



Streamlining Grievance Redressal Mechanisms: Detering sexual harassment on public transport and urban spaces



*A guidance brief based on the 'Toolkit for
Enabling Gender Responsive Urban Mobility
and Public Spaces'*

India

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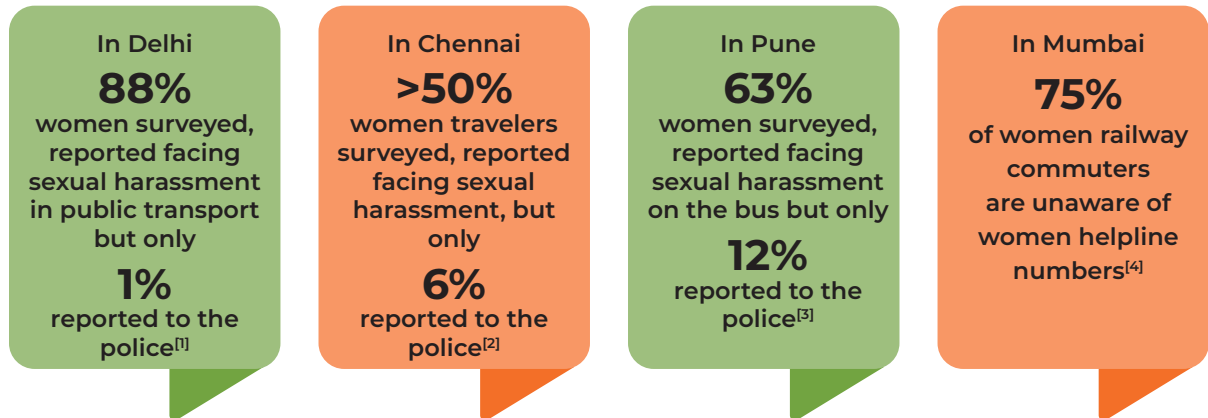
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RATIONALE: NEED FOR AN EFFECTIVE GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM TO ENSURE WOMEN'S SAFETY



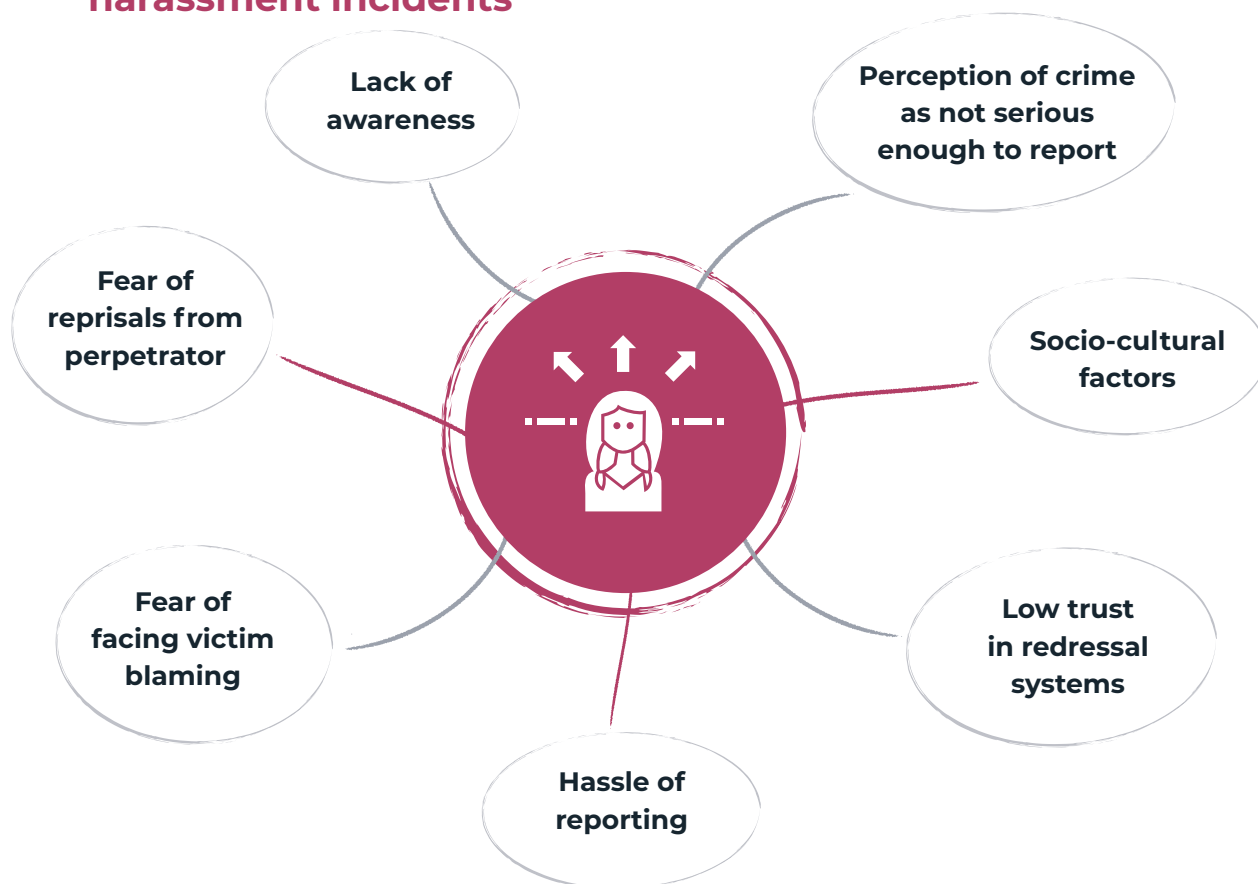
The gap in the prevalence and reporting of sexual harassment needs to be addressed through efficient redressal mechanisms. Evidence from Indian cities shows that while the prevalence of sexual harassment on public transport and in public spaces is high, reporting, and subsequent actions taken for redressal are perceived to be low. For instance, a

