SHE
RISES

Responsive, Inclusive, Safe & Equitable Spaces
A Framework for Caring Cities

About Safetipin

Safetipin is a social enterprise and a technology platform that works to make cities safer by collecting and providing safety-related data on a large scale. Since its inception in 2013, Safetipin has worked across 45 cities in Asia, Latin America and Africa. With a mission to build a world where everyone can move around without fear, Safetipin has collaborated with government and non-government stakeholders in using big data to improve infrastructure and services in cities.

She RISES (Responsive, Inclusive, Safe & Equitable Cities)
A Framework for Caring Cities
November 2022

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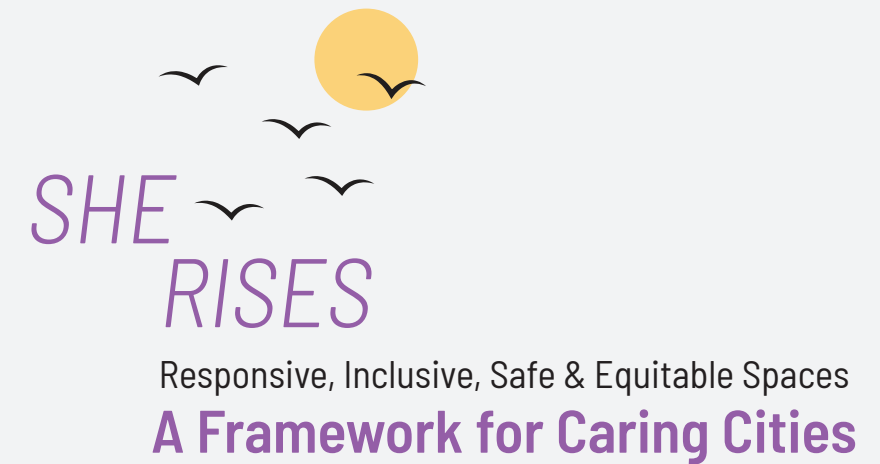Surabhi Tandon Mehrotra, Kalpana Viswanath, Ankita Kapoor and Rwitee Mandal

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She RISES

We need to bring the work of care to centre stage in our vision as well as planning of cities. Care work, which is the bulwark of any economy or society, has been invisibilised as it is primarily done by women either in their own homes or other homes, is low-paying, and informal with little or no benefits. Indian women and girls put in 3.26 billion hours of unpaid care work every day — a contribution of at least Rs 19 trillion a year to the Indian economy, according to an Oxfam report titled "Time to Care: Unpaid and underpaid care work and the global inequality crisis".

Patriarchy places the burden of care primarily upon women. This includes the care of vulnerable and excluded groups like children, elderly and people with disabilities. It is therefore important to acknowledge the care economy when we speak of "inclusive" cities. Otherwise, inclusion is stripped of social and political implications. Whilst inclusion aims to bring a diverse set of voices to urban design and planning, it is the recognition of how the care economy supports and subsidises the state, market as well as the family that will lead to more equitable urban policies and practices.

Research in the last two decades has shown that men and women experience the cities differently with distinct levels of participation and ownership (Viswanath & Mehrotra, 2007; Falu & Segovia, 2010). Women constitute half the population and yet are unable to participate equally in the diverse facets of city life, including shaping its policies, services, design, and infrastructure. The restricted participation in the city stems from a range of factors including limited options for housing, health care, and childcare services, inadequate access to water and sanitation services, mobility concerns, gaps in fair economic opportunities and low representation in decision-making positions. In addition to these, patriarchal socio-cultural norms, and gender-based violence impact women's access to opportunities for education, employment as well as leisure. This inequality, in effect, restricts women's 'right to the city.'

It is critical to recognise that women are not a homogenous category. Intersectionality of age, socio-economic profile, marital status, and ability, among others, adds to the complexity of their experience of the city. Whilst we recognise that the needs of other distinct groups such as the elderly, the differently abled, and sexual minorities are also rarely represented in the processes of shaping a city, the focus here is primarily on women as they represent the foundation of the care economy of a city.

