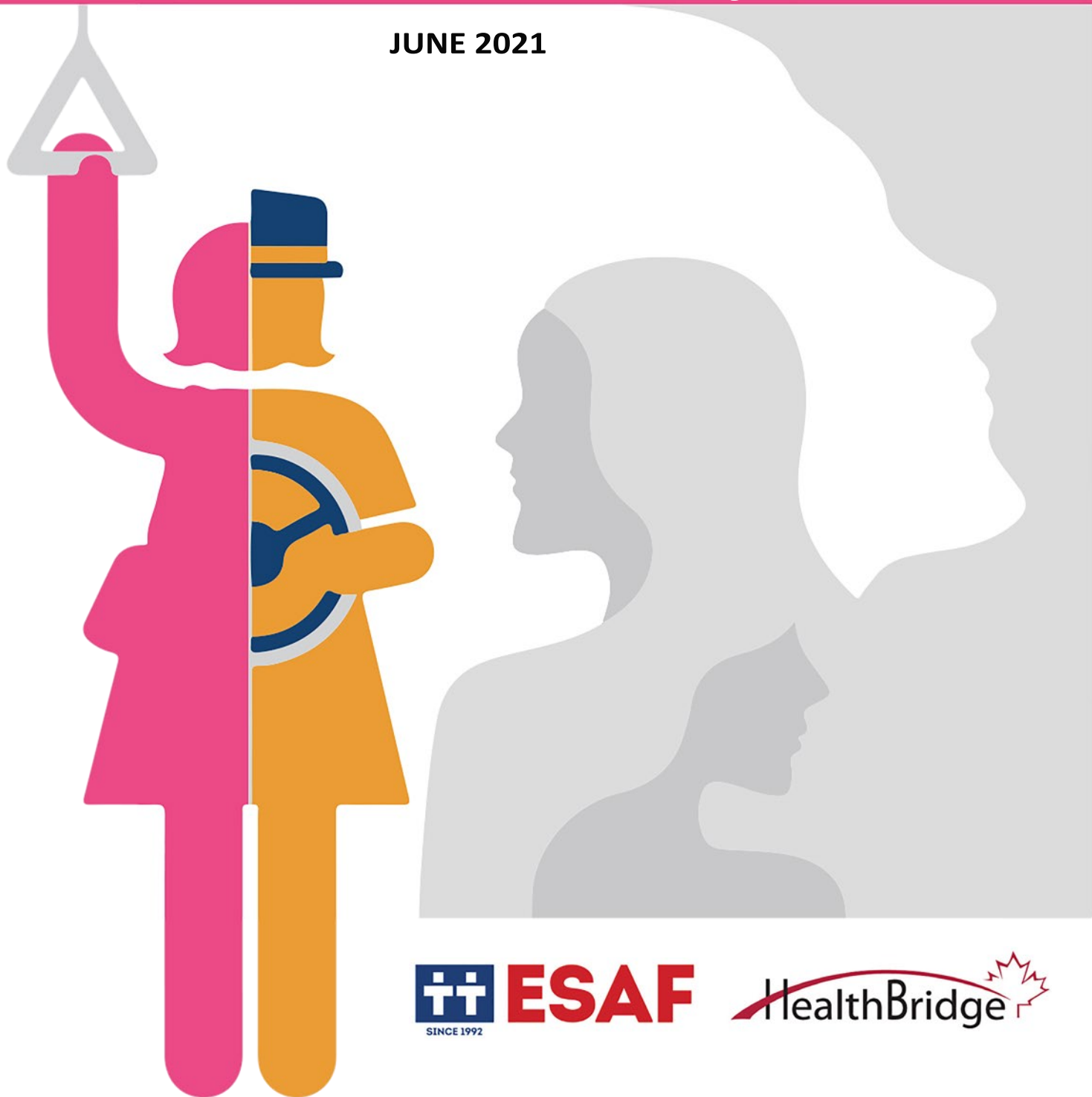


GENDER EQUITY

IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Understanding the Safety Issues and Mobility Needs of Women in Trivandrum City

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in Trivandrum City



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*“When
we create cities - their
public spaces and transport
systems - that are responsive to
the needs of women, children
and the elderly, they become great
cities for all!”*

- Shreya Gadepalli

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GENDER EQUITY IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

What are the issues faced by female travelers commuting by public transport in Trivandrum City? How friendly and safe are our public transport systems? What can be done to address these needs?

