



GENDER & POLICY LAB
GREATER CHENNAI CORPORATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2022- 2023

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1. Government Officials:

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4. World Bank:

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Lastly, we would like to acknowledge all individuals and organisations who may not be mentioned explicitly but have played a part, directly or indirectly, in the work of Gender and Policy Lab and the development and publication of this Annual Report. Your contributions are highly appreciated.

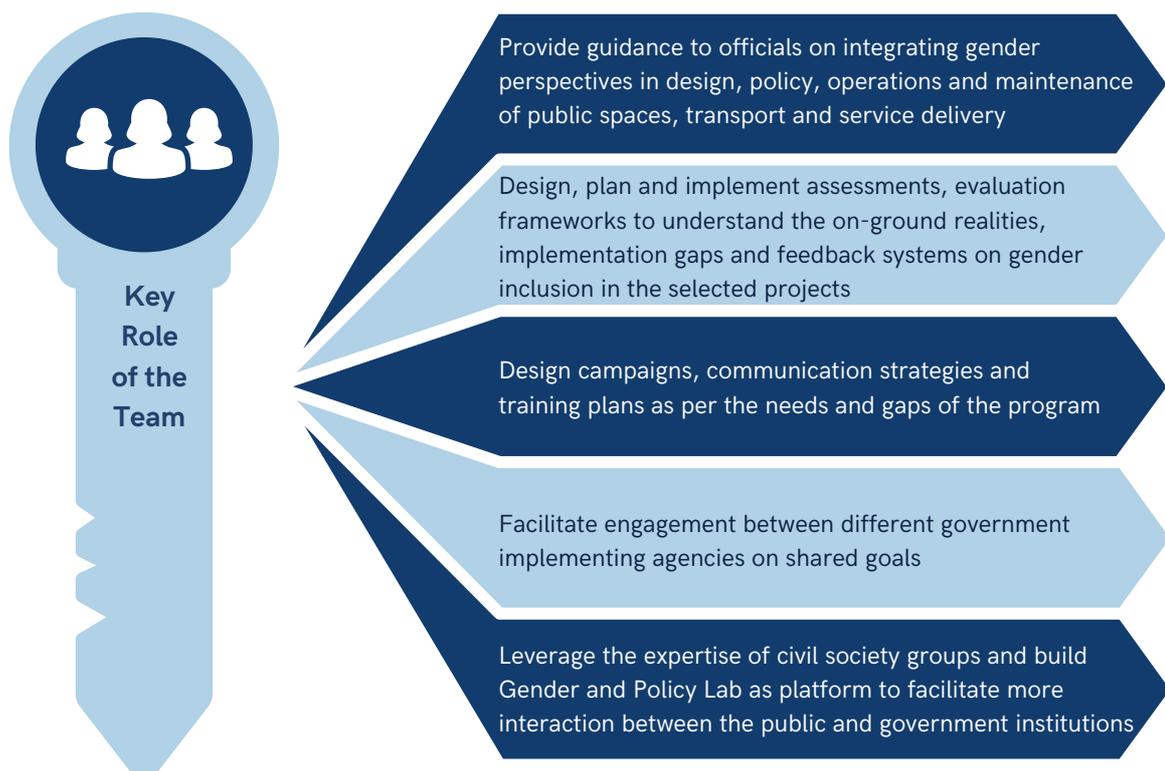
About Gender and Policy Lab

Cities are hubs of economic growth, employment and infrastructure services. Evidence shows a clear, positive correlation between urbanisation and real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita for the world as a whole, and in developing Asia¹ and in India in particular.² Cities attract a significant migration of people, especially women seeking better opportunities, either individually or with their families. Thus, the cities have a responsibility to ensure the space is welcoming, safe and secure for these women who are moving in search of better pursuits.

The rise in women's participation in urban governing bodies and the broader decision-making process has been a positive step towards establishing an inclusive and just city. One undeniable takeaway from the success of this strategy is the importance of gender-responsive urban development. By adopting a gender lens in our urban planning, our cities can become equally accessible and economically beneficial to all.

In efforts to adopt this lens and ensure this inclusivity, the Gender and Policy Lab (GPL) was operationalised through Nirbhaya Funds in February 2022 by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC). This first-of-its-kind initiative was done under the Chennai City Partnership between the Government of Tamil Nadu and the World Bank, with the objective of providing women with safe, comfortable and accessible public spaces. The objectives of the Gender and Policy Lab are:

1. To improve women's access to opportunities by improving safety and gender responsiveness in public spaces and public transport through a multi-pronged collaborative approach
2. To mainstream gender inclusivity so that it becomes a process and a natural element in all city-level planning and service delivery decisions



¹ *Asian Development Outlook 2019*

² *World Bank (2007) Urbanisation, inequality and economic growth: Evidence from Indian States and towns*

Foreword



I am delighted to present this annual report, celebrating the remarkable achievements of the Gender and Policy Lab. As a woman Mayor, it has been my privilege to inaugurate the Lab on April 1st, 2022 following the progressive values of the Honourable Chief Minister and the Government of Tamil Nadu.

As the elected representative, I am filled with immense pride as I reflect upon the incredible progress made over the past year, with a resolute focus on Chennai and its wonderful citizens. The issue of women's safety has been a key priority for me and the Gender and Policy Lab has played a pivotal role in advancing this mission by prioritising their needs through various initiatives.

One of the most gratifying accomplishments has been the establishment of the Gender Club, a concept that I introduced in 2022. Witnessing this program flourish has filled my heart with joy. In its inaugural year, the program was successfully implemented in 70 GCC Schools, fostering an environment of equality and empowerment.

I am thrilled to announce that in the upcoming year, the program will be expanded to include 92 Middle Schools, marking a significant milestone in our journey. It is crucial to recognize that breaking glass ceilings and increasing women's representation in various fields necessitates addressing internal biases and prejudices that often originate in early childhood. Schools and our homes hold the key to shaping young minds, fostering empathy, and cultivating respect.

With optimism and anticipation for what lies ahead, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the success of the Gender and Policy Lab and its associated initiatives. Together, we will continue to build a city that cherishes diversity, champions gender equality, and serves as a beacon of hope for others to follow.

Tmt. R. Priya
Honourable Mayor

Message from Commissioner



It is truly a remarkable achievement for the Greater Chennai Corporation to spearhead the establishment of India's first Gender and Policy Lab within an Urban Local Body. The Lab has provided us with a fresh perspective on gender mainstreaming in civic infrastructure, allowing us to examine them in a more nuanced and comprehensive way. We are actively committed to integrating gender-sensitive considerations into all our services and infrastructure, ranging from lighting and sanitation facilities to grievance redressal and education. When we address gender issues, we are equally attentive to the specific needs of vulnerable and marginalised individuals within this spectrum, such as single mothers, transgender individuals, persons with disabilities, and daily wage workers who rely on the city's services every day.

Since their inception, the Gender and Policy Lab has effectively bridged the divide and fostered a robust partnership with the public and civil society organisations and other government departments on the issue of women's access to public spaces and mobility in the city. The Citizens for Safe Mobility fellowship and campaigns on parks and by-stander intervention held this year have been tremendous initiatives in opening up the Greater Chennai Corporation to the public. By conducting a thorough city-wide safety audit and incorporating citizen perspectives and inputs, we are actively working towards addressing, rectifying, and enhancing the implementation of infrastructure and services. The city-wide research study and parks survey undertaken by the Gender and Policy Lab has also given us pointers in terms of the important issues that need to be addressed with regards to women's safety and access to public spaces and mobility.

The first-year annual report serves as a testament to a rewarding year of accomplishments by the Gender and Policy Lab. We aspire for other Urban Local Bodies and government institutions to draw inspiration from the Lab's exceptional work and seamlessly integrate similar projects into their regular operations. Together, we can foster positive change and create more inclusive and equitable societies.

Dr. J. Radhakrishnan, I.A.S .

Additional Chief Secretary / Commissioner

Our Operations Leadership



Dr. J. Radhakrishnan I.A.S.
Additional Chief Secretary /
Commissioner



Dr. G.S. Sameeran I.A.S.
Joint Commissioner
(Works)



Tmt. Sharanya Ari I.A.S.
Deputy Commissioner
(Education, Parks &
Playfields)



Thiru. S.Rajendiran
Chief Engineer
(General)



Thiru. N.Mahesan
Chief Engineer
(SWM, Mechanical and
Special Projects)



Thiru. B.V.Babu
Superintending Engineer
(Special Projects &
Buildings Department)



Thiru P. Annadurai
Executive Engineer (Special
Projects Department)



Tmt. A. Roseline Gnanamani
Assistant Executive Engineer
(Special Projects Department)