"A sustainable and caring economy is guided by the rationality of care. This concept of rationality is based on the notion of human beings not as isolated individual utility maximisers, but as living and acting beings in a social context who are capable of caring for other beings, including the natural assets of future generations" (Shildberg,2014:4)

Acknowledging the care economy would mean redistribution of the care work beyond households to communities, marketplace and the State. By giving value to care, the priorities of local governments as well as private organisations will have to be altered. It will also challenge "the myth that our successes are achieved as autonomous individuals, and as such, we have no responsibility to share the fruits of our success with others or to dedicate public resources to the work of care." (Lawson 2009:210)

Framework for Gender Transformation in Cities

This document unpacks the elements of a city that places the economics and ethics of care at the centre. The framework addresses a range of dimensions of city life from the perspective of women. Safetipin's work over the past decade has focused on designing and planning safer and more inclusive spaces, with a focus on mobility for women, using a data-driven approach. This approach has generated robust datasets that have resulted in interventions in cities across India and other cities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The framework builds upon the learning from these projects and research to propose a comprehensive approach towards the gender transformation of our cities. Caroline Moser argues that gender empowerment is different from gender transformation. Gender empowerment can remove immediate inequalities, but it does not "necessarily destabilize wider structural inequalities". Gender transformation challenges structural inequalities as it is an "inherently political act". (Moser, 2016).

The approach has four key principles that underlie the entire framework, which we have termed She RISES.

Responsive cities ensure that infrastructure and services are designed, planned, and managed based on the needs of their residents. The services and amenities in such cities are designed with a bottom-up approach that responds to the needs of the community.

Inclusive cities embrace people of all identities while recognising that certain identities have been privileged in city planning and design. Our cities and services have primarily been designed for able-bodied, heterosexual, and cis men. Thus, an inclusive city will take into consideration the experiences and needs of people across the gender spectrum, economic status, race, religion, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation.

Safe spaces are those where women and others can move around and engage without fear. When spaces are not safe, people restrict their activities and mobility. A safe city would be one where sexual harassment would not be a constant worry, whether walking on a street, riding a bus or visiting a park.

Equitable spaces and cities foreground equity over just equality as it recognizes that people are diverse and live in different circumstances. Equality acknowledges injustice but does not focus on the diverse life situations of people in its solutions. Thus, an "equity" approach makes sure that different groups of people are given the necessary resources and opportunities needed to reach an equitable outcome.


The infographic above shows the four streams of the She RISES framework towards gender transformation. These streams represent different aspects of the built environment, policy and services that need to be understood, assessed and acted upon to implement the She RISES approach. Each stream has several elements which are addressed in detail in the following pages.

We use the metaphor of a stream as it is fluid, connected, and flows into a common ocean. Similarly, these streams of knowledge and change are closely linked, and changes in one will impact the others as well as the ocean, in this case, our cities.

Any framework on gender transformation in cities must acknowledge that a large part of the urban population resides in underserved areas. Women in low-income neighbourhoods bear the burden of uncertain services, insecurity of tenure, informal employment, poor access to public transport, inadequate health services, as well as climate-related challenges. These factors shape the circumstances and experiences of women in the city. The two aspects - built environment and social relations - are tangible forms of spatial and social exclusion (Kern, 2020).

