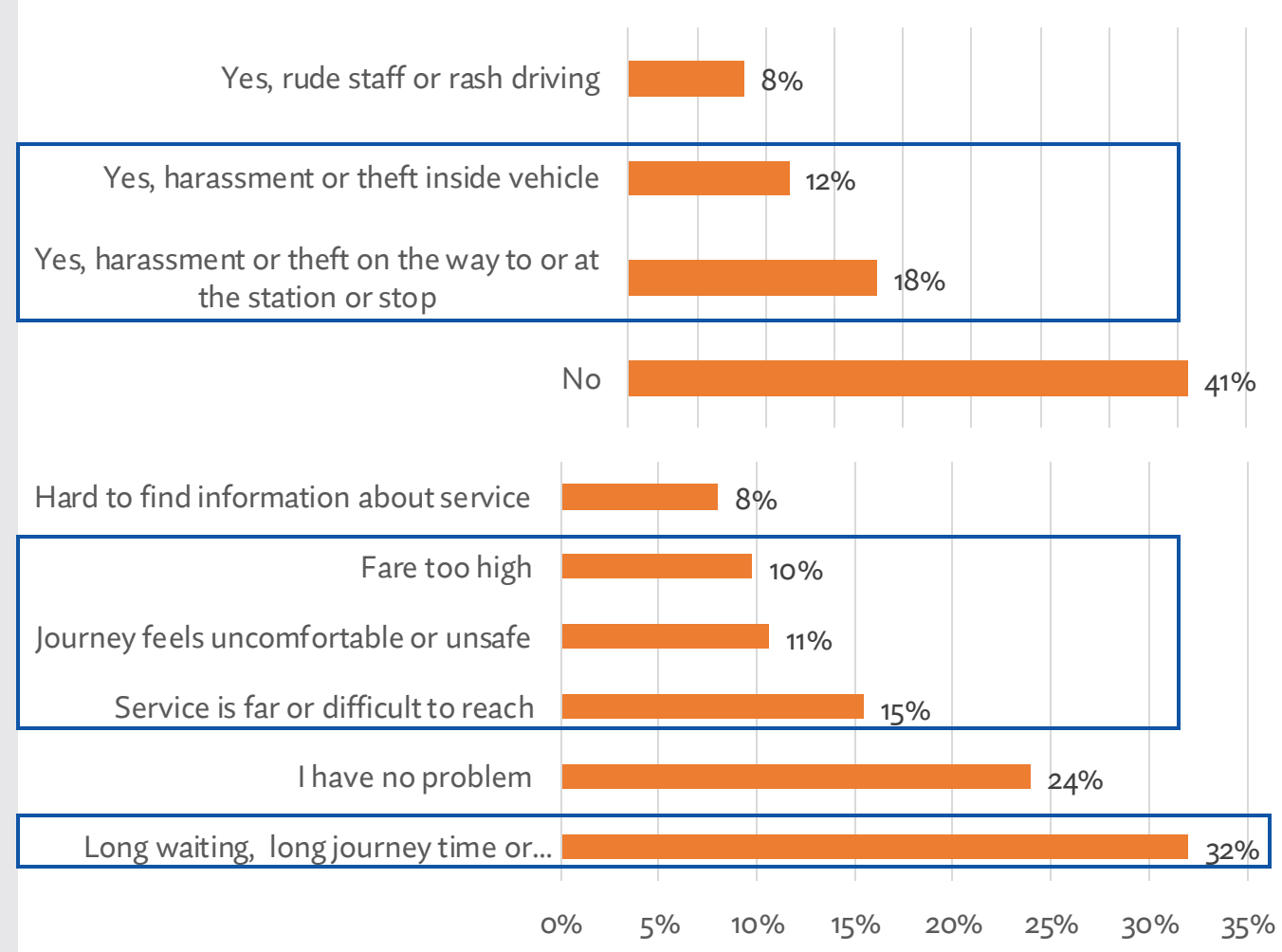
3. Navigating fear: Concerns highlighted by commuters

30% of women experienced harassment or theft in or while waiting for public transport.

