

## Toolkit for Gender Responsive Urban Mobility & Public Spaces

### Why in news?

The World Bank has launched a “Toolkit on Enabling Gender Responsive Urban Mobility and Public Spaces in India” on making public transport better for Indian women.

### What is the need for the toolkit?

- **Importance of cities** - Cities are engines of growth, job-creation, and innovations.
- Cities are economic powerhouses and innovation hubs with large markets that can attract investments, knowledge, skilled personnel.
- They can lead to innovations thereby generating economic opportunities.
- **Need for the toolkit** - Lack of consideration for diverse population needs in urban planning and design has constrained women’s access to socioeconomic opportunities.
- Historically, cities across the world have been designed to fit the needs of able-bodied men rather than that of women, girls, sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities (PWDs).
- Indian cities need gender-responsive urban mobility and public spaces so that benefits of city-led economic growth can be more equitably distributed.

### What are the major concerns of women regarding the public transport?

- Urban mobility systems are not catered to the unique needs of women.
- Since the burden of care work (mostly unpaid) lies disproportionately on women, they often need to plan their travel in detail than men.
- **Effect on education** - Distance from home impacts women’s choice of colleges and other educational institutions.
- **Effect on employment** - Lack of viable urban transport is a major challenge for women to access better employment opportunities.
- **Lack of safety and perception of safety**- Lack of good street lighting, no reliable last mile transport, and high waiting time at remote bus stops are some of the challenges in this regard.
- **Higher costs of travelling** - Women have to stitch together various short commutes (trip chaining) which increases travel costs.
- Women often make decisions to use certain kinds of more expensive routes or forms of transport on account of them being perceived to be more safe.
- **Pink tax** - All these factors amount together as a pink tax that specifically burden women and prevent them from making optimal decisions for themselves.

*India’s female labour force participation rate is among the lowest in the world,*

*standing at just 30% in 2019-20.*

## **What is the toolkit about?**

- **Bridging the knowledge gaps** - The toolkit intends to bridge the knowledge gaps between policy making and program implementation for gender-responsive urban mobility and public space in India.
- **Inculcating best practices** - It brings together 50 case studies of best practices and efforts from across the world, along with a special inculcation of the Indian context.
- The World Bank suggests a four-pillared approach to help address prevailing issues in urban transport for women.
- **Integrating a gender lens** - The toolkit emphasises on the importance of integrating a gender lens in transport policies and infrastructure that can help make urban transport safer for women.
- **Reflecting the concerns of women in development plans** - For this to happen, there must be more women in key institutions in charge of decision making.
- **Building gender sensitivity** - Awareness among service providers must be given through mandatory programmes and community action.
- **Investing in better infrastructure and services** - Women-friendly design with a focus on adequate lighting, SOS buttons, and well-maintained washrooms are the need of the hour.

## **References**

1. [The Indian Express | Making urban transport better for Indian women](#)
2. [World Bank | Toolkit for Enabling Gender Responsive Urban Mobility](#)