The She RISES framework considers the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women in cities, acknowledges the different experiences and needs of women, and responds through policies, schemes, services, and laws to promote their enhanced participation in different aspects of urban life. Together, these can lead to gender transformation and a city that cares for all women across the range of intersectionality for a city that is equitable, accessible, safe, inclusive, and responsive.
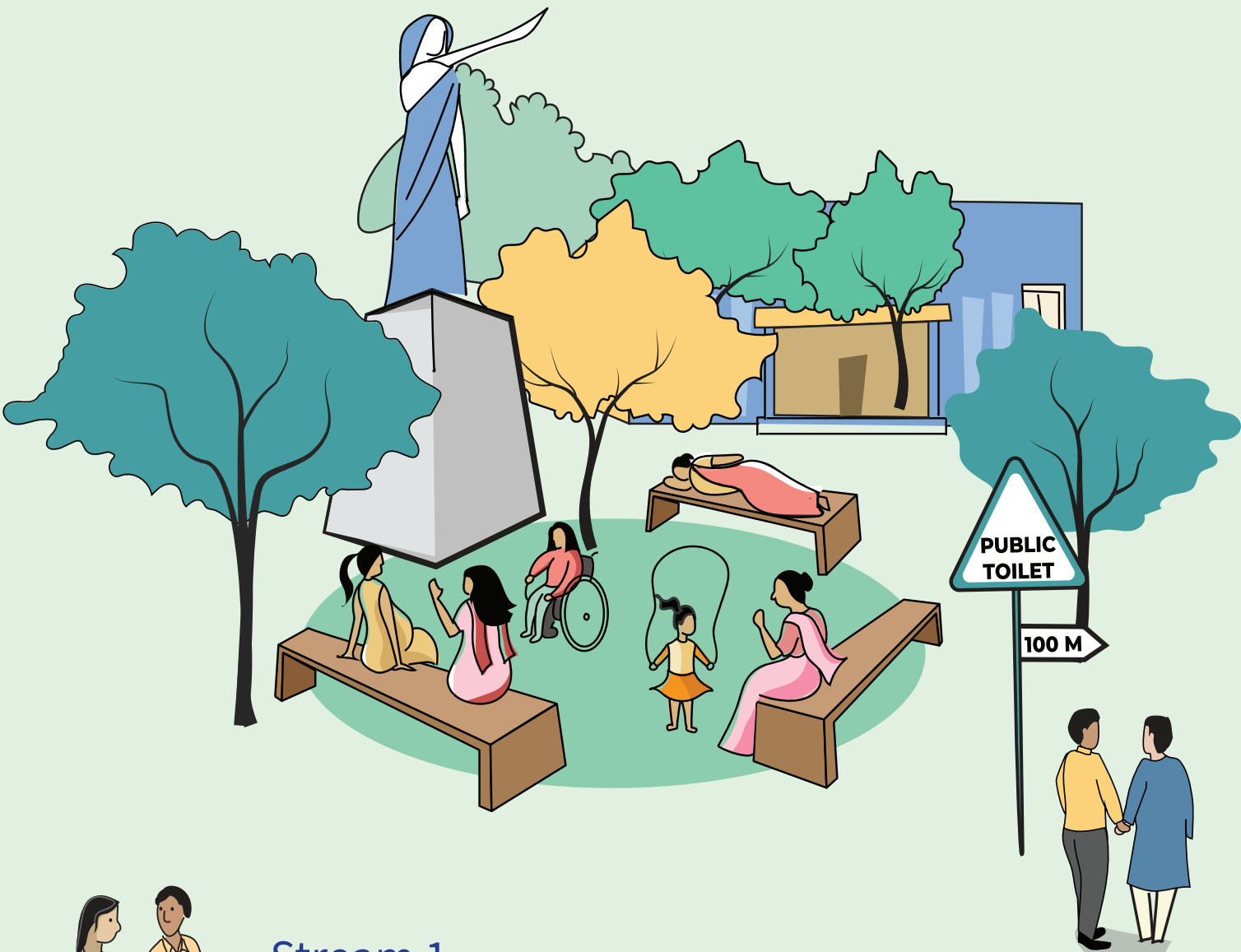
Stream 1
PUBLIC SPACES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A large part of the urban built environment consists of public spaces where everyday activities and social interaction take place. This includes different types of public spaces such as streets and squares; parks, gardens, playgrounds; public beaches, riverbanks, and waterfronts; public libraries, community centres, markets; public sports facilities, as well as public and community toilets. "Public spaces are places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free" (UN Habitat, 2015).

Cities are often planned and designed from the perspective of an able-bodied male and reflect traditional gender roles and spatial segregation in terms of zoning (The World Bank, 2020). A critical factor is the perception of safety in public spaces, especially sexual harassment, as it limits women's participation in public spaces, whether it be for education, livelihood, or leisure.