study conducted in Mumbai found only 2% of women commuters who had faced harassment approached the police and none were satisfied with the outcome.^[5] In one study of women in Delhi, respondents said they chose to simply move away from harassers due to fears that the situation might escalate further while some women said that they did not want to “create a



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Reasons why survivors refrain from formally reporting sexual harassment incidents



scene”.^[6] Lack of awareness, characterizing sexual harassment as eve-teasing and creating a perception that it is not a serious crime to be reported, fear of reprisals from the perpetrator, social stigma, and fear of victim blaming are amongst the common reasons that deter reporting.

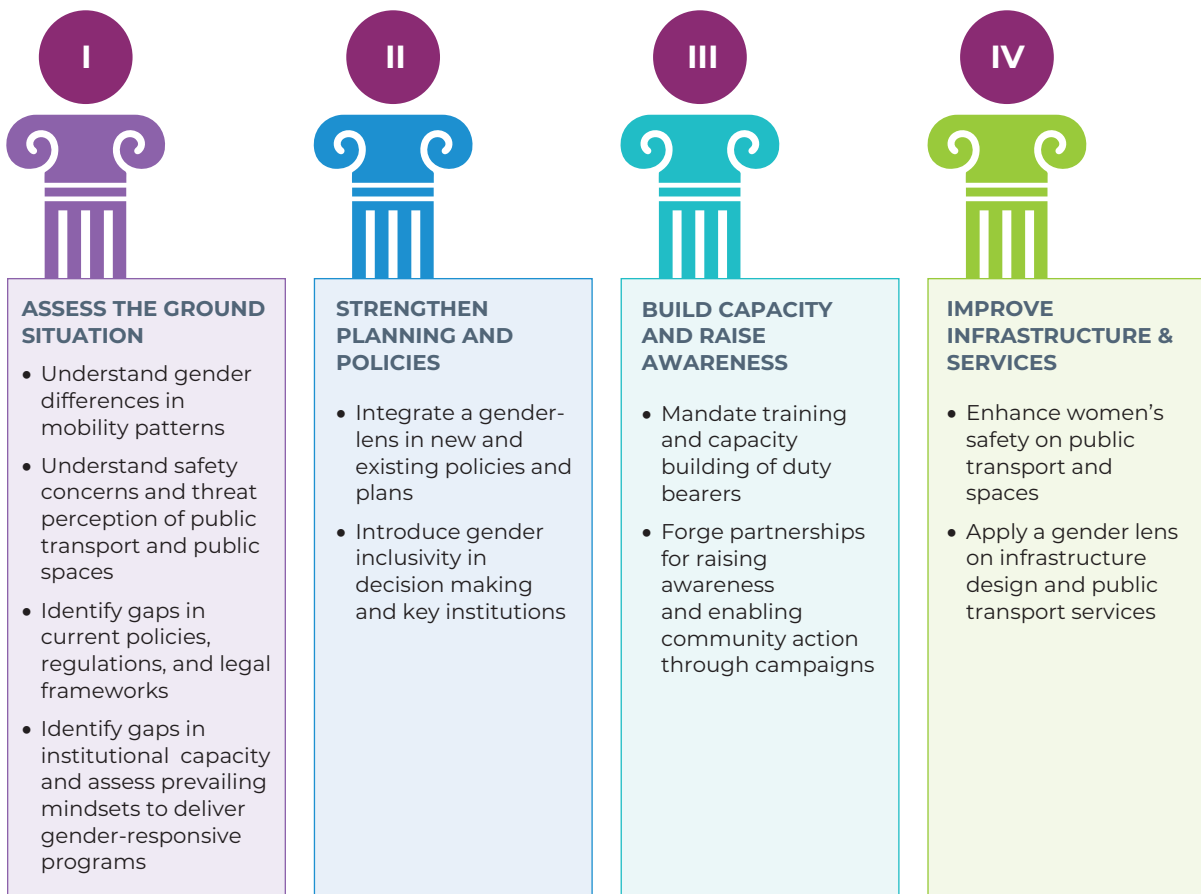
The multiplicity of redressal systems also discourages women from reporting incidents of sexual harassment. In addition to three national helpline numbers that women in India can use for reporting incidents of sexual harassment, each state operates several helpline numbers