Organisational Structure

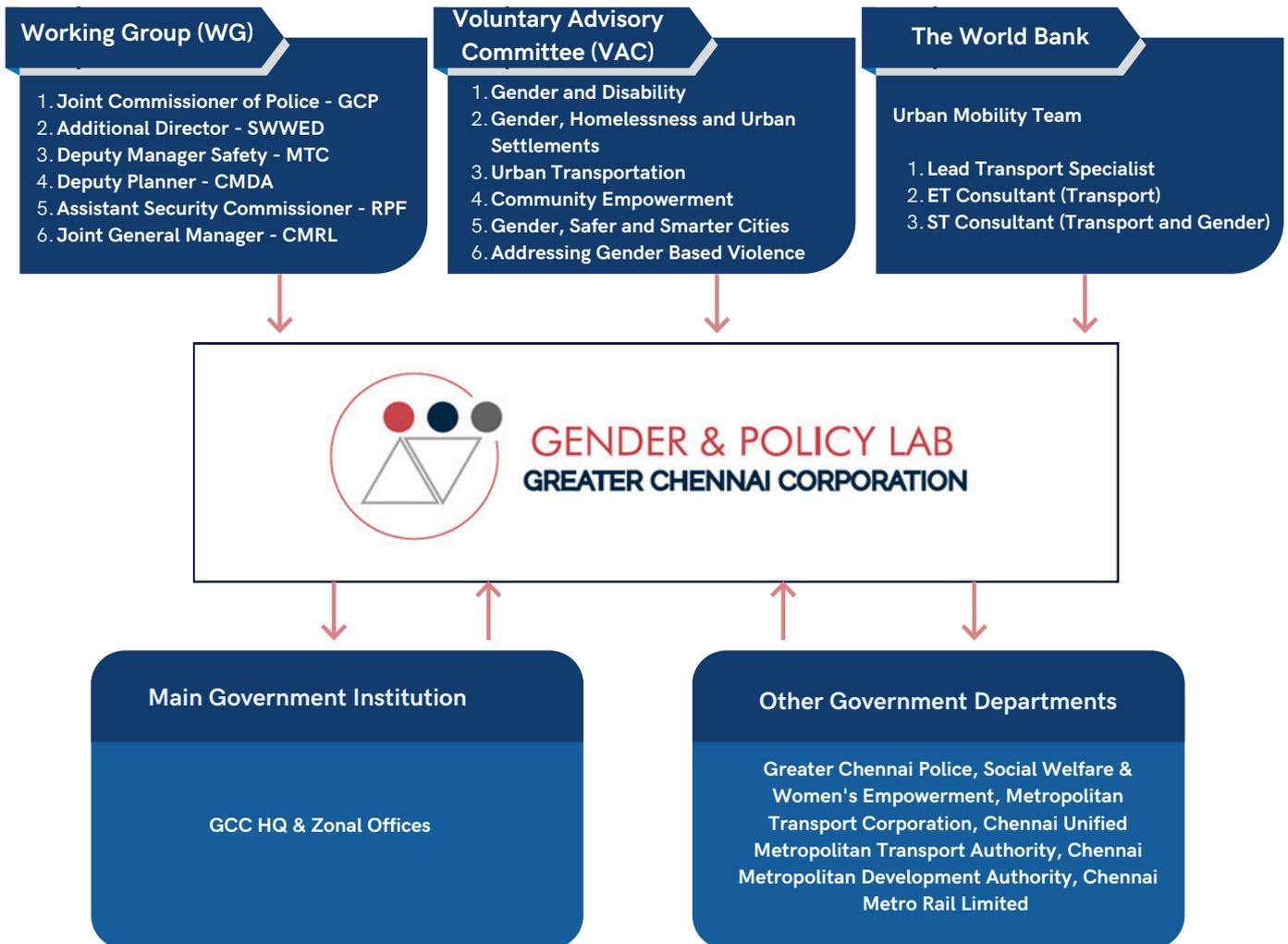


Figure 1: Organisational Structure of Gender and Policy Lab

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The Greater Chennai Corporation reaffirms its unwavering commitment to gender mainstreaming in our ongoing efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable society.

We are convinced that true progress can be made only when the distinct needs, perspectives, and contributions of all genders are fully recognised and integrated into all aspects of our city's development. As we reflect on the Gender and Policy Lab's accomplishments, we recognise that the journey towards gender mainstreaming is ongoing, and we remain committed to ensuring a brighter future for all, where every individual can thrive, regardless of gender.

- Dr. G. S. Sameeran I.A.S, Joint Commissioner (Works)

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Overview of the pillars of GPL

GPL delivers its commitment to making Chennai city safer, increasing women's access to public spaces and mobility networks, and ensuring gender-inclusive planning through project interventions that can be grouped under the following four pillars.



Assess the ground situation

As the first step to a gender-inclusive Chennai, it is important to understand the ground realities of access, functionality and perceptions of safety of infrastructure and transport services. Identifying gaps in current policies, regulations, legal frameworks and institutional capacity also becomes crucial to holistically capture the gaps in ground reality. Under the 'assess the ground situation' pillar, GPL conducts various offline and online surveys, safety audits, field visits, stakeholder discussions and focus group discussions to study the existing infrastructure and the perceptions of the citizens.



Strengthen planning and policies

Designing policies that are gender-inclusive and strengthening existing policies to be more gender-responsive is the next pillar of GPL. While the gaps in existing infrastructure are identified, the next step is to formulate policies and regulations that support the objective of gender inclusivity. Reforms through policies can lead to implementation at a larger scale and thereby, deeper impact on the ground. GPL strives to achieve this by incorporating a gender lens to new and existing policies and plans and introducing gender inclusivity in the decision-making of key institutions.



Build capacity and raise awareness

It is crucial that every stakeholder involved in the functioning of the city is trained and aware of the diverse gender needs. Creating a gender-sensitive stakeholder system is necessary for the planning and implementation of policies and schemes that are gender-responsive. Under this pillar, GPL organises and conducts various orientation workshops, training programmes and campaigns to build capacity among the stakeholders as well as raise awareness among the larger public, thereby bringing about change at the individual, institution and community level. By forging partnerships for raising awareness, GPL intends to enable community action through campaigns.



Improve existing infrastructure

Following the reforms to policies, it is essential to focus on the access and functionality of infrastructure and transport services in the city. This pillar of GPL emphasises providing key inputs to enhance the existing infrastructure and transport services, improve the perceptions of safety and enable gender inclusivity in the city while applying a gender lens on infrastructure design and public transport services.

“

Making Chennai inclusive and safe for women was one of the top priorities identified by the Government of Tamil Nadu and the World Bank as part of the Chennai City Partnership. This led to the establishment of the Chennai Gender and Policy Lab, with a team of dedicated professionals.

As they mark their first year, I extend my congratulations to the team for their outstanding start. I encourage them to continue their commendable efforts by implementing the necessary projects to bridge the gaps identified in the assessments conducted during the first year.

The preparation of the new metropolitan masterplan, comprehensive mobility plan, corridor plans, and complete street projects under the Chennai City Partnership as well as other projects in the metropolitan region, offer many new opportunities for the Lab to apply lessons learned and address the mobility differences between men and women, actively working towards creating gender-informed public spaces and public transport.

- Gerald Ollivier, Lead Transport Specialist, The World Bank

”

The Year That Was (FY 2022-2023)

Launch event

Gender and Policy Lab was established by Greater Chennai Corporation following the assessments conducted at the beginning of the Chennai City Partnership by The World Bank team leading up to the recommendation to set up an institutional mechanism to oversee the gender aspects in the urban mobility programme. The Gender and Policy Lab is supported by the funds from the Nirbhaya Project. The **Honourable Mayor of Chennai Tmt. R Priya officially inaugurated the Gender and Policy Lab on April 1, 2022**. Senior government officials, government partners in Tamil Nadu, representatives from civil society organisations, and members of the press attended the event.



During the launch event, Mr Gerald Olivier, Lead Transport Specialist of the World Bank emphasised GPL's crucial role to create a coalition across departments such as the Greater Chennai Corporation, Chennai Police, Transport, and Social Welfare Department to improve the safety of women in Chennai.

Speaking about GPL as a new and unique initiative, the Former Director of the Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, Tmt. D Rathna I.A.S. enumerated the projects and role of the department in society. She stated that the department addresses the issues of individual women victims but addressing the issues of women in public spaces through regulatory mechanisms is the holistic and sustainable solution. She commended the establishment of GPL by GCC as a changemaker in society and a step towards achieving this holistic solution.



Thiru. Gagandeep Singh Bedi, I.A.S, the Former Commissioner of the Greater Chennai Corporation, began his speech by referencing Dr. Ambedkar, who stated that the success of a society may be assessed by the progress made by its women. He stated that there is a huge need to work on the welfare of women in public places and referred to the launch of GPL as the commencement of change.



The Former Commissioner of Police, Thiru. Shankar Jiwali P.S. enumerated the various activities conducted and currently in pipeline under the Nirbhaya Programme. He recommended that GPL should follow a participatory and data-driven approach.

The Honourable Mayor Tmt. R Priya, in her address, emphasised that current urban planning and design do not take into account the diverse needs of women, transgender persons and persons with disabilities, resulting in cities that do not meet the specific needs of women and disadvantaged communities. She specified that GPL will serve as a robust institutional mechanism that will spearhead a multi-department effort on women's safety over three years.

The second part of the launch event included presentations on the outcomes of three different studies conducted on women's safety and mobility needs in Chennai. This was followed by getting feedback from the participants especially civil society organisations on issues that can be addressed by GPL with regard to women's safety and mobility, access to public spaces and enabling better bystander engagement.





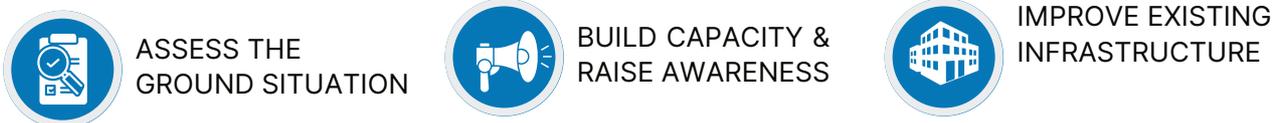
Research & Analysis

No. of Activities: 4 ●—●—●—●—●

Stakeholders:



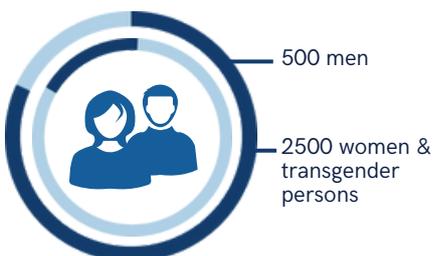
Thematic Areas:



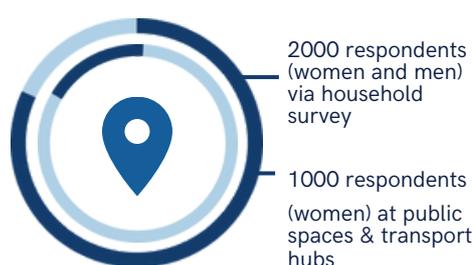
In its efforts to create a sustained impact in the long run, GPL has been **conducting several research studies** to identify and address issues related to gender, safety, and policy in the city. Through its research activities, GPL intends to take informed decisions, gather evidence for policies and plans, strengthen its internal capacity as well as create a knowledge database for actions in the future. In its first year, GPL undertook a city-wide study on the safety of women in public spaces and transport, a bilingual study on park usage, a study on the safety concerns of foot-over bridges and pedestrian subways, and analysed grievances received through the GCC helpline number 1913.

In order to assess the ground reality and the perception of safety, **a city-wide baseline study on Women's Perception regarding Access and Safety in Public Spaces and Public Transport in Chennai city** was initiated by GPL. This first-of-its-kind study in Chennai aims to understand the women's perception of safety and challenges faced in public spaces and transport. The findings of the study will be used to develop recommendations for different departments and relevant stakeholders to improve women's safety in public spaces and transport. Refer to Figure 2 for more details.