The gendered nature of public spaces impacts women's access to opportunities, their mobility, their well-being, and their right to the city.
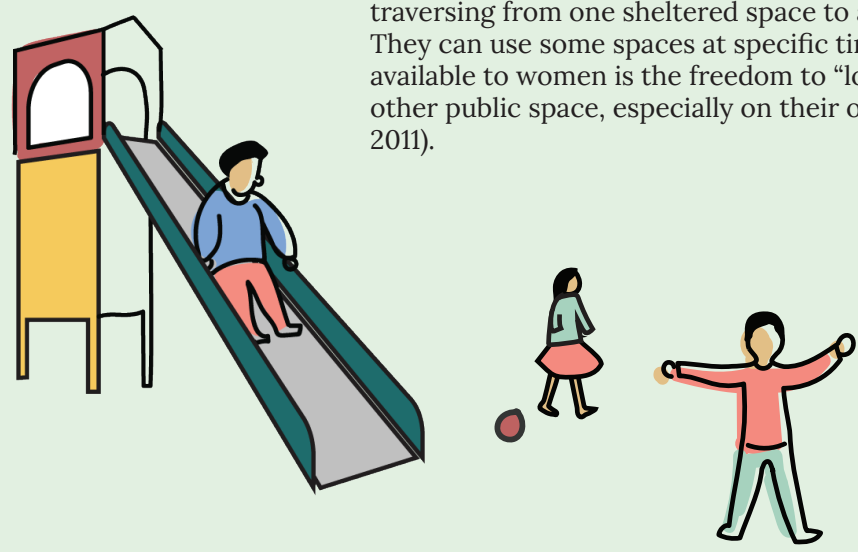
Girls and women seldom use public spaces such as parks, gardens, and sports grounds for leisure and recreation. They are conditioned to plan their lives by traversing from one sheltered space to another and not "loiter" in a public space. They can use some spaces at specific times and often in a group. What is not available to women is the freedom to "loiter," or enjoy themselves in a park or any other public space, especially on their own and after dark (Phadke, Khan, Ranade, 2011).

The following elements impact women's perception of safety and their ability to use public spaces freely.

Lighting: This is one of the significant factors that impact women's perception of safety. Poorly lit streets and other open spaces generate a sense of fear, and women tend to avoid such places. Women also feel uncomfortable and fearful using underground or elevated walkways with poor lighting. Adequate lighting at transit stops and, on the streets increases women's confidence to use public spaces without the constant fear of sexual harassment or assault.
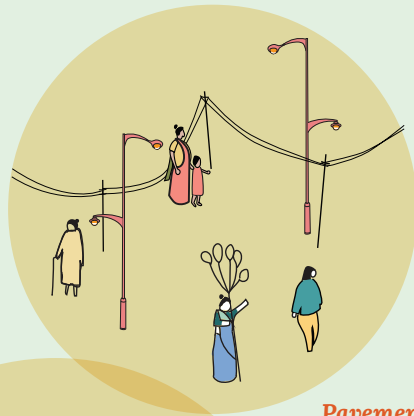
Pavements: Well-designed obstruction-free pavements enable women and others to walk comfortably. Pavements that are broken or uneven make it difficult for a person to walk or run in case of an emergency. People tend to walk on the street when there is a narrow or obstructed pavement which can also lead to accidents. Unobstructed, wide, and well-lit pavements enhance women's safe mobility in public spaces. This becomes more essential if they are accompanying children or the elderly.
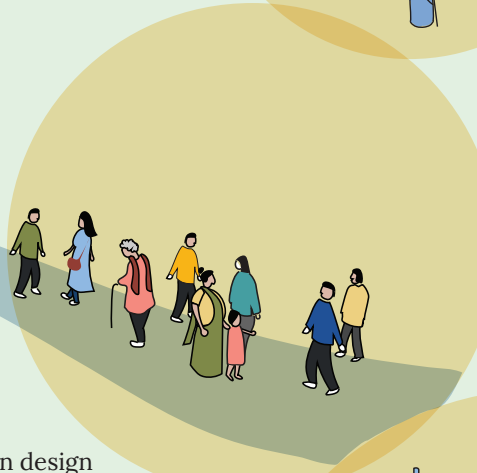
"Eyes on the Streets": This urban design principle states that a person feels safer when they can be seen by others on a street or in a public space. It is particularly important for women, as they feel more vulnerable in spaces that are isolated and where there are no pedestrians, shops, cafes, street vendors etc. They also feel unsafe in spaces with high solid boundary walls, or setbacks that obstruct their vision or line of sight. The presence of people, vendors, and familiar service providers make a space livelier and more active, thereby providing a sense of safety to all, particularly women.