for women in distress including common redressal cells in ULBs and STUs. When a survivor has multiple touchpoints to seek redressal, they may be confused and even discouraged from reporting. Thus, ensuring an efficient, unified grievance redressal system, which is easy to use for consumers, anonymous and integrates with ongoing efforts for prevention of violence against women is essential for urban local bodies and public transport authorities.

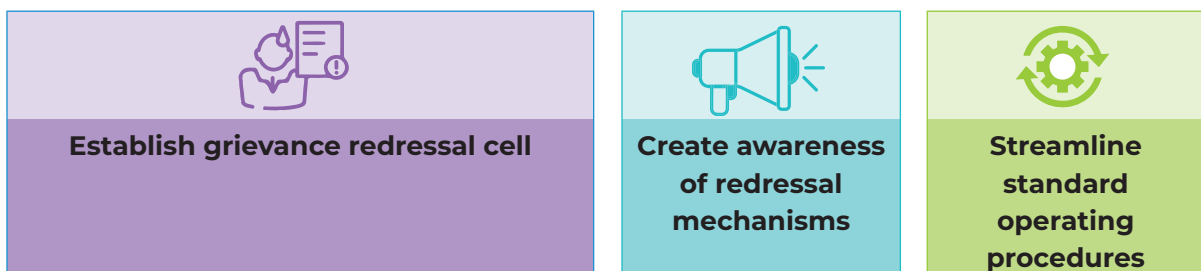
WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STREAMLINE GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISMS TO ENSURE USERS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND SPACES HAVE A UNIFIED PLATFORM FOR REPORTING?

Grievance redressal mechanisms (GRMs) need to be strengthened to be responsive, rapid and results-oriented. Grievance redressal encompasses the entire process of a user raising a complaint with the service

provider, followed by its acknowledgement, investigation, and subsequent redressal. At each stage, the user raising the complaint would require sensitive handling by staff that is responsive to her needs in a



Select Measures



time-bound manner. Most importantly, closing complaints, connecting users to appropriate services and stakeholders for escalation and delivering results at the end of the process, is essential to motivate survivors to raise complaints.

Aligning various GRMs into a coherent system is vital to ensure quick, effective, and responsive grievance redressal. Efficient inter-departmental coordination is required across city and state authorities to handle sexual harassment complaints received across multiple GRM channels. The key elements of an effective GRM comprise:

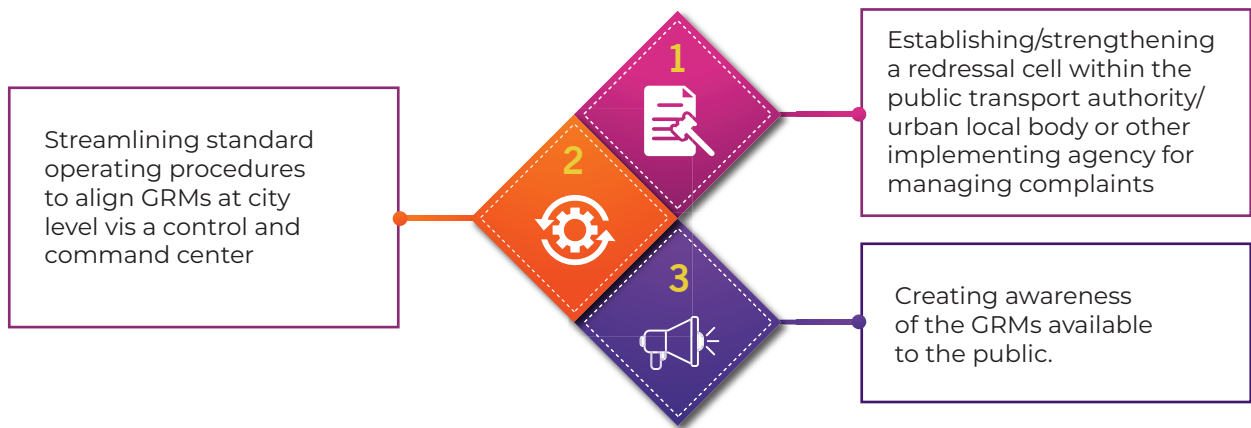


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ESTABLISH A COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT CITY LEVEL

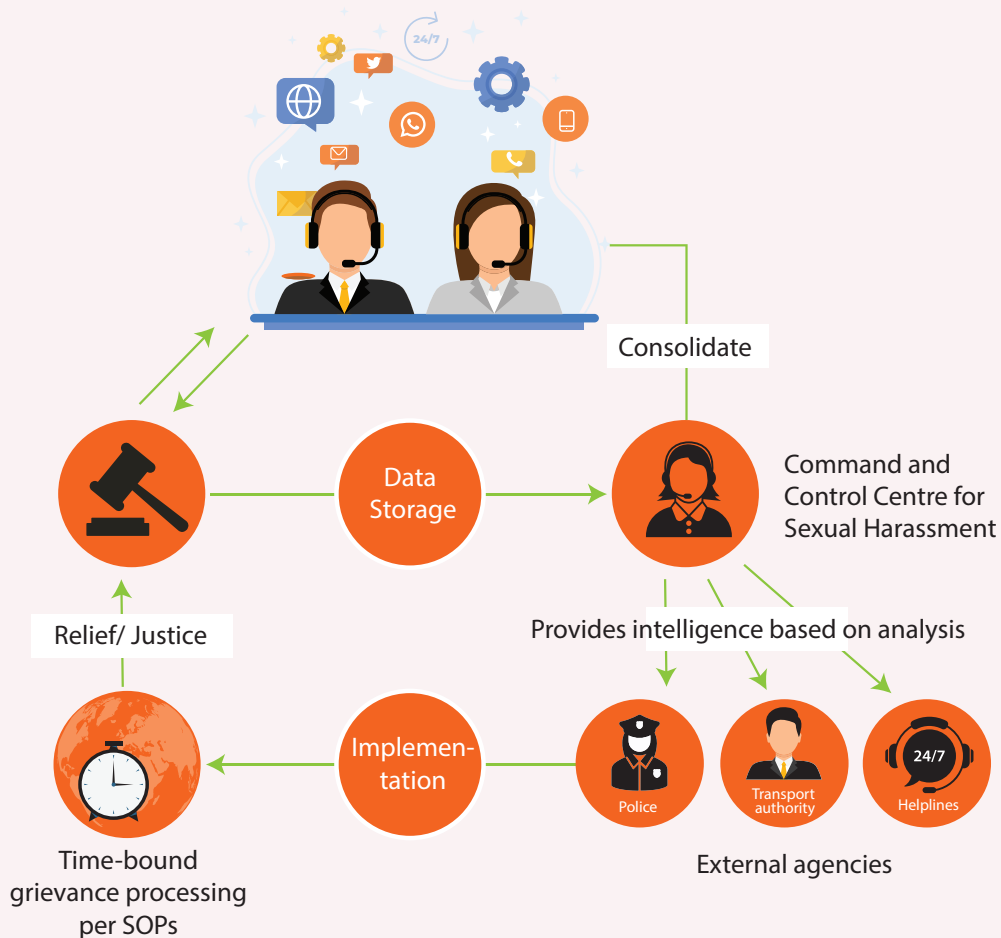
How can the command and control center ensure sexual harassment reporting is streamlined?

