

# **PUBLIC OPINION AND POLICY MEASURES ON REDUCING THE GENDER GAP IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT MODES**

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**ABSTRACT** - This study investigates the intricate interplay between public opinion and policies meant to reduce gender gaps in public transportation, with a particular emphasis on daily bus travel in the suburban areas of Colombo. The research finds deficiencies and shortcomings in the current policies and solutions for effectively resolving these discrepancies through an in-depth review. The study employs a combination of questionnaire surveys, on-location questionnaires, and few interviews with professionals to conduct comprehensive data analysis. Anticipated outcomes include a nuanced comprehension of the multifaceted factors shaping public perceptions of gender disparities in public transport and a critical evaluation of the efficacy of current policy measures. This is intended to create a safer, more accessible, and inclusive public transportation environment for women and further the goals of progress and gender equality in society globally.

**Keywords:** Policy Measures, Gender gap, Public Opinion, Public Transportation, Community

## **1. BACKGROUND**

This research project delves into the crucial link between public opinion and policies aimed at reducing the gender gap in public transportation. The intention is to gather information through the examination of existing perspectives regarding gender disparity in transportation to support evidence-based policy decisions. Men and women have starkly different views about public transportation. Men continue to see it as a place that is dangerous in general and therefore not necessarily the best place for women to be commuting. (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013) Women's dissatisfaction with public transportation not only causes disruptions to regular daily activities and the economy, but it also affects the prosperity of society because they may often avoid using these public transportation services. Obviously public transport is used to a greater extent in big cities because there is a greater availability. However, despite the greater use of this public transport, it is in these large and medium cities where there is a greater inequality by gender in its use. (Sánchez & González, 2016).

The ultimate objective of this research is to improve societal well-being and improve gender equality by identifying and resolving safety barriers and other public transportation-related issues, with potential implications for global progress. This study primarily focuses on violence against women and safety concerns in bus travel within the suburban areas of Colombo, Rajagiriya, Battaramulla, Kotte, and Kollupitiya.

As the capital of Sri Lanka, Colombo encounters an enormous amount of bus travel every day. Therefore, resolving obstacles regarding safety and other complications related to this mode of transportation in this area will be better to improve solution and advancing gender equality and boosting societal well-being which directly affect to the growth of whole world.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a questionnaire survey among daily commuters utilizing public bus transportation within the suburban regions of Colombo District, Sri Lanka. The survey aimed to gather comprehensive data encompassing bus safety, confidence levels, and travel preferences, alongside inquiries into the

frequency of bus utilization, perceived safety measures, incidents of harassment or violence, accessibility concerns, and awareness of support services and community engagement initiatives fostering passenger safety. Employing a structured questionnaire, the research also delved into public sentiments regarding the reduction of the gender gap within public transportation.

The selection of Colombo District as the study area was predicated on its status as a pivotal metropolitan center boasting diverse transportation infrastructure and a considerable populace. Surveys were conducted on buses and at designated bus stands across chosen suburban areas of Colombo, with stratified sampling techniques ensuring the representation of 500 respondents. Furthermore, the survey methodology involves conducting few interviews with professionals in the industry, alongside distributing paper forms within the community of Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology to gather data from a diverse range of respondents. After being methodically assembled, the questionnaire data was systematically organized for analysis. The primary objectives of the analysis were to ascertain public opinion and identify policy solutions intended to mitigate gender inequities within public transport modes.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings highlighted significant issues regarding safety and women's dissatisfaction with public transportation. These insights were crucial for initiating legislative modifications and initiating improvements to infrastructure in public transportation system. The findings startlingly demonstrated that an enormous percentage of women are worried about their safety and inconvenience when travelling buses in their everyday lives.

This revelation underscores the urgent need for addressing these issues to enhance the overall experience of female commuters. Furthermore, the results provide insightful information on public perceptions and prospective legislative initiatives meant to close the gender gap in bus travel. Policymakers may develop interventions to build a safer and more inclusive public transportation system by taking into consideration the issues and difficulties that women encounter.

These findings serve as a crucial foundation for developing targeted strategies that prioritize the safety and well-being of all passengers, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and efficient transportation network.

### 4. REFERENCES

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