Public Toilets: This basic requirement is often inadequately provisioned in cities. Toilet cubicles for women are often fewer than those for men even though women need to use toilets more frequently, especially during pregnancy and menstruation. Further, in many cases, children also use women's toilets (Water Aid, 2018). The infrastructure and design of community toilets especially in low-income neighbourhoods, seldom take women's needs into consideration. Lack of proper maintenance and regular cleaning, inadequate water supply, lack of menstrual waste disposal systems, poor or no lighting, and lack of nighttime access negatively impact women's use. (Jagori, WICI, 2010).

Stream 1 Key Recommendations

- Ensure well-lit public spaces including transit stops after dark.

- Provide well-lit, obstruction free pavements for the ease of walking and safety of pedestrians.

- Plan and design dedicated spaces for vendors along the pavements to enhance "eyes on the street."

- Ensure that neighbourhoods have mixed-use development for better natural surveillance.

- Provide adequate, functional, and safe public toilets for women's use in public spaces.

- Provisions for breastfeeding and menstrual waste disposal should also be ensured.

- Special provisions for children such as low-height wash basins and mirrors should be provided in public toilets for easy access. Men's toilets should also have facilities for children.

- Ensure regular maintenance of public spaces such as parks, public squares and riverfronts for continued usage by everyone.
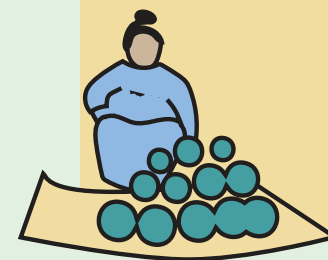
Stream 2
SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Urban living is enhanced by the provision of good quality and affordable public services. Housing, education, and health are among the basic services that all residents of a city should be able to access. These services and amenities should be provided for all residents of a city, irrespective of their socio-economic class. Cities are also populated by people migrating from other parts of the country, and their requirements also need to be considered.

Services such as creches and daycare are central to recognizing the care economy as the bulwark of a city. It is only when these services are well provided that women and girls will be free to participate equally in all aspects of urban life.

A large section of the urban poor lives in overcrowded urban settlements without access to basic services and provisions such as running tap water, clean sanitation, adequate childcare, education, health care, and the security of adequate housing and tenure. Public services and provisions are meant to provide a basic standard of living to city residents for their well-being. Even among the poor, inadequate services impact social groups differently. As women carry the primary responsibility for care and household work, poor service delivery impacts their lives more. The time spent in procuring these services leaves them with little or no time to pursue economic or educational opportunities, which further deepens gender imbalances in society. Further, the experiences of women vary based on factors such as age, marital status, and caste, among others.

Provision of the following services is essential for women responsive cities.

Housing: Among the various services and amenities required in a city, housing is one of the most important. The impact of housing is multifaceted - from access to infrastructure, employment, education, and health to women's participation in the workforce, and many other components of well-being. The lack of public or low-cost housing in most global South cities has resulted in a large population living in slums. In general, women do not have equal ownership and access to housing and property. With the increasing numbers of women-headed households, single women and single mothers living on their own in cities, special provisions, and support for them are essential. Hostels for students and young working women should also be provided.

For the urban poor, insecure tenure means that eviction is a constant probability, and actual eviction leads to loss of livelihood, homelessness, or moving to the periphery of the city. In this situation as well, the impact on women is significant as they continue to carry the burden of care work, lose their support network, and are vulnerable to sexual violence.

Child Care: Unavailability or poor condition of care-related amenities is an additional concern for women and families. Due to lack of adequate childcare facilities, women often take underpaid jobs close to their homes or drop out of the workforce altogether. In some cases, children are left unattended, which increases their vulnerabilities.