Gender of respondents



Place of interaction



Respondent groups

- School & college girls
- Elderly women
- Women with disabilities
- Transgender persons
- Homemakers
- Women employed in blue- & white-collared work and daily wage work

Figure 2: City-wide perception study on the safety of women in public transport

The Objectives of the Baseline Study



Figure 3: Objectives of Baseline Study

To better understand the complaints being raised by the public, GPL **analysed 2,29,277 grievances** received through the 1913 helpline, social media and telephone between June 2021 and July 2022. Even though gender-disaggregated data was not available, GPL gauged a list of complaint groups. The highest complaint groups were stagnation of water, non-burning of street lights, removal of garbage, street dogs, and mosquito menace.



As a recommendation, **the 1913 Helpline has incorporated gender as a component in the registration forms. to receive gender-disaggregated data** Safety concerns under the categories of Parks and Playgrounds, Public Toilets, Road and Footpath and Street Lights have also been incorporated into the forms.





Greater Chennai Corporation



Citizen

[CheckStatus](#) [RegisterComplaints](#)

Registration of Complaint

i *Instructions: Please fill your complaint details below and click the 'Submit Complaint' button at the bottom. You will be given a 'Complaint Number' upon submitting the complaint that you can use to track the complaint.*
 (*indicates required fields)

Complaining Person's Details

Mobile Number *	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Click to Get OTP"/>	OTP: <input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Submit OTP"/>
	Should be in the following format: 0123456789			
	On Submission of OTP, you can proceed with Complaint registration			
Name	Name <input type="text"/>	Initials <input type="text"/>		
Gender	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Transgender			

Figure 4: Screenshot of complaint portal

The analysis also helped to use citizens data systemically and **identify 'dark spots' in the city**. The new street light request from the citizens were analysed and 483 such requests were sent to Electrical Department. The Electrical Department after verification sanctioned 425 light posts in 152 locations to address these dark spots.



COMPLAINT GROUP	No.of Complaints	%
Water Stagnation	64115	26%
Tax and Licence	3065	1%
Street Light	41115	17%
Road and Footpath	19226	8%
Public Toilet	714	0.3%
Public Health	39636	16%
Park and Playground	12600	5%
General	16634	7%
Garbage	45515	18%
COVID-19	470	0.2%
Building Plan Permission	3574	1%
Air Quality	141	0.1%
Grand Total	247014	100%

Figure 5: Analysis of complaint groups

In a move to ensure safe public recreation spaces by addressing gaps in infrastructure, GPL rolled out a bi-lingual survey on park infrastructure and usage on the website of GCC. The **survey was created in both English and Tamil** for ease of understanding. The survey recorded responses from a total of 576 respondents. For more information on the survey, refer to Figure 6.



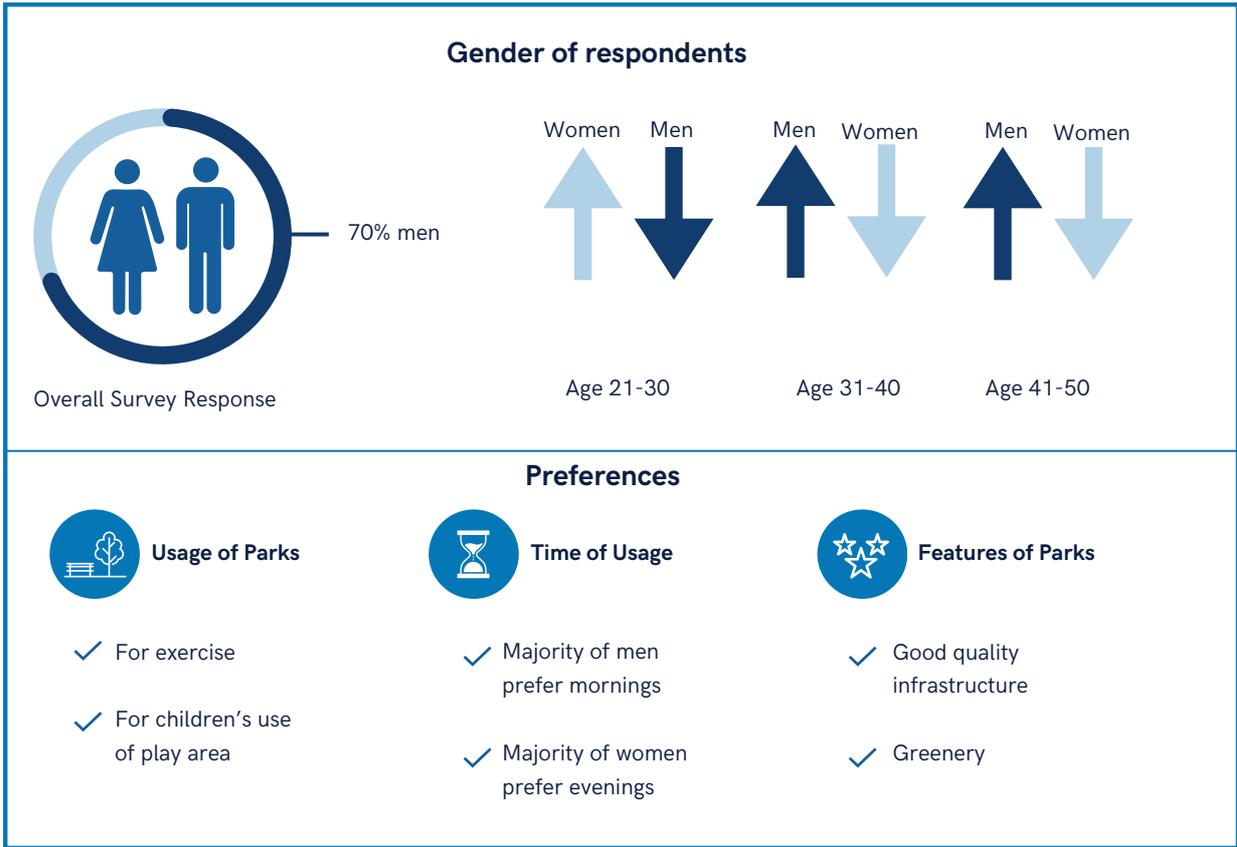
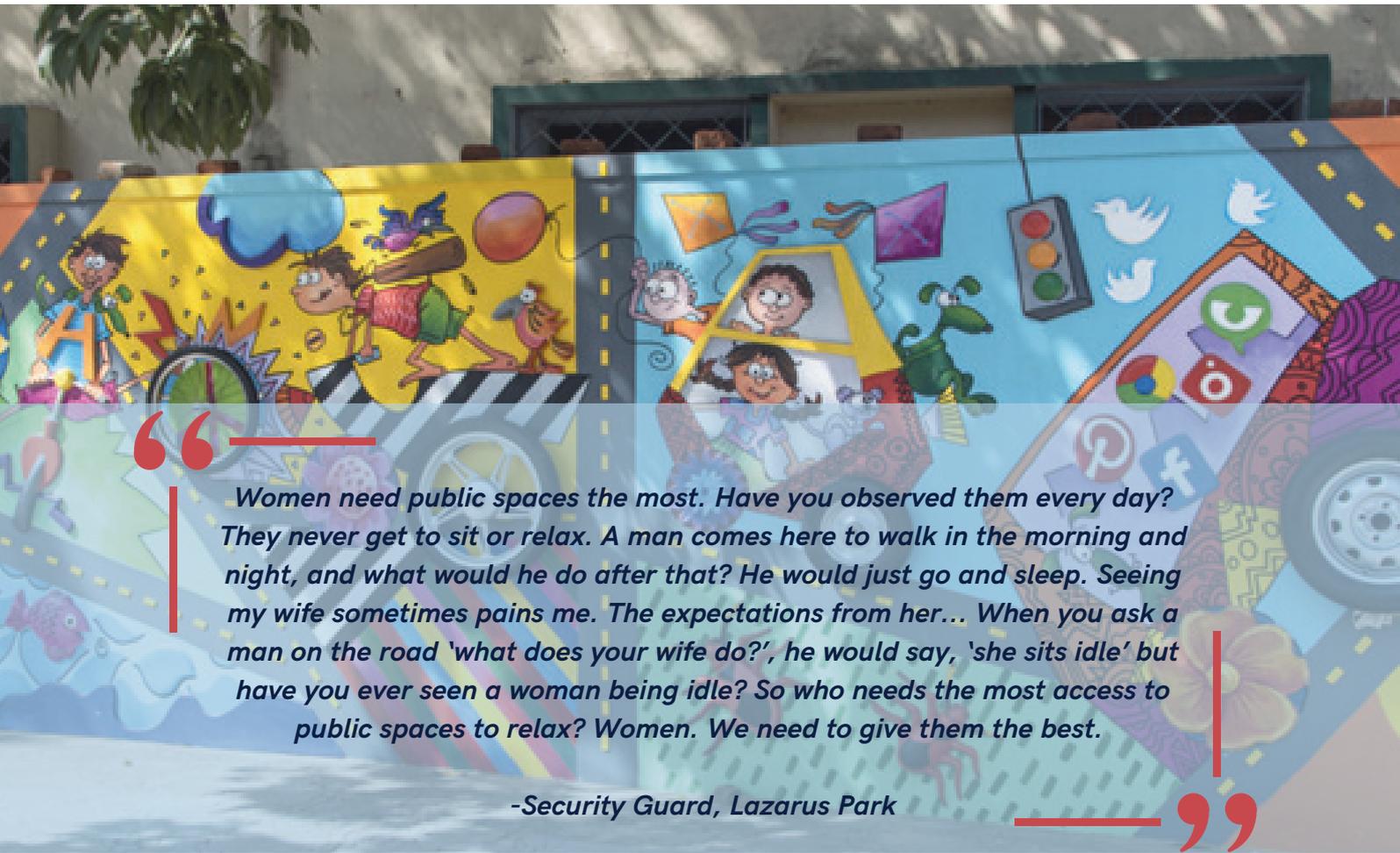
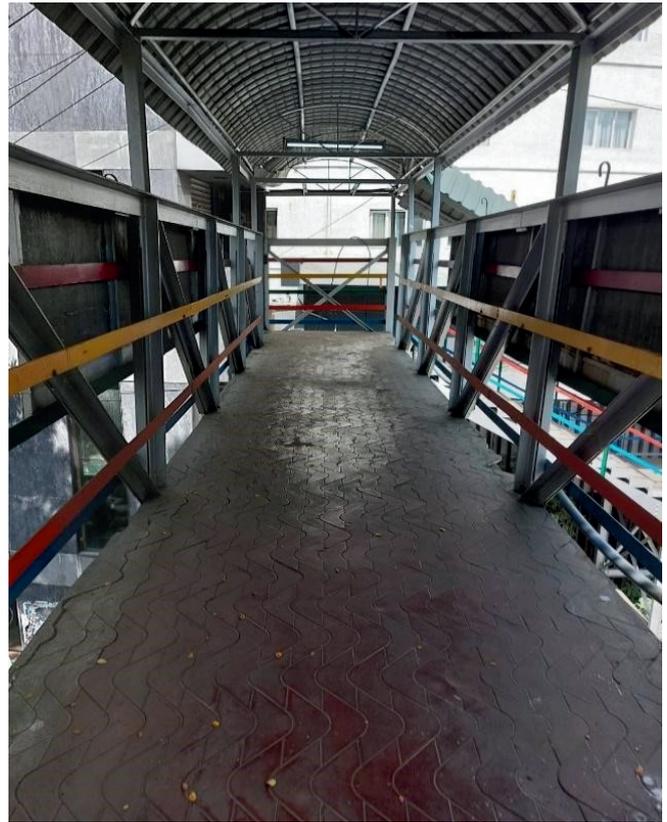