Accessible and affordable transportation is the key to unlocking better and more equitable opportunities in education, work, healthcare etc. It is an integral link that will help cities locally achieve the global mandate of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With 55 percent of world living in cities, at least half of them being women and girls, there have been an increasing number of efforts to incorporate gender perspectives to transport sector. Accessible, affordable and safe transportation will have a direct impact on the economic development of the community and society. When planned and executed well, public transportation can reduce existing inequalities, promote gender equity and reduce poverty: issues that cannot be tackled individually. All these issues are interconnected, making it relevant to consider them in tandem, with access to affordable transportation acting as a strategic fulcrum for positive social change.

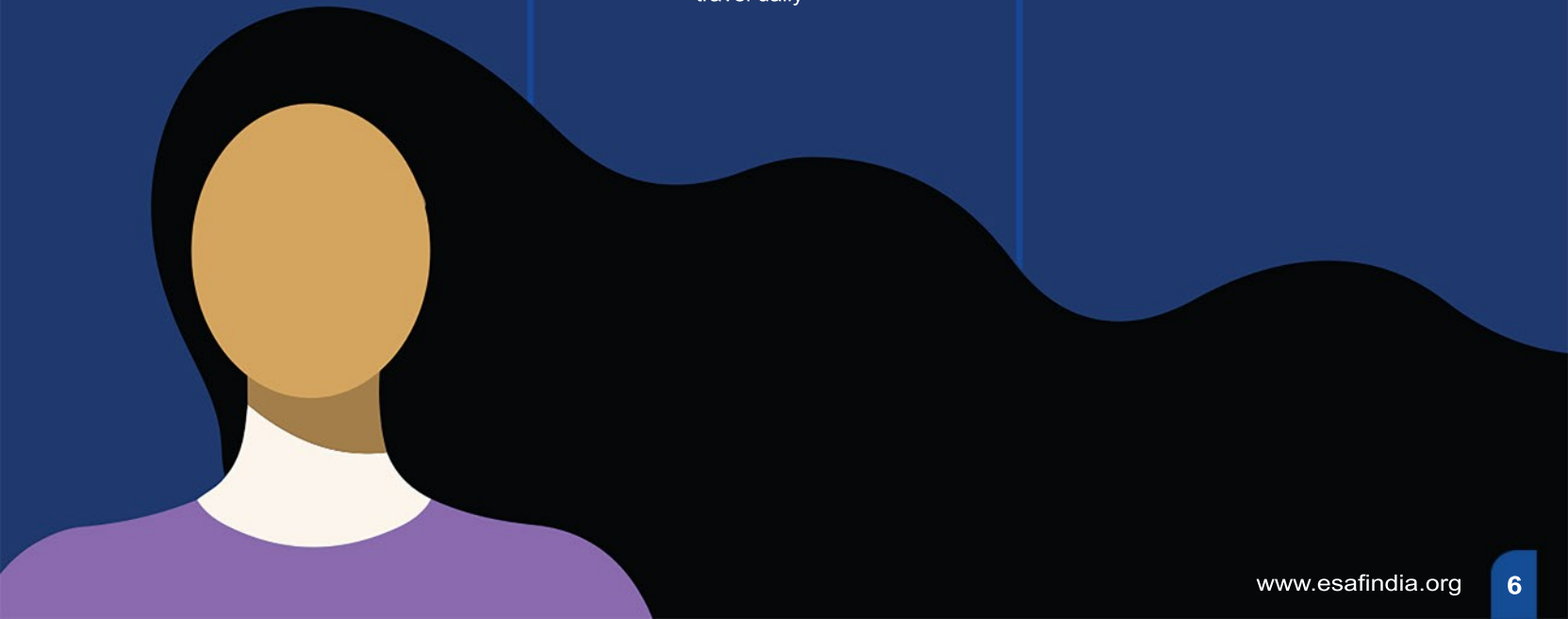
This study endeavored to understand the current transport policies and programs that account for gender equity in Trivandrum's public transportation system, the history and inspiration behind major changes to transport policy and planning in Kerala, female travelers, transgender's, women with disability and elderly women's opinion on safety, accessibility and efficiency of Trivandrum city's current transportation system, significant deterrents to using the system, if any or improvements that can be made, and the major differences between the intentions of current transport policies in Trivandrum and the lived experiences of female travelers.