Lack of childcare services, such as the availability of creches or childcare centres, affects women across economic groups and is one of the factors contributing to women's low labour-force participation. Public provision of childcare services should be given high priority by city authorities. Further, policies should also encourage private organizations to provide childcare facilities such as creches, and provisions for flexible working hours and working from home for women with infants. In the context of the large informal economy in India, it is crucial that policies and support structures are put in place for the care of infants and children.

Education: Ensuring quality education for girls and providing safe access to educational institutions could transform communities, strengthen economies, and reduce inequalities. Education has several positive impacts on the lives of girls- delayed marriages, better health, reduced gender-based violence, and increased social and economic independence (Wodon et al., 2017). Research has shown that girls often drop out of school during their early teens due to menstruation and lack of adequate sanitation facilities in school (Dasra, 2015). This, compounded by social and cultural norms restrict girls' movement and even leads to early marriages.

City governments and other stakeholders need to provide quality education for all their residents. Special provisions and programmes for keeping girls in school and bringing back girls who have dropped out should be safeguarded. Schools should be safe places for all students where they can grow and learn without any fear or discomfort. Safety audits need to be conducted regularly in schools to ensure safe and responsive infrastructure, such as toilets as well as transport to and from the institution.
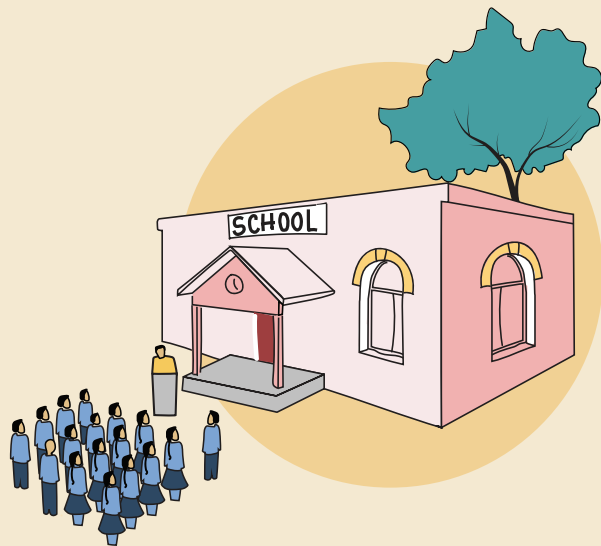
Health Care: Though health services are more easily available in cities than in villages, the quality, cost, and access to health care services vary in different parts of the city. Due to socio-cultural norms, poverty, and the burden of care work women often neglect their health, especially sexual and reproductive health.

The increasing privatization of health care works to further marginalize poor women. It is therefore important that affordable and quality health care, with a focus on girls' and women's health, is delivered by city governments.
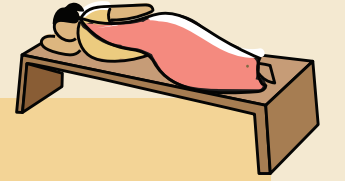
Stream 2 Key Recommendations

- Special schemes and housing for women, particularly single women and women-headed households, should be incorporated into the city's development or master plan.

- Awareness campaigns about housing provisions and women's right to property

- Provision of adequate and accessible hostels for women.

- Provision of childcare facilities such as creches and day-care centres within neighbourhoods.

- Affirmative schemes for the education of girls and special programmes to bring back girls who drop out.

- Schemes for ensuring the safe mobility of girls to and from school.

- Provision of separate and clean toilets with menstrual products for girls.

- Adequate time for sports and recreation in schools for students' physical and mental well-being.

- Provision of quality and affordable health care facilities for all urban residents, with a focus on the poor and marginalised. In addition, special provisions for sexual and reproductive health, along with awareness and access to maternal health schemes and health insurance are needed.

- Ensure healthy and safe working conditions for ground-level women health workers.
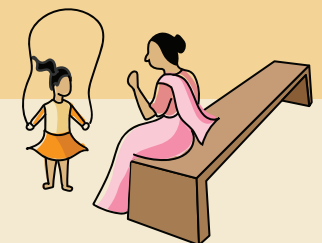