Figure 6: Bilingual Survey on park infrastructure and usage



With an aim to identify the challenges faced by pedestrians, especially women while using foot-over bridges and pedestrian subways, GPL **initiated a study on the safety concerns of foot-over bridges and pedestrian subways**. The questionnaire was administered in English and Tamil. GPL studied 6 foot-over bridges and 5 pedestrian subways across zones covering the city.



A total of 408 responses were documented consisting of responses from 227 female respondents and 181 male respondents. Most of the respondents fell under the age group of 18-35 years, indicating more mobility due to accessing education and engaging in greater economic activities.



Key Learnings from study on the safety concerns of foot-over bridges and pedestrian subways



96% of users of both foot-over bridges and subways use the structure every time they come to the area



45% of non-users mentioned though they felt unsafe while crossing at grade they felt it is too cumbersome to use the structure.



33% of non-users mentioned that they always felt safe crossing at grade



People tend to use foot-over bridges and pedestrian subways only when it is linked to a transit hub like a railway station or metro station



Public do not perceive these structures as safety enablers to cross the road. They find it too cumbersome or time consuming and prefer the risk of crossing at grade



Presence of vendors (especially women vendors) as in the case of the Guindy subway and the Beach Station subway increase feelings of safety among users



Unused foot-over bridges and subways are often dirty and attract antisocial activities

Figure 7: Key Learnings from study on foot-over bridges & subways

Based on the findings, action is being taken for the structures that require repair and refurbishment.

“

It has been an enriching experience for Special Projects Department to host the Gender and Policy Lab. The Lab's work has deepened our perspectives in planning towards mobility along with understanding safety and access to civic infrastructure. Inclusive and gender-responsive civic infrastructure is the cornerstone of a thriving city. By considering the unique needs and experiences of all genders, we not only foster equality and social justice, but we also unlock the true potential of Chennai.

-Thiru. B.V. Babu, Superintending Engineer, Special Projects Department

”



Training and Building Skills, Knowledge and Capacity

No. of Activities: 4 ●—●—●—●

Stakeholders:



GREATER CHENNAI CORPORATION



THE CHENNAI SCHOOL



GREATER CHENNAI POLICE



MTC



TAMILNADU HABITAT BOARD



TAMILNADU POLICE



SAFETIPIN



IRCUC



PENNTHOZHILALARGAL SANGAM



ACTION AID



SOUTHINDIA AIDS ACTION PROGRAMME



THOZHAMAII

Thematic Areas:



ASSESS THE GROUND SITUATION



BUILD CAPACITY AND AWARENESS



STRENGTHEN PLANNING AND POLICIES



IMPROVE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Parallel to building awareness among the stakeholders and the larger community, building internal capacity to understand, act and comply with the different needs of women is crucial. Over the span of the year, GPL organised various training activities for different stakeholders on gender sensitivity and inclusivity. The training activities intended to provide necessary technical skills and sensitise stakeholders specific to their area of work. Some of the training activities conducted by GPL include a workshop on gender mainstreaming in urban mobility, training internal compliance committee members about PoSH, training on how to conduct safety audits and establishing gender clubs in schools to provide continuous training to children on gender equality and inclusivity.

The Honourable Mayor in 2022 announced the introduction of **Gender Clubs** in Corporation Schools. Following her vision, GPL has been closely working with the Education Department to deliver a unique initiative called the Gender Clubs. Gender Club was conceptualised and introduced in 70 High and Higher Secondary Corporation Schools to inculcate gender sensitivity in children and promote a healthy classroom environment.

In association with Bharathidasan University, a comprehensive module encompassing 9 topics was prepared for the teachers implementing the programme. Each school level Gender Club had 30 students and 2 nodal teachers. The **curriculum training for school teachers** was completed in two phases. The first phase on September 15, 16 and 19, 2022 and the second phase on January 24 and 25, 2023.

In the second year of implementation, the **Gender Clubs are planned to be expanded to 92 Middle Schools**. The Gender Clubs initiative will introduce these topics during School Management Committee (SMC) meetings to engage parents and organise school-level *melas* to showcase the students' work.

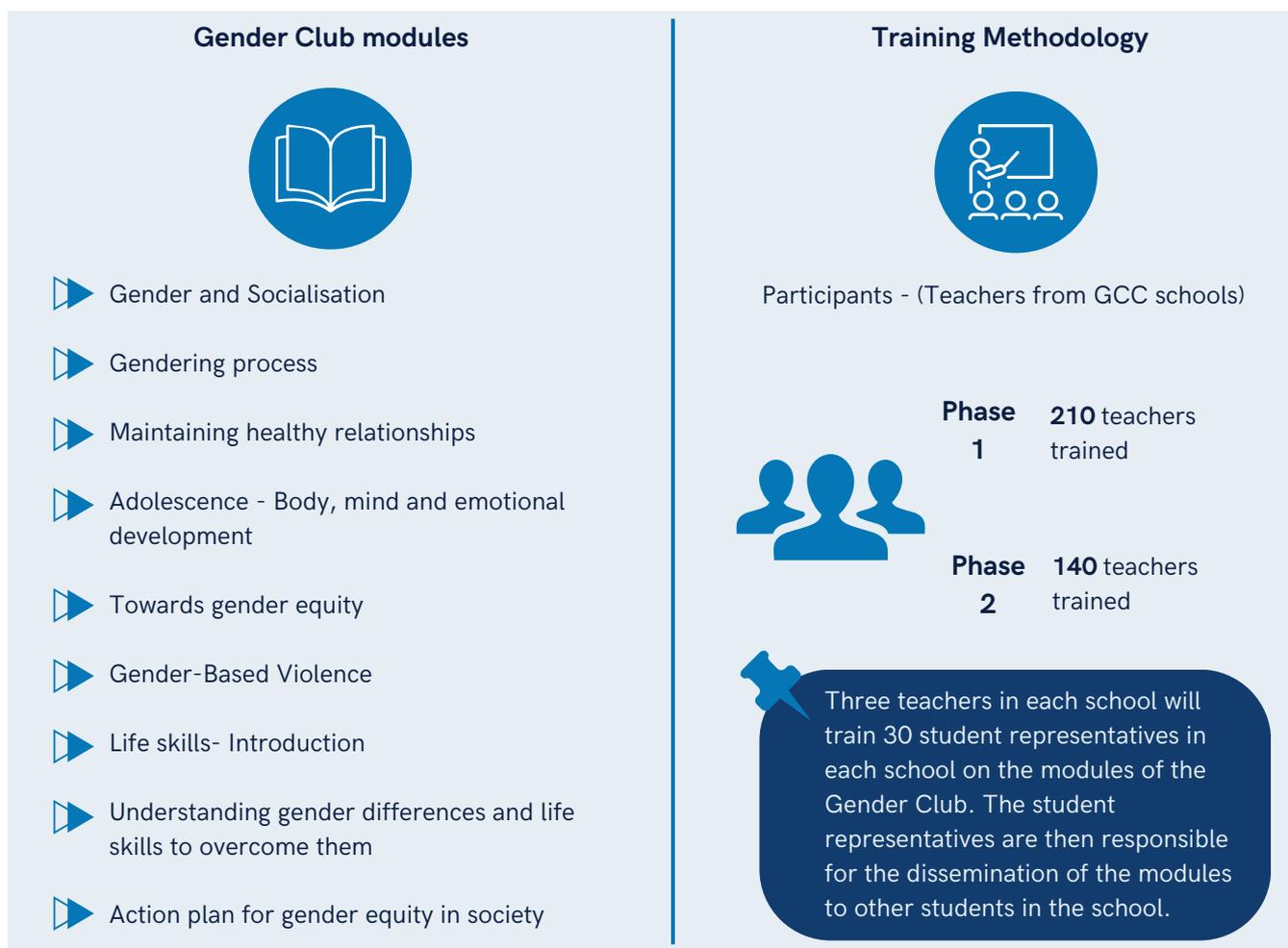
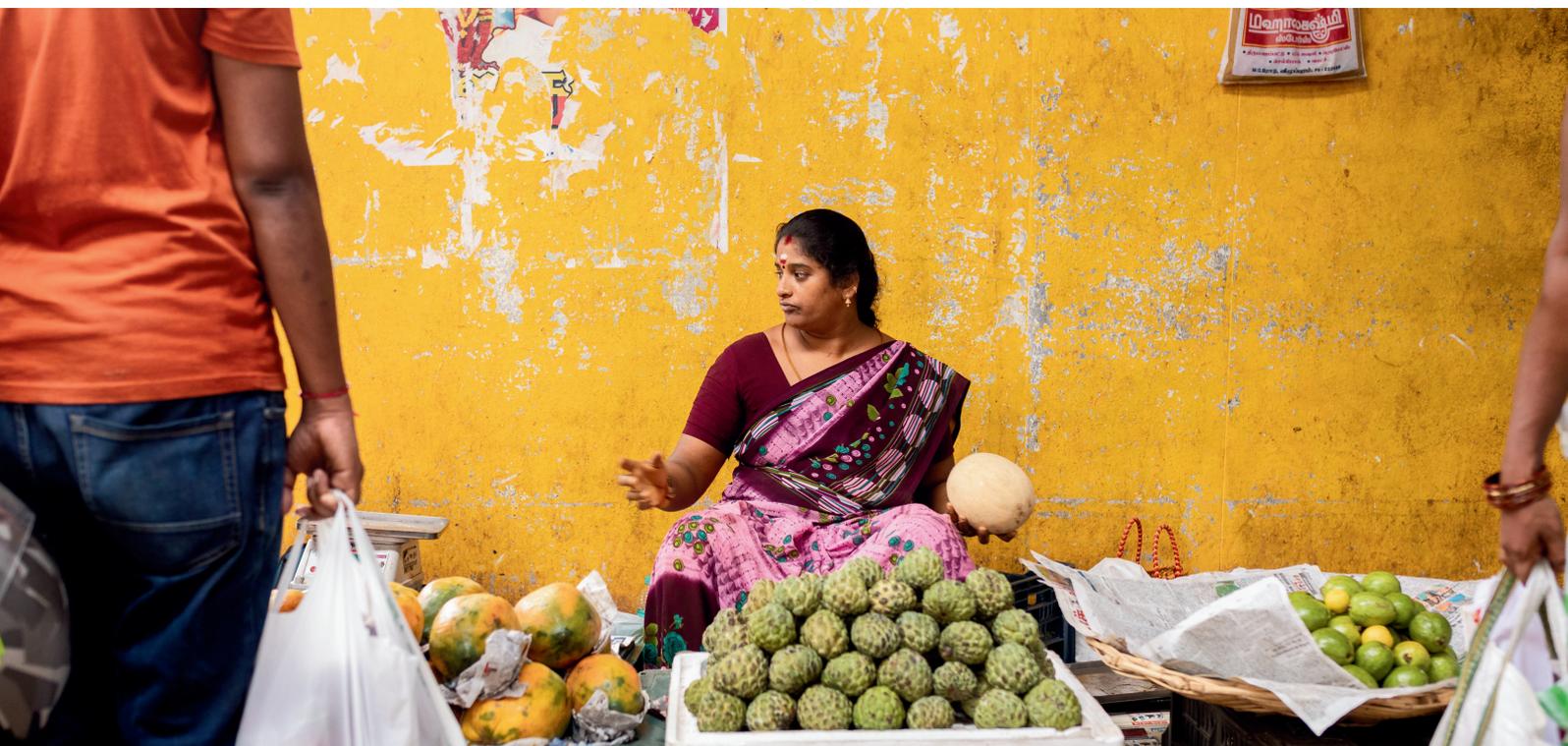