32% reported long waiting times, unreliable service, which increases delays

Access to information regarding routes and schedules was cited as a major concern by **23% of women commuters**

10% said fares were too high, affecting their ability to access essential services.



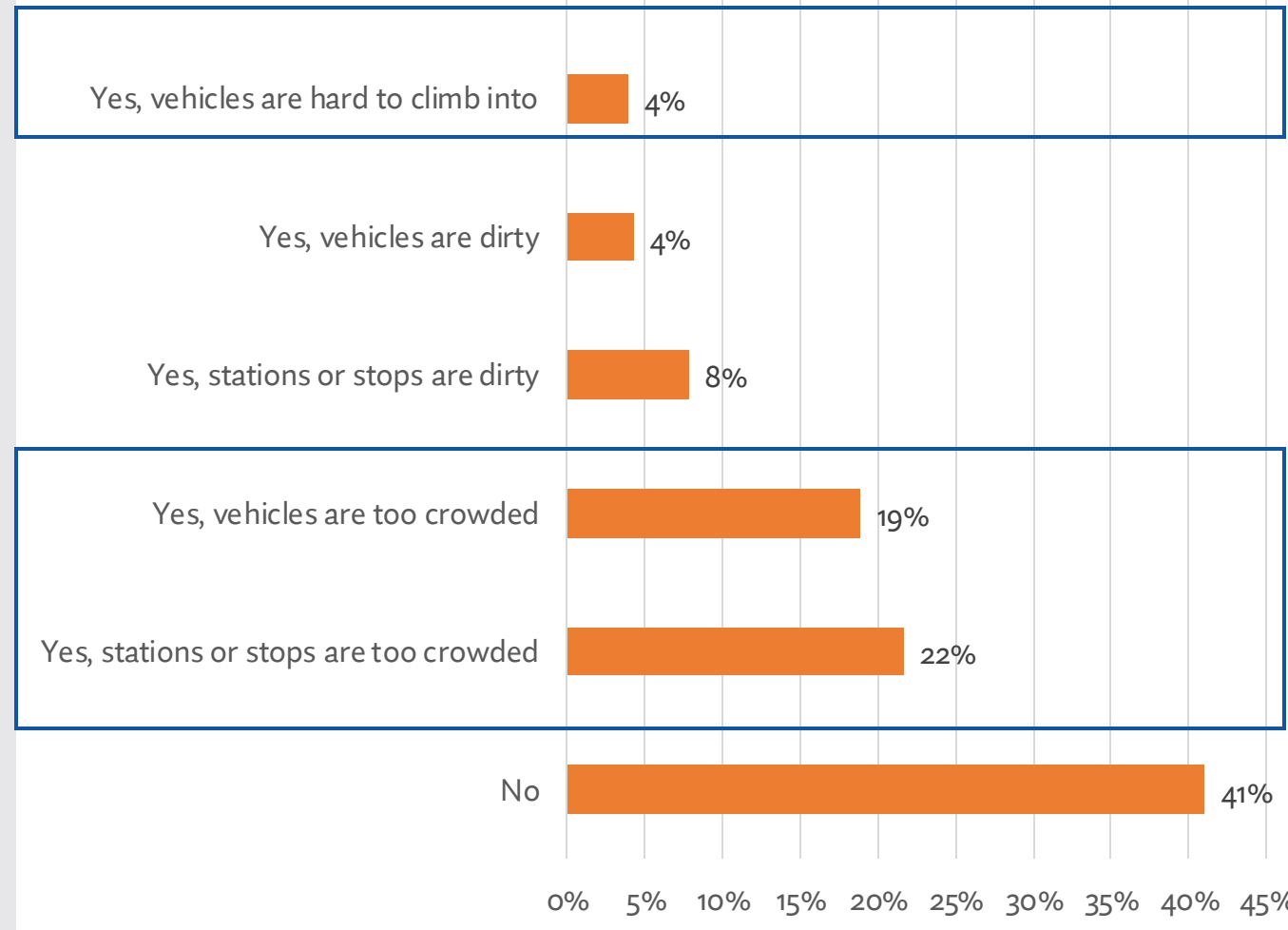
Concerns raised by women using public transport, Source: Transport4All Challenge, 2021

4. Too crowded to feel safe

41% of women flagged overcrowding as a major issue—making them feel unsafe and increasing the risk of harassment during their commute.