The multiple GRMs at the state and city level can be strengthened by building capacity at the individual level and building standard operating principles (SOPs) at the institutional level. The multiple GRMs once aligned can provide streamlined services so that dialing any of the available numbers or reporting online / via SMS or mobile application would be handled in a similar manner using the standard SOP. The data from the multiple GRMs can be collated at the control-and-command center and monitored for resolution.

Why should cities establish a command and control center for sexual harassment at city level?

It's at a different height sparse and even those collected is held with multiple stakeholders, thus not providing the complete picture. A unified command and control center can help in collating information from different GRM platforms and ensuring quick resolution. The complete set of data can also be analyzed at the control-and-command center via a dashboard, providing implementing agencies with the appropriate information to design evidence-based interventions.

GRIEVANCES REGISTERED THROUGH MULTIPLE CHANNELS BY THE VARIOUS AGENCIES



Who should manage this command and control center?



The center may be managed by a municipal authority at city level and operated on public private partnership mode, to ensure efficiency as well as deployment of cutting-edge technology. City police, relevant legal authorities, and PTAs should be key partners of the center.

How can the command and control center leverage data for prevention of sexual harassment?

The center can collect data on incidence of sexual harassment using quantitative parameters like the number of complaints received, the number of complaints resolved, the proportion of complaints withdrawn, the place, type, and time of harassment etc. to maintain a reliable database of harassment incidents. For example, this data may be analyzed to generate heat maps across the city and identify “red zones” or hot spots of sexual harassment. Deployment of police may be increased at the hot spots.

CASE STUDY

New Orleans 911 – Quick Base technology

<p>Program overview</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Orleans 911 call center streamlined process with the advanced technology of Quick Base
<p>Streamlining technology</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 911 calls were consolidated through one center, making a more efficient response in a city of 400,000 • The center averages 50,000 calls a month • Quick Base provides a streamlined workflow by connecting people, data and systems through an interface with various departments across police, fire, and medical emergencies • A single button action automatically connects the dispatcher to a third-party service that helps them locate victim’s number about 10 minutes faster than before

Streamline standard operating procedures to align grievance redressal mechanisms at city level

Why are standard operating procedures required for grievance redressal in cases of sexual harassment in public transport and public spaces?

To ensure staff at ULBs / PTAs / police stations/ helplines/other implementing agencies respond in a similar fashion based on the complaint and have the knowledge to sensitively handle and escalate instances of sexual harassment in public transport and public spaces, it helps to establish clear SOPs at city level. This can help in reducing the response time and enhance support for victims.

Who should develop these standard operating procedures for grievance redressal in cases of sexual harassment in public transport and public spaces?

SOPs can be formulated under the

leadership of a large ULB in the city or by the command and control center for sexual harassment. The SOPs should consider views of relevant partner agencies – such as PTAs, the police, government lawyers, amongst others.

What are the essential elements of SOPs for grievance redressal for sexual harassment in public transport and public spaces?

SOPs typically include guidance for staff of ULBs, PTAs and other implementing agencies, as well as for citizens on the following areas:

- Define and detail key steps in the process – Reporting | Processing | Resolution
- Fix clear timelines for each process from the PTA / ULB side



Photo Source: istockphoto








- Fix institutional responsibility for each process, clearly differentiating internal responsibility and responsibility of external stakeholders
- Provide clear steps and support available for by-standers and witnesses

It will help to institute a clear no-pay loss policy for all PTA / ULB staff, i.e., they will not lose pay if they appear as witnesses in a sexual harassment case & provide legal support if required

How can the SOPs ensure alignment of different GRMs?





SOPs can lay out the precise steps to be followed by implementing agencies, so that linkages and alignments across GRMs are created in the city. For instance, SOPs can define that if a city-wide telephonic / SMS / WhatsApp helpline is already available for women in distress, it may also be used to report sexual harassment of women in public transport and public spaces, and request managers of the helpline to note these complaints under a separate category. All of the information coming into various platforms is then channeled to the command and control center.