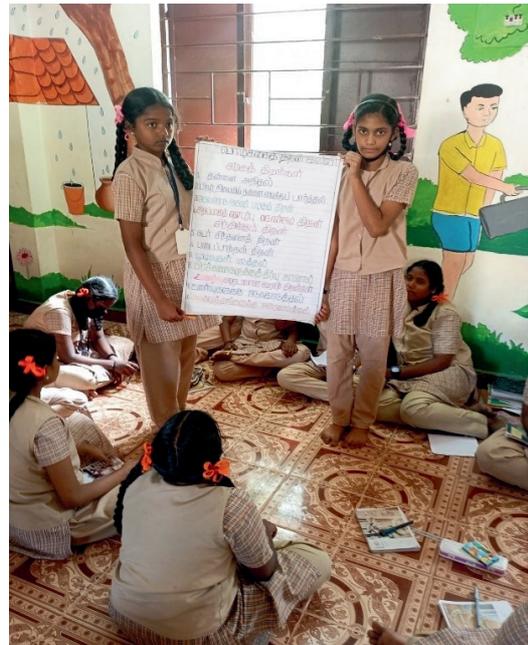
Figure 8: Gender Clubs



Figure 9: An excerpt from Gender Club modules



To provide **awareness about the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act** specifically in the context of schools, GPL organised a training program for administrators from the Department of Education of GCC in partnership with International Foundation for Crime Prevention & Victim Care (PCVC) on April 12, 2022. The training covered understanding sexual harassment in a school context, laws related to workplace sexual harassment, and policy and practices to be adopted by GCC education department.



While GPL recognised that providing awareness about PoSH was necessary, it also identified the need to sensitise relevant stakeholders and make reforms to existing compliance procedures under GCC. In this process, GPL **facilitated Internal Compliance Committees (ICCs)** to be set up in 3 regions. It also identified external members who would be part of the Head Quarters and the regional ICCs as mentioned in the PoSH Act of 2013. These teams were trained and sensitised on the PoSH Act and their roles as members.



Understanding the existing ground situation was recognised as the first step to building safe public infrastructure. One of the initiatives GPL facilitated to understand the ground situation was a two-day **Safety Audit Training Programme** along with Safetipin, an organisation that uses technology to enable safe public spaces, on September 21 and 22, 2022. The training was attended by 40 participants.



This included the GPL team, GCC Engineers of Zone 15, Metropolitan Transportation Corporation, Chennai and Tambaram Police, Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board and Civil Society Organisations - Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCDUC), Penn Thozhilalargal Sangam, Action Aid, South India AIDS Action Programme (SIAAP), and Thozhamai.



Each group was assigned with a persona/character:

- 30-year-old female domestic worker with two children who travels to the city for work
- 18-year-old female college student living in Semmanchery who travels to the city
- Informal woman labourer who is a single old flower seller who travels to the city for her livelihood
- Person with disability in Semmanchery



The activity involved identifying key issues for each character and areas of improvement in Semmanchery. GPL noted the suggestions and initiated follow-up actions with the concerned departments. This **led to infrastructure upgradation in vulnerable locations** to avert risky situations. Lights were fixed at avenue roads, playgrounds and the Semmanchery bus depot. The Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) buses were permitted to board inside the terminus and the women's toilet inside the depot was instructed to be kept open and functional.

“

Safetipin has been privileged to collaborate with the Gender and Policy Lab which is a unique initiative to prioritise women's rights and safety within city planning. We were glad to see such an enthusiastic team that identified gaps in the the urban infrastructure using Safetipin tools. More than 400 safety audits were conducted and the commitment of the Lab and the corporation towards gender inclusion is commendable.

-Dr. Kalpana Viswanath, Founder, Safetipin

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Strengthen Operations

No. of Activities: 5 ●—●—●—●—●

Stakeholders:



Thematic Areas:



In its continuous efforts to create a safe and inclusive Chennai, GPL realised that supporting existing departments under GCC is important for seamless implementation of infrastructural services in the city. GPL's multi-sectoral approach has enabled the Lab to collaborate with multiple stakeholders and support them in providing inclusive infrastructure services. Over the course of the year, GPL has **supported many stakeholders by conducting studies or providing recommendation notes** to improve their services to be more women-friendly. This included collaborations with the departments of parks and playground, bus routes and roads, health and the shelter committee.



Reaffirming its commitment to making Chennai city inclusive, GPL worked with the Shelters team under the Health department and **updated the SOP for Urban Homeless Shelters Program 2022**. It included clear roles and responsibilities of the shelter team, zonal team, and shelter management committee members. GPL updated the SOP by integrating guidelines and procedures of other departments for special categories such as persons with disabilities and children. The Expression Of Interests (EOIs) were updated for the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Selection criteria.

Objectives of the Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUH) component of NULM scheme



Figure 10: Objectives of SUH component of NULM scheme

Along with conducting awareness programmes and training concerned stakeholders, GPL also consistently analyses and pens recommendations for better implementation on ground. In order to facilitate and ease the execution of its recommendations, GPL also provides detailed guidelines and checklists for the concerned departments. **Adapting inclusive infrastructure implementation** has therefore, become easier for departments with the help of checklists and guidelines provided by GPL.

As an outcome of park visits, public consultation and review of best practices, GPL shared a list of **recommendations and strategies for enabling gender inclusivity with the parks department**. GPL observed that girls and women are using GCC parks less than boys and men due to a variety of factors including design, community and societal level challenges. To address the issues in design and infrastructure in terms of equipment, seating, lighting and visibility, GPL provided gender focused recommendations to the Parks department.



Key Recommendations for Parks



Compound wall



Walk path



Gym facility



Gallery



Waste bins



Water supply arrangement



Drinking water



Electrical arrangements



Toilets and changing room



Lighting



Locker room facility



First Aid provision



CCTV surveillance



Signages and information boards



Landscaping

Figure 11: Key recommendations to Parks

In addition to the parks infrastructure suggestions, GPL has **provided inputs at the maintenance level** too, such as mandating helpline numbers in the signage boards and training of watchmen to respond to harassment.



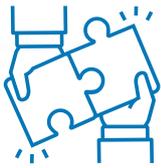
Parallel to the recommendations on park infrastructure, GPL visited numerous bus stops across the city and gained inputs from women to **create a manual on bus shelter designs and bus stop locations**. It also incorporated national guidelines on accessibility in the manual along with collating recommendations on bus stop locations from international manuals. These recommendations were included in the tender for construction, renovation and maintenance of modern bus shelters of GCC.



Figure 12: Key recommendations for bus shelters and stops

While raising awareness among women stakeholders is important, GPL also acknowledges the need to listen to their challenges. Between June and July 2022, GPL made visits to the GCC-, Ramkey- and Urbaser-run solid waste management centres at the ward and zonal level. During this interaction, GPL **studied the challenges of women workers engaged directly in solid waste management** and submitted a recommendation to the Deputy Commissioner of Education, Parks and Playfields.





Campaigns and Collaborations

No. of Activities: **7** ● — ● — ● — ● — ● — ● — ●

Stakeholders:



Thematic Areas:



ASSESS THE
GROUND SITUATION



BUILD CAPACITY &
RAISE AWARENESS

Public awareness is important to stimulate self-mobilisation and action, mobilise local knowledge and resources, and increase enthusiasm and support. Engaging the public through active collaboration can create a sustained impact in the long run. GPL realised the need for collaboration in creating awareness alongside actively organising and facilitating campaigns. Through various campaigns and collaborations, such as the night cycling event for women, the global 16 Days of Activism, Safe Mobility Fellowship, the Spirit of Chennai celebration and the Bystanders Against Public Harassment campaign, GPL produced a strong effect about creating safe spaces for all genders amongst the public.

Public spaces that are safe 24*7 result in creating vibrant social lives bustling with economic and recreational opportunities irrespective of the time of the day. In an effort to create safe and active spaces even in the dark, GPL **organised a women's night cycling event** on May 28, 2022, in partnership with Chennai Smart City Limited. The campaign witnessed more than 100 individuals cycling from different starting points to show their solidarity with the cause.