4% of the women also reported the buses as **difficult or hard to climb**.

12% of the commuters highlighted that **stations and vehicles were dirty**. This impacts women's overall commuting experience and influences their willingness to rely on public transport.



Survey responses on overcrowding and cleanliness concerns, Source: Transport4All Challenge, 2021

Voices of hope

Positive Impact



**18TH URBAN
MOBILITY
INDIA**

**CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025**
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025



"It feels good when passengers say I am doing a great job. It motivates me to keep going" - a woman conductor

"I love wearing the uniform and being recognised for my work. It gives me sense of accomplishment," - a woman driver

"My colleagues have become like a second family. We support each other through the tough times," - a woman driver

18TH URBAN MOBILITY INDIA

CONFERENCE & EXPO 2025
URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025

Key Recommendations

For gender-inclusive public bus transport



**18TH URBAN
MOBILITY
INDIA**

**CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025**
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025



1. Equitable work environment



- Ensure fair pay
- Offer permanent contracts with medical benefits after one year
- Gender specific toilets and designated rest areas



- Aim for 50% women in leadership and management roles
- Provide gender-sensitive leave policies

18TH URBAN MOBILITY INDIA CONFERENCE & EXPO 2025
URBAN DEVELOPMENT & MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025



- Enforce zero-tolerance, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies
- Set up a grievance redressal cell

2. Safe, inclusive infrastructure and services for commuters



- Ensure lighting, CCTV, panic buttons, and secure access during odd shifts.
- Clean toilets, drinking water, and rest areas for women at depots.
- Build low-floor, and accessible buses with ramps



- Meet MoHUA's 40-60buses/lakh benchmark; reserve 35% seats for women
- Optimise routes to reduce wait times to under 5 minutes during peak hours



- Improve pedestrian and station infrastructure
- Display real-time info, maps, and helplines in local languages
- Conduct regular safety audits

3. Gender-aware planning, communication & affordability



- Integrate gender-sensitivity into annual staff training and feedback
- Showcase women in diverse transport roles



- Prioritise inclusive planning using gender indicators
- Ensure women's representation in committees, and advisory boards



- Collect gender-disaggregated data on travel, safety, and access
- Allocate dedicated budgets for gender-inclusive infrastructure



Cities leading the way in gender-inclusive transport

S. No	City	Action	Impact/Outcomes
1	La Rolita, Bogota	Operates an all-electric fleet with 60% women drivers . Women offered permanent contracts, childcare, toilets, and rest spaces at depots.	Safer, more dignified work environment. High retention of women employees. Positive public image.
2	Punjab, India	State government launched free bus travel for women across public buses in 2021.	Over 110 million women used the scheme. Female bus ridership nearly doubled by 2023–24.
3	London-Tfl	Project Guardian trains staff to handle harassment. Includes lighting upgrades, panic buttons, helplines, and safer streets for pedestrians.	Significant increase in women's perception of safety on public transport. Trust in reporting improved.
4	Delhi	Rolled out 3,125 low-floor buses in 2010 for ease of boarding by women, elderly, and wheelchair users	Improved access and safety. Became a benchmark for other Indian cities to follow.



Thank You

**18TH URBAN
MOBILITY
INDIA**

**CONFERENCE
& EXPO 2025**
URBAN DEVELOPMENT &
MOBILITY NEXUS
GURUGRAM, HARYANA | 7TH-9TH NOV 2025