Effective reporting and post reporting services by grievance redressal cells

Ease reporting		Actions post reporting	
	SMS/ mobile application and anonymous reporting		Communicate clear SOPs to be followed post reporting
	Allow reporting up to 30 days after the incident		Designate officials with responsibility of follow ups
	Ensure presence of women officials to register reports		Support frontline staff who agree to be witnesses to the incident
	Training and sensitization of frontline staff for taking reports		

CASE STUDY

Grievance Redressal Mechanism - Chennai

<p>Program overview</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A grievance redressal mechanism has been made available to assure 24x7 access to help through multiple modes for women in distress.
<p>Registering complaints through helplines</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions have been made to receive complaints in-person at police stations or through helpline numbers, online complaint forms, text messages, emails and mobile apps. • Police operates helplines on 100 and 1091 numbers to provide immediate assistance within minutes of the call. All Women Police Stations are available for registering a complaint in person. • The Social Welfare Department also runs a helpline – 181 - and connects calls to the police in case of emergencies. The police initiates action to aid and the helpline responder remains on call to provide moral support. • The Chennai Metro-Rail Limited (CMRL) and Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) maintain helplines which provide emergency help in addition to addressing queries through calls or emails. The CMRL control center sends security personnel to the respective metro station while MTC connects to the police.
<p>Online Complaint Registration</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tamil Nadu Police provides an online complaint registration system available on their website in English and Tamil. • The complainant needs to fill basic information regarding name, district, gender, contact details, description of crime incident and the place of occurrence of the crime. • The complaint is sent to the respective district's deputy commissioner of police and is then redirected to the local police station.
<p>Mobile Application</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tamil Nadu Police runs the Kaaval Uthavi mobile application and provides users the facility to immediately alert the police in an emergency using a SOS button. • Pressing the SOS button on the application's home page starts a 5 second countdown following which the police is sent an alert with the user's information, location and a short video from the back camera of the mobile phone. • The app also allows women to raise complaints along with location, time and kind of harassment. This facility will encourage more women to complain hassle-free.

Creating Awareness of Redressal Mechanisms

How can frontline staff and duty bearers be made aware of redressal mechanisms to respond quickly?

Regular redressal training is required for drivers, conductors, security, and other frontline staff operating public transport facilities, as they are often the first responders in crisis situations and witnesses to sexual harassment. Thus, it becomes important to clearly make the staff aware of their duties in the process of providing redressal, equip them with skills to intervene as well as assure them of the support available to them from their employer.

How can awareness campaigns alleviate the problem of under-reporting?

Commuters often are not aware of helpline numbers or do not remember long 10-digit helpline numbers easily. Authorities, thus, can raise awareness of helplines and other



redressal mechanisms through sustained mass media and social media campaigns. ULBs, PTAs, and implementing agencies can partner with community-based civil society organizations to promote redressal mechanisms through advocacy efforts. Large and multiple posters within buses, metros, at bus stops, and metro stations can also help in the recall. Advertisements on radio, television and social media platforms can also complement the efforts.

How can community engagement be undertaken?

Implementing agencies may go beyond awareness campaigns of grievance redressal helplines to also shift mindsets and devise broader community engagement plans including social and behavioral change campaigns for promoting gender equality outcomes.

CASE STUDY

Report It To Stop It Campaign - London

<p>Campaign details</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A campaign called 'Report It To Stop It' is tackling sexual harassment and assault on public transit by encouraging women to report unwanted behaviors • The campaign provides break down on how to report unwanted sexual behavior and what follows reporting
<p>Key Results</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results show that the initiative did increase reporting of unwanted sexual behavior and that this increase was not due to a rise in the prevalence of harassment

For more information: The World Bank Gender and Urban Mobility Toolkit

Please refer to the World Bank Gender and Urban Mobility Toolkit for more detailed information on the guidelines to be followed to address gender concerns in public transportation and public spaces on safety standards. The toolkit also includes sample terms of references and survey questions in its annexures, which are intended to serve as a point of reference for public transportation authorities and implementing agencies to follow in order to ensure gender-responsive urban mobility planning.

This toolkit is meant to act as a guidance note for government agencies, groups and institutions that develop programs for safer and more inclusive transport for women in

cities. It presents a four-pillar framework for designing gender-responsive urban mobility programs and public spaces. Inclusion and safety in public transport and public spaces in cities are the two central themes discussed in this toolkit.

The toolkit is divided into two volumes, with the first volume focused on high-level guidance for policymakers, while the second provides a “How-to” guide including practical tools for implementing agencies, including guidelines on how to plan, design and implement a participatory, inclusive urban mobility program.



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To understand more about **what needs to be done** to tread towards gender-inclusive urban mobility click here for Volume I of the toolkit - Enabling Gender Responsive Urban Mobility and Public Spaces

To understand **how to plan**, design and implement a participatory, inclusive urban mobility program refer to the Volume II of the toolkit