WOMEN NIGHT CYCLE RIDE

28 MAY, 2022 @8-9PM



SINGARA CHENNAI 2.0

VEEDHI VIZHA



சிங்கார CHENNAI 2.0

**PATHUKAPPANA
CHENNAI!**
Chennai, Safe for Women

#PATHUKAPPANACHENNAI #NALAMIGUCHENNAI #NAMMACHENNAISINGARACHENNAI



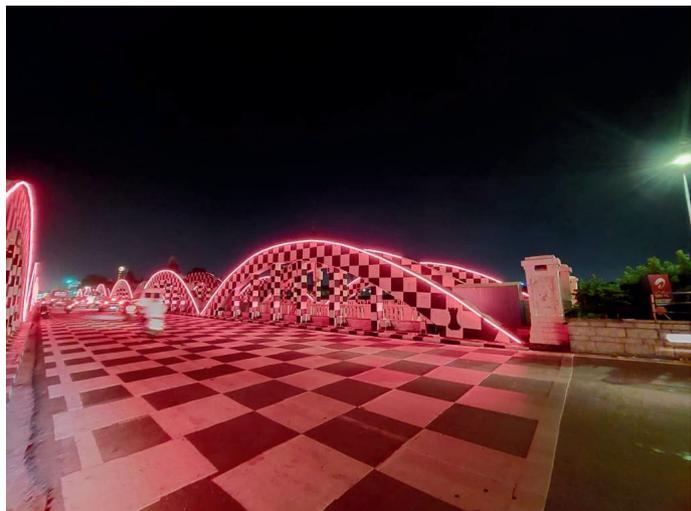
Figure 13: Women's night cycling event

Being an organisation working to make cities and public spaces safe for women and girls, GPL reiterated its commitment by **taking part in the global 16 Days of Activism** to end violence against women, girls and vulnerable groups. Between November and December 2022, GPL worked on two campaigns.



Figure 14: Social media posts during 16 Days of Activism

GPL conceptualised and worked closely with GCC officials to **light up the Ripon Building and Napier's Bridge in orange** on select days to symbolise a brighter future of the world, free of violence in keeping with the global choice of orange as the colour of solidarity. The second campaign involved a **Twitter campaign** spearheaded by the Mayor Tmt. R Priya and Former GCC Commissioner Thiru. Gagandeep Singh Bedi, I.A.S, to take a stance against gender-based violence. The Southern Railways, Greater Chennai Police, and Chennai Metro Rail Limited also actively participated in the campaign to show solidarity.



What to do if I am Sexually Harassed?

- Do not suffer alone in silence
- Shout for help! Alert people nearby
- Press the panic button (in pilot mode)
- Alert the bus driver & conductor
- Call 100 or 181

UNITE TOGETHER FOR A SAFER CHENNAI

Educate your fellow citizens!

For more information: Chennai Gender and Policy Lab (chennaigenderlab@gmail.com)

"Speak Up, Speak Out Against Public Harassment"

?	WHAT	2-Day Campaign
📅	WHEN	December 29 and 30, 2022
📍	WHERE	4 Bus Depots (CMBT, Broadway, Thiruvanmiyur and Guindy)

IMPACT

600+ Citizens

Reaffirming the cause of taking a stand against gender-based violence in public places, GPL conducted a **2-day campaign** in December 2022 called **"Speak Up, Speak Out Against Public Harassment."** The campaign encouraged victims and bystanders to speak up and not be silent in the face of sexual harassment. It also publicised MTC's panic button system in deluxe buses through a street play by folk artists.



"The play was very informative. It gives us the confidence to stand up against sexual harassment. Many times we don't speak up because we don't know what to do. Now, that won't be the case. I know so many women who have been stopped from getting education and access employment opportunities because of harassment issues. This is a welcome move. In fact, these campaigns should be done in schools as well."

- Commuter

Figure 15: "Speak Up, Speak Out Against Harassment" campaign

Being an organisation rooted in Chennai city, it was only fitting that GPL **acknowledged the spirit of Chennai** on its first Madras Day since its inception. The Lab partnered with Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL) on August 22, 2022 to reiterate its commitment to making Chennai's public spaces safer, clearer and more accessible to all, especially women. This involved holding discussions on women's safety in public parks and saw the participation of 15 councillors across 9 zones. The event also felicitated 165 community volunteers across 15 locations with medals and certificates.



To further collaborate with the community in its efforts towards ensuring safe and inclusive public spaces and opening up institutions like the Greater Chennai Corporation, GPL **conceptualised a ten-day Citizens for Safe Mobility Fellowship** program in partnership with Safetipin and Prajnya. The intent of the Fellowship was to conduct safety audits of transit points and public spaces in 47 locations across Chennai.

A total of 22 Fellows were selected to undertake safety audits across the city. The candidates underwent training for two days, followed by five days of safety audit and three days of data collation and presentation of findings. They used three tools to conduct the safety audit - Safetipin mobile app, infrastructure checklist and interview questionnaire - in designated routes.



Figure 16: Objectives of Citizens for Safe Mobility Fellowship

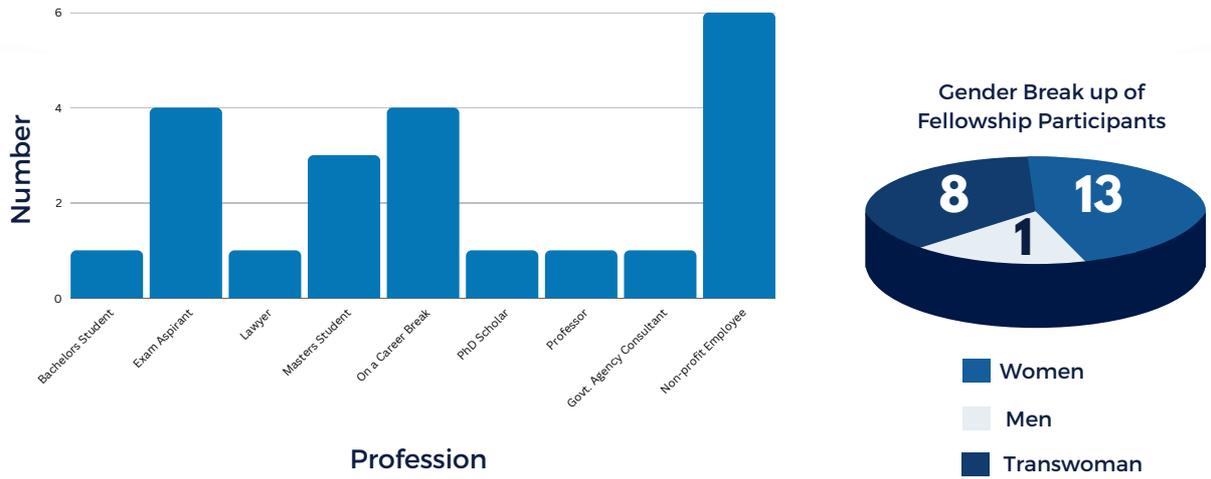


Figure 17: Participants of Citizens for Safe Mobility Fellowship

Their findings were presented to concerned officials of different departments including GCC, Greater Chennai Police, Southern Railways, MTC and CUMTA. The Fellows were felicitated with certificates and medals by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, GCC Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner (Education, Parks & Playfields) on March 23, 2023.