1. All respondents including transgender travelers, elderly women, women with disability, and other women are referred together as women throughout this study, except in some cases where women with disability are specially mentioned.

1. KEY STATISTICS

1.1. MOBILITY PATTERN

WOMEN RELYING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT	TRAVEL PREFERENCE & PATTERN OF WOMEN	REASONS FOR TRAVEL
26% women rely on public bus services	54% travel alone	43% travel for personal reasons
14% rely on private bus services	46% travel with friends/family	32% travel for work
22% rely on auto rickshaws	62% travel during peak hours	20% for educational purposes
	25% travel early morning	
	12% travel late evening	
	45% travel occasionally	
	31% travel daily	



1.2. ACCESSIBILITY

WOMEN REACHING DESTINATION	WHETHER WOMEN FACE CHALLENGES WHILE USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES?
35% take single transit	64% women face challenges while using public transport services
28% take two transits	80% women said buses stop at designated bus stops
23% take three transits	20% claim buses do not stop at designated bus stops
14% take more than three transits	61% women were unaware that they can demand for stopping buses at their desired location after 8:00 pm
37% take more than 30 minutes to reach destination	32% women said the bus drivers stop at the location they demand after 8:00 pm
15% take around 25 minutes to reach destination	28% said bus drivers do not stop the bus at the location they demand after 8:00 pm

12%

take around 15-20 minutes

77%

women said they can travel
anywhere in the city at any time

37%

have access to transport
services in less than 0.5 km
from their residence

23%

women said they were unable to
travel within the city limits at any
time of their choice

32%

have access within 0.5 -1 km
from their residence

31%

have access to transport
services beyond 1 km only

1.3. AFFORDABILITY

WHETHER TRAVEL COST IS AFFORDABLE?	WHO MEET THE TRAVEL NEEDS OF WOMEN?	MONTHLY TRAVEL EXPENDITURE OF WOMEN?
40% women find travel cost to be high	52% women's travel expenses were met by their family	44% women incur ≤ ₹1000 for their monthly travel
31% find travel cost affordable	43% women meet their travel expenses by themselves	25% women's travel expense costs around ₹1000-2000
10% women find travel cost to be low		11% women's travel expense costs around ₹2000-3000
		7% women's travel expense costs around ₹3000-4000
		7% women's travel costs were above ₹4000

1.4. WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE

AVAILABILITY OF FOOTPATHS/SIDEWALKS?	WHETHER FUNCTIONAL STREET LIGHTS WERE PROVIDED IN ALL THE STREETS?
<p>65% women said footpaths/sidewalks available on main roads only</p>	<p>62% women said functional street lights were provided in all the streets</p>
<p>35% said footpaths are available in all the roads, including small streets</p>	<p>17% said street lights were provided but not functional</p>
	<p>6% said street lights were not provided</p>