Figure 18: Geographical distribution of safety audits in Chennai



Structure of the Audit

22 Fellows
7 Groups



5 Clusters - North, Central, Mount Road,
Saidapet, OMR



47 Transit Point and Public Places
Railway Station, Bus Depots, Subway, Foot
Overbridge, Market, Approach Roads



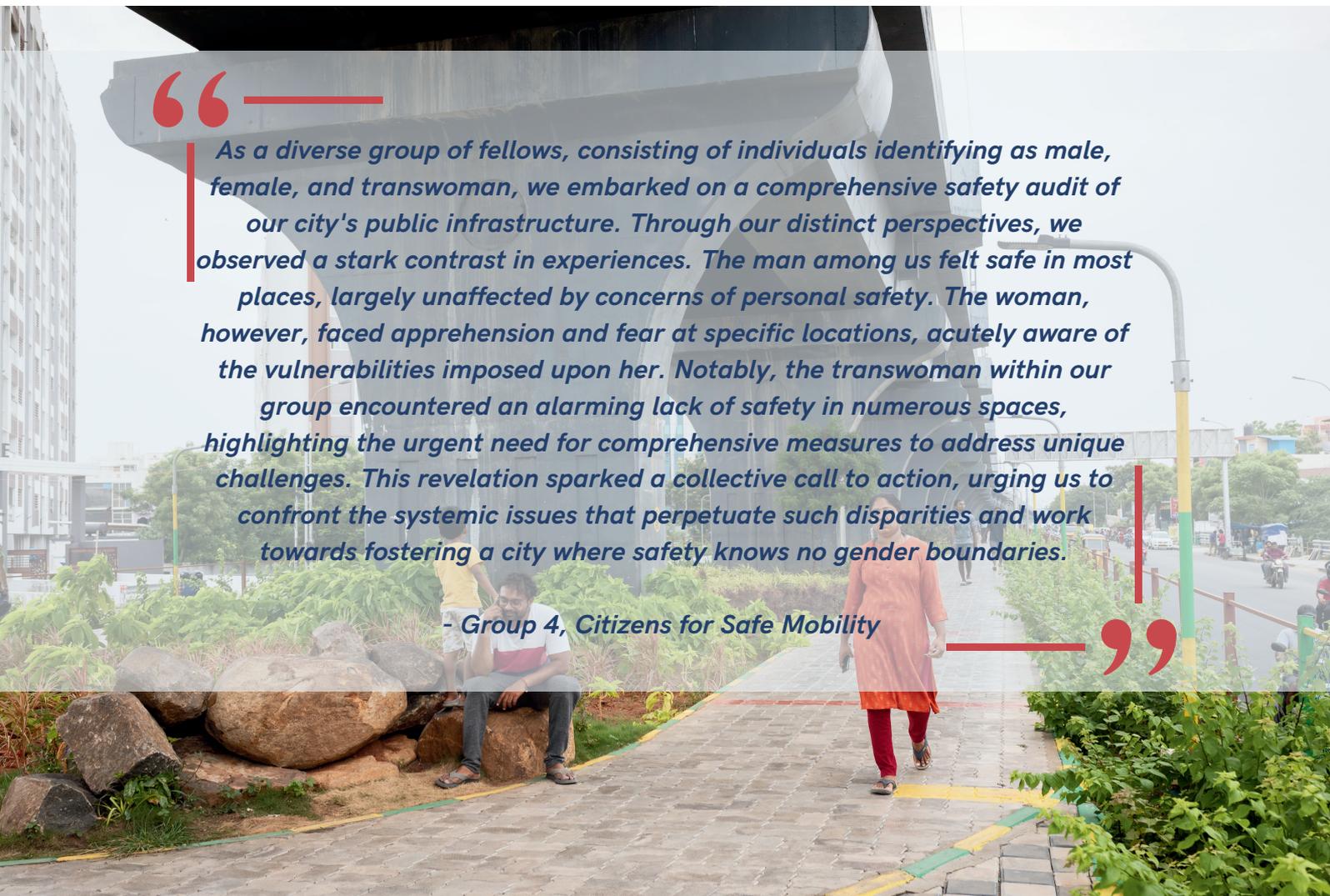
Figure 19: Structure of safety audits

“

As a diverse group of fellows, consisting of individuals identifying as male, female, and transwoman, we embarked on a comprehensive safety audit of our city's public infrastructure. Through our distinct perspectives, we observed a stark contrast in experiences. The man among us felt safe in most places, largely unaffected by concerns of personal safety. The woman, however, faced apprehension and fear at specific locations, acutely aware of the vulnerabilities imposed upon her. Notably, the transwoman within our group encountered an alarming lack of safety in numerous spaces, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address unique challenges. This revelation sparked a collective call to action, urging us to confront the systemic issues that perpetuate such disparities and work towards fostering a city where safety knows no gender boundaries.

- Group 4, Citizens for Safe Mobility

”



On October 12, 2022, Mayor Tmt. R Priya announced a **competition on designing logos** that best represent GPL. A 4-page brief about eligibility, technical parameters, submission guidelines, and evaluation criteria was prepared and uploaded on the GCC website. The competition aimed to not only result in a logo for GPL but also serve as a means to raise awareness among the wider public about the Lab and its functions. Award money of Rs. 10,000 was also announced for the winner.



Figure 20: Posters for logo designing competition

Longlist of Logos



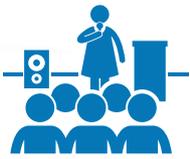
Shortlist of Logos



Finalised Logo



Figure 21: Finalising logo for Gender and Policy Lab



Orientation Programmes and Awareness Workshops

No. of Activities: 5 ●—●—●—●—●—●

Stakeholders:



Thematic Areas:



BUILD CAPACITY & RAISE AWARENESS



STRENGTHEN PLANNING AND POLICIES

As the first step towards creating safe and vibrant public spaces, GPL recognised the importance of building awareness and sensitising different stakeholders and the wider public on gender inclusivity. GPL **organised numerous orientation and awareness programmes** with multiple stakeholders and the wider public. In its first year of establishment, GPL undertook many outreach and orientation programmes around the Women's Helpline number, the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act (PoSH) 2013, the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act (POSCO), and intersectionalities of gender, urban mobility and sanitation.

In order to raise awareness on **Tamil Nadu women's helpline number 181 and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act (PoSH) 2013**, GPL partnered with the Department of Social Welfare and Women's Empowerment and presented the process of registering complaints on sexual harassment.

Representatives from the 181 helpline of the department presented about the helpline and its services. Over 170 women staff from GCC attended the orientation programme held on May 31, 2022. As an outcome of the workshop, Internal Committees were constituted at zonal and regional levels while all the existing committees would undergo training to be compliant with the PoSH Act 2013.

Being an organisation advocating for women in the decision-making process, it was essential to GPL's mandate to engage and discuss gender sensitivity with key women stakeholders. One such initiative was the **training program for women councillors on Gender and Sanitation**. This was conducted jointly with the Indian Institute of Human Settlement (IIHS) on May 19, 2022. 78 out of the 102 women councillors participated in the training. A survey form was also administered to councillors to obtain feedback on women's access to civic infrastructure.



With the spirit to build an inclusive Chennai, GPL **organised a one-day workshop on Gender Inclusive streets** in partnership with World Bank and Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP). The event, held on June 21, 2022, was attended by 30+ participants from GCC and the Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA). The workshop trained these engineers on gender mainstreaming, using data for project planning, gender inclusivity by design, and assessing the impact of a street redesign project.



GPL's ethos to build an inclusive Chennai emphasises the need to work on different identity intersections such as gender and senior citizens, gender and disabilities. In a move to address the needs of women with disabilities, GPL **organised a two-day workshop on Gender and Disabilities** with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) on July 4 and 5, 2022. The participants were taken to Santhome Sensory Park and Museum of Possibilities to understand how infrastructure can adopt a disability lens. The workshop was attended by 50 participants across GCC, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), the Department of Highways, Commissionerate of Disabilities, Tamil Nadu Institute of Urban Affairs, Department of City Planning, Coimbatore Municipal Corporation and Smart City Trivandrum and Mangalore.



Recognising school children as the citizens of tomorrow, GPL has been parallelly organising events to build awareness among school children about various gender-related issues. On the International Day for Prevention of Child Abuse (November 19), GPL **conducted a half-day awareness training on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act** for 281 Head Masters of GCC Schools. This training was done in partnership with Social Defence and Tulir, an NGO dedicated to the issue. The Head Masters received detailed information, kits and posters to carry out the provisions of the Act in their respective schools.





Leveraging Institutional Mechanisms

No. of Activities: **2** ●—●

Stakeholders:



Thematic Areas:



BUILD CAPACITY & RAISE AWARENESS



STRENGTHEN PLANNING AND POLICIES

Over the several efforts and processes taken up by GPL, it also recognised the need to strengthen the institutional mechanisms of GPL in order to strategise and execute activities effectively and efficiently. As its steps towards enhancing institutional mechanisms for the better, GPL decided to strengthen its expertise across different fields with the Voluntary Advisory Committee and enhance its focus on implementation and collaborations through an inter-departmental working group.

GPL recognises that collaborations are integral to its goal of adopting a multi-sectoral approach. In a move to create a body that aids the Lab in providing inputs and suggestions, a **Working Group was created**. The long-term aim of the Working Group is to facilitate inter-departmental collaboration between GPL and other departments in projects related to women's access and safety in Chennai for greater city-level impact. The group constitutes members from Greater Chennai Police, MTC, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, Southern Railways and Chennai Metro Rail Limited. The first meeting of the working group was held on September 7, 2022.

“ On behalf of Greater Chennai Police, I have been associated with the Lab as a Working Group member. I am closely engaged with the team to understand synergies to strengthen their work. This initiative of GCC towards gender-responsive urban planning ensuring better and safer access to public spaces for women will go a long way in making Chennai even safer and improve their participation in its economic growth.

- Tmt. Disha Mittal I.P.S, Former Joint Commissioner East (L&O)



In order to strengthen the GPL internal team with multi-faceted expertise, GPL **created a 6-member Voluntary Advisory Committee (VAC)** constituted by members from the fields of gender-based violence, disability, homelessness, urban transportation, safe cities and technology, and community empowerment. The first orientation of the VAC was held on February 3, 2023.





Technical Feedback and Support

No. of Activities: **5** ● — ● — ● — ● — ●

Stakeholders:



Thematic Areas:



While GPL has undertaken several activities in the past year to make Chennai city safe, it also extended **support to other governmental and non-governmental bodies in planning infrastructure and formulating policies with a gender lens**. GPL provided recommendations and feedback for the World Bank toolkit, the Nirbhaya PMU team's curriculum on menstrual hygiene management, the Tamil Nadu state policy on senior citizens and the state's New Policy on Women.

GPL **provided inputs to the World Bank Toolkit**, consisting of two volumes, and circulated Volume 1 for feedback from MTC, CMDA, SWWED and GCP. The feedback received was used to refine the toolkit and make it more relevant to the local context. The World Bank toolkit also mentioned GPL as a case study for other bodies to adopt to strengthen their planning and process. The toolkit was launched on December 8, 2022. The Former GCC Commissioner, Thiru. Gagandeep Singh Bedi, I.A.S, officially released the two volumes of the toolkit and presented GPL's contributions to all the stakeholders who were present.

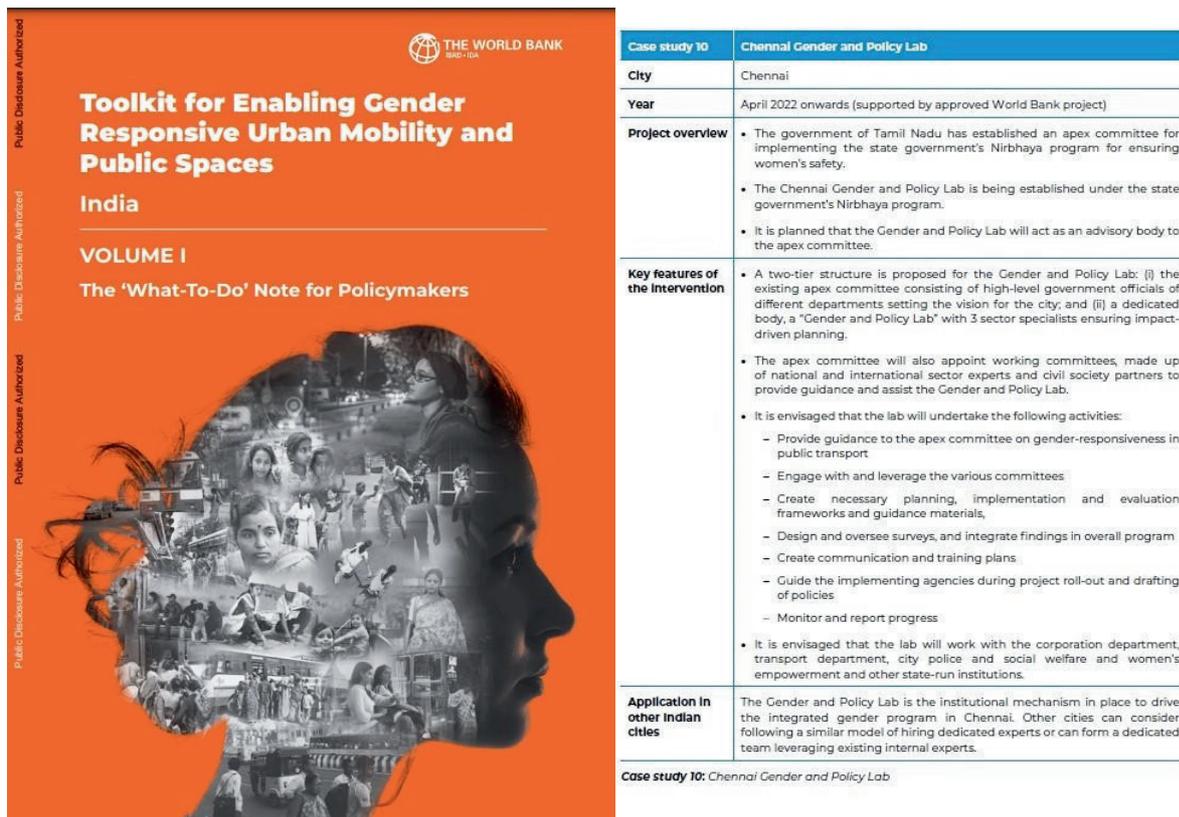


Figure 22: Excerpt of toolkit by World Bank

In an effort to address the intersection of gender and old age, GPL drafted comments on the state policy on senior citizens. The note aimed to ensure that the elderly policy was inclusive and **addressed the specific needs and concerns of elderly women** such as health and nutrition, social security, and income security.