1.5. SAFETY

HOW SAFE IS IT FOR A WOMEN TO LIVE IN TRIVANDRUM CITY?	DO WOMEN FACE ANY FORM OF HARASSMENT IN TRIVANDRUM CITY?	WHO WERE THE PERPETRATORS OF HARASSMENT?
<p>80% women find Trivandrum safe</p>	<p>70% women did not face any harassment in Trivandrum City</p>	<p>55% have experienced harassment from male co-passengers</p>
<p>20% women did not find Trivandrum safe</p>	<p>15% women were harassed in Private/KSRTC buses</p>	<p>16% perpetrators were female co-passengers</p>
<p>52% women said they have concern over their safety, though they were not harassed as of yet</p>	<p>5% women were harassed in private buses</p>	<p>15% have experienced harassment from pedestrians</p>

23%

women feel assault as their major safety concern

6%

women were harassed at public spaces, including footpaths and bus stops

8%

perpetrators were drivers of the vehicles

23%

women were wary of robbery

3%

women were harassed in cabs and auto rickshaws

5%

perpetrators were other staff of the vehicles

32%

women feel well-lit bus stops would increase safety

25%

experienced verbal abuse

24%

support street vendors, as they ensure safety on streets

11%

experienced physical abuse, including assault

21%

support street activities, as it increases the safety

10%

experienced emotional abuse including body shaming or stalking

21%

feel mixed land use of commercial and residential buildings increase safety

2. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WOMEN TRAVELERS

2.1. MODE OF TRANSPORT



- A “15-minute city” accessible by foot
- Better public transport coverage
- Update to Intelligent Transport Systems
- Prioritize the challenges in public transport at the neighborhood level
- Apps like m-indicator of Mumbai to access timings of public transport in the city
- Mobile apps to book buses and autos

2.2. SAFETY

- Ensure last mile connectivity
- Gender mainstreaming in transport policies
- Functional lighting and CCTV cameras at bus stops and streets, especially at those streets that are less crowded
- Regular evaluation and updating of safety initiatives
- Effective measures for incident-reporting or help seeking in emergency situations
- Periodic women's safety audits
- Provide training to the staff of public transport with a gender lens
- Training for driving licence with a gender lens
- Campaigns to ensure the safety of women while using public transport services
- Women only buses, during night
- More she taxis and easily available information for contacting she taxis
- More lady conductors in buses
- Washrooms attached to bus stops, bus terminals etc.
- Frequent public bus services, especially during late evenings
- Mandatory reservation of seats for women, especially at night
- Option for giving feedback for travelers in public buses through QR codes printed in bus tickets
- Increase the number of pink police deployed at bus terminals, bus stations, and railway stations etc.
- Gender - responsive police services to ensure fair treatment of transgenders and women in distress
- More she lodges or waiting rooms at major bus stations/terminals etc for women to stay at night
- Separate entrance doors for women and men during peak hours of travel
- Deploy lady police officers in all ladies' only compartments in trains





2.3. INCLUSIVITY

- Accessible cycling lanes that can accommodate tricycles and wheelchairs etc.
- Road safety and traffic rules adherence campaigns
- Road safety education in school curriculum
- Travel concession for senior citizens in long distance transport services
- Gender-neutral washrooms for transgenders

3. EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITY²

“I used to travel directly from Vikas Bhavan to Kattakkada in a bus which departs from Vikas Bhavan depot. But as the bus was changed to BOND (Bus on Demand) service, I was forced to travel by auto-rickshaw to Bakery Junction which is not at all an affordable option for me.”

Woman with dwarfism (45 - 60 Yrs.)



2. Women with visual disability, dwarfism, mild intellectual disability, and physical disability. 20 women with disabilities were interviewed.

Commuting by bus

- Women with disability prefer traveling by bus due to its low cost.
- As most bus operators do not give sufficient time to alight, women with invisible disabilities were affected more.
- Reduced number of buses during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Standing in overspeeding buses.

Treatment by fellow passengers

- Women with disability, especially invisible disability, and dwarfism were not given their reserved seats by fellow passengers most of the times.
- Some bus conductors do not even ask the passengers to move from the seats which were reserved for the disabled.
- Emotional and sexual harassment.

Bus structure

- Narrow space between the seats makes it difficult for women with physical disabilities to occupy the seats.
- Holders are not provided in any bus, which can be used by women of short stature. The holders given on the roof cannot be used either, because of its height.
- Women with dwarfism & physical disability finds it very difficult to board the steps of private/KSRTC buses, because of its height.

Walking infrastructure

- Inaccessible footpaths and sidewalks obstruct the mobility of women with visual impairments.



“There were times when I had to alight the bus, as I didn’t get the reserved seats and I find it very difficult to stand in buses. I prefer getting down and wait for the other bus even for long hours as I find it safer”

Woman with dwarfism (30- 44 Yrs.)

Crossing roads

- Women with any degree of disability finds it difficult to cross busy streets and roads.
- Most drivers do not slow down their vehicle to give way for women with visual impairments to cross the streets. This sometimes results in fatal road accidents.
- Two women with dwarfism met with an accident recently while crossing the road. Subsequently, they stopped crossing roads and started taking auto rickshaws instead.
- Vehicles do not slow down for women with disability even at zebra crossings.
- Women with disability prefer crossing the roads at traffic signals and at places where traffic police were deployed.

Passenger information system

- Women with visual impairments are dependent on fellow travelers to board right buses, and alight at right stops, cross roads etc. This is due to the unavailability of inclusive passenger information system in buses, bus stops and stations.
- Families restrict the travel of women with visual disabilities, due to lack of inclusive passenger information systems at public transport services and facilities.

Commuting by auto rickshaw

- Women with disabilities, having higher income or from high income families prefer traveling by auto rickshaw. They found Uber Service to be the useful travel option, as they could book and track the auto rickshaws using their smart phones.
- All women respondents having disabilities said traveling by auto rickshaw is safer than any other transport modes in the city.
- Women from low-income families said they can't afford to hire an auto for their travel, as it is quite expensive.

Cost of travel

- Mostly women having disabilities rely on their disability pensions and travel concessions in public buses to meet their travel cost.
- Lack of travel concession for disabled women in super-fast buses and above force them to travel by local buses having travel concessions. Because of which, they were forced to drop at different locations to catch the connection buses to reach their destination.

Toilet facilities

- Women with disability prefer western toilets to Indian toilets, especially in trains
- Women with disability finds it difficult to use toilets while the train is moving.

“I’m scared to cross the roads and streets. So, every day after I get down from the bus, I take an auto to reach my office which is on the other side of the road.”

Woman with visual disability (45 - 60 Yrs.)

4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

- Inclusive public transport, barrier-free walking infrastructure at bus stops.
- Mandating vehicles to stop or slow down at zebra crossings.
- Inclusive, tactile and wide footpaths (1800 mm) that ensure continuous mobility of pedestrians.
- Dedicated bicycle lanes that help physically disabled users to use wheelchairs, tricycle, or scooters etc.
- More senior citizens' vehicles at railway stations, that can also be used to drop the disabled at different platforms
- Elevators between platforms than escalators to enable people with disability to move between platforms.
- More accessible low floor buses having ramps, wheelchair holders, dedicated number of low seats and holders placed at an accessible height to help children and disabled.
- Regulate stopping time of buses, including super fasts and express buses to give adequate time for people with disability or senior citizens to board or alight.
- Inclusive passenger information systems in buses, bus stations, bus terminals and traffic signals.
- Hygienic western toilets in compartments reserved for people with disability
- Deploy lady police officers in train compartments at night, reserved for people with disabilities
- Mandatory reservation of seats in buses for people with disability, especially invisible disability.
- Travel concessions in long distance buses, especially super-fast and express buses.





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