Key themes of recommendations for state policy on senior citizens



Health and
Nutrition



Social Security
Schemes



Livelihood/
Income Security



Housing and
Environment



Safety and
Security



Institutional
care

Figure 23: Key themes of recommendations for state policy on senior citizens

In its active collaborations and support to ensure the welfare of women in the state, GPL **developed recommendations for the Tamil Nadu State's New Policy on Women**, which was released in 2021. The recommendations aimed to ensure that the policy was inclusive and addressed the specific needs and concerns of women such as education, health, sanitation, social security, elimination of violence and emotional and mental wellbeing as well.



In its continuous endeavours to raise awareness in schools, GPL supported the Nirbhaya PMU team in suggesting topics and resource material to strengthen the service provider's training curriculum on **menstrual hygiene management** for GCC students.

To provide a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the increasing traffic in Chennai, GPL **drafted a list of recommendations for the Chennai- Intelligent Transport System (C-ITS) project**. GPL reviewed three components of C-ITS which are Chennai Traffic Information System (C-TIS), Traffic Management System (TMS) and City Bus System (CBS). The recommendations included insights into governmental standards of the infrastructure, accessibility of the mobile application and focus on pedestrian convenience and accessibility.

Key themes of recommendations for state policy on women



Education and Research



Health, Sanitation and Nutrition



Elimination of Violence



Social Security



Media



Infrastructure



Economy



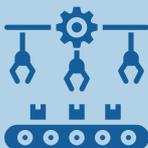
Workforce Participation



Skilling



Agriculture



Manufacturing



Domestic workers



Banking and Insurance



Political and Emotional wellbeing

“

Lighting is a critical factor when it comes to ensuring safety in our public spaces and transportation. The Gender and Policy Lab's community-based approach to projects such as safety audits and grievance analysis has helped the Electrical Department prioritise areas where there was a presence of dark spots.

The other channels of grievances report single point complaints or lack of service. Gender Lab has brought out the social impact perspective. The Department has put to use the scientific approach of the Lab and swiftly addressed the concerns and carried out the required rectifications. We are committed to leaving no stone unturned in our mission to create a safer and more secure urban city for all residents, road users and visitors alike.

*- C.A. Balamurali,
Superintending Engineer,
Electrical Department*

”

Figure 24: Key themes of recommendations for state policy on women

Looking Ahead



The Gender and Policy Lab is playing a pivotal role for the Greater Chennai Corporation and the city of Chennai. Since its establishment in 2022, the Lab has successfully implemented a range of innovative projects and activities, all aimed at promoting gender inclusion and gender sensitisation in different spaces. Our unique position has allowed us to forge strong partnerships and harness support from a diverse array of stakeholders, including government bodies, non-profit organisations, academic institutions, and elected representatives.

As a result, the Lab's endeavours, which encompass comprehensive studies, impactful workshops, capacity building programs, streamlining operations, compelling campaigns, and empowering fellowships, have fostered an exceptional body of work and initiatives exclusively tailored to the Chennai Corporation.

While Year 1 of the Lab's work primarily concentrated on understanding the functioning of different departments within the Corporation and fostering liaison with other government departments; Year 2 will focus on strengthening some of the partnerships and building on the foundation to do deeper work. The findings from the city-wide perception study will give us rich data to improve infrastructure and services and plan appropriate programmes with different stakeholders across Chennai.

In my role as the Deputy Commissioner entrusted with overseeing the Gender and Policy Lab, I take immense pride in the Lab's remarkable progress and the multitude of milestones achieved within a relatively short timeframe. I believe this experiment the Gender and Policy Lab within an Urban Local Body will evolve as an example for other departments and states. The future holds great promise as we continue on this journey.

Tmt. Sharanya Ari, I.A.S.

Deputy Commissioner (Education, Parks & Playfields)

Our Team



Meera Sundararajan

Team Lead, Gender and M&E Expert

Meera is a Social Development professional with over two decades of experience in the social sector. She has worked with Government, NGOs (National and International) and Corporate entities as a Monitoring & Evaluation Lead, Gender Expert and Program Manager. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Agriculture from the then Andhra Pradesh Agriculture University, Hyderabad (now called Acharya N G Ranga Agriculture University) and a Masters in Social Work from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.



Vaishnavi Chidambaranathan

Policy Expert

Vaishnavi has a background in Development Studies with 9 years of experience across different stakeholders and states. She has worked with Governments of Kerala, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Assam. She has worked across the issues of women and local governance, livelihoods and school systems with civil society organisations, elected representatives and collectives. She had her own independent project in Kumbakonam to promote local research in community, and gender equity.



Steffi Mariam Cherian

Communications Expert

Steffi is a development sector practitioner with over 7 years of work experience in programme development, implementation, research, and writing. Her sectoral experience include skilling and urban livelihoods, parliamentary research, and gender and safe cities. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Literature and Political Science from St. Stephen's College, Delhi and a Masters in Development from Azim Premji University.



Kiran Caroline

Programme Associate

Kiran holds a Masters degree in Social Work from Loyola College and a Bachelors degree in Psychology from Stella Maris College. She has previously worked as a tele-counsellor for the Greater Chennai Corporation's COVID care programme, talent acquisition intern at Hogarth Worldwide, and student intern with the Pratham Education Foundation.

Annexure A

Gender and Policy Lab – Year 1 Activities

S. No.	Type of Programme	Activity
1.	Research and Analysis	City-wide Baseline Study on Women's Perception of Safety in Public Spaces and Public Transport
2.	Research and Analysis	1913 Grievance Redressal Analysis for the Year June 2021-22
3.	Research and Analysis	Bi-lingual Online Park Survey to Understand Park Usage and Issues
4.	Research and Analysis	Study on the Safety Concerns of Foot Over Bridges and Pedestrian Subways
5.	Trainings and Building Skills, Knowledge and Capacity	Gender Clubs in 70 GCC Schools
6.	Trainings and Building Skills, Knowledge and Capacity	One Day Training of Education Department Administrators on understanding the PoSH Act in the School Context
7.	Trainings and Building Skills, Knowledge and Capacity	Set up Regional Internal Complaints Committee and Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Training for all ICC Regional Office Committee Members
8.	Trainings and Building Skills, Knowledge and Capacity	Safety Audit Training in Semmanchery

9.	Strengthen Operations	Update Standard Operating Procedures for the Urban Homeless Shelters under NULM
10.	Strengthen Operations	Update Inclusive Gender and Accessibility Design Recommendations in the Tender for 1000 Bus Stops
11.	Strengthen Operations	Adapt Inclusive Infrastructure Recommendations with Checklists for Implementation
12.	Strengthen Operations	Revise Parks Maintenance Standard Operating Procedures to Facilitate Accessibility and Safety for Women
13.	Strengthen Operations	Understand the Risks and Challenges Faced by Women Engaged in SWM Work
14.	Campaigns and Collaborations	Night Cycling Campaign to Encourage Women to Occupy Spaces in the City after Dark
15.	Campaigns and Collaborations	Two Day Campaign Speak up, Speak Out against Sexual Harassment with MTC in 4 Bus Depots
16.	Campaigns and Collaborations	Acknowledging the Spirit of Chennai as part of Madras Day Celebration to Facilitate Community Volunteers and Discuss Women's Access to Public Spaces
17.	Campaigns and Collaborations	Social Media Campaign to Say No to Gender Based Violence as part of the 16 Days of Activism
18.	Campaigns and Collaborations	Campaign to illuminate Ripon and Napier's Bridge in Orange as part of the 16 Days of Activism
19.	Campaigns and Collaborations	Pan India Logo Design Competition
20.	Campaigns and Collaborations	Ten Day Citizens for Safe Mobility Fellowship

21.	Orientation Programmes and Awareness Workshops	Orientation Programme on Gender and Sanitation in partnership with Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS)
22.	Orientation Programmes and Awareness Workshops	Two Day Workshop on Gender and Disabilities (Southern Region) along with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)
23.	Orientation Programmes and Awareness Workshops	Orientation on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act 2013 and the 181 Women's Helpline Services
24.	Orientation Programmes and Awareness Workshops	One Day Workshop on Gender Inclusive Streets in Chennai along with World Bank and ITDP
25.	Orientation Programmes and Awareness Workshops	Orientation Programme on Protection of Children against Sexual Offences (POCSO) for 281 HMs
26.	Leverage Institutional Mechanism	Set up Inter-departmental Working Group
27.	Leverage Institutional Mechanism	Set up Voluntary Advisory Committee
28.	Technical Feedback and Support	Review the World Bank Gender and Urban Mobility Volumes 1 and 2
29.	Technical Feedback and Support	Recommendation Note on Tamil Nadu State Policy for Women, 2021
30.	Technical Feedback and Support	Recommendation Note on Tamil Nadu Policy on Senior Citizens, 2022
31.	Technical Feedback and Support	Recommendation Note on Intelligent Transport System Design Report
32.	Technical Feedback and Support	Recommendation to Strengthen the Menstrual Hygiene Management Programme by Nirbhaya PMU



Contact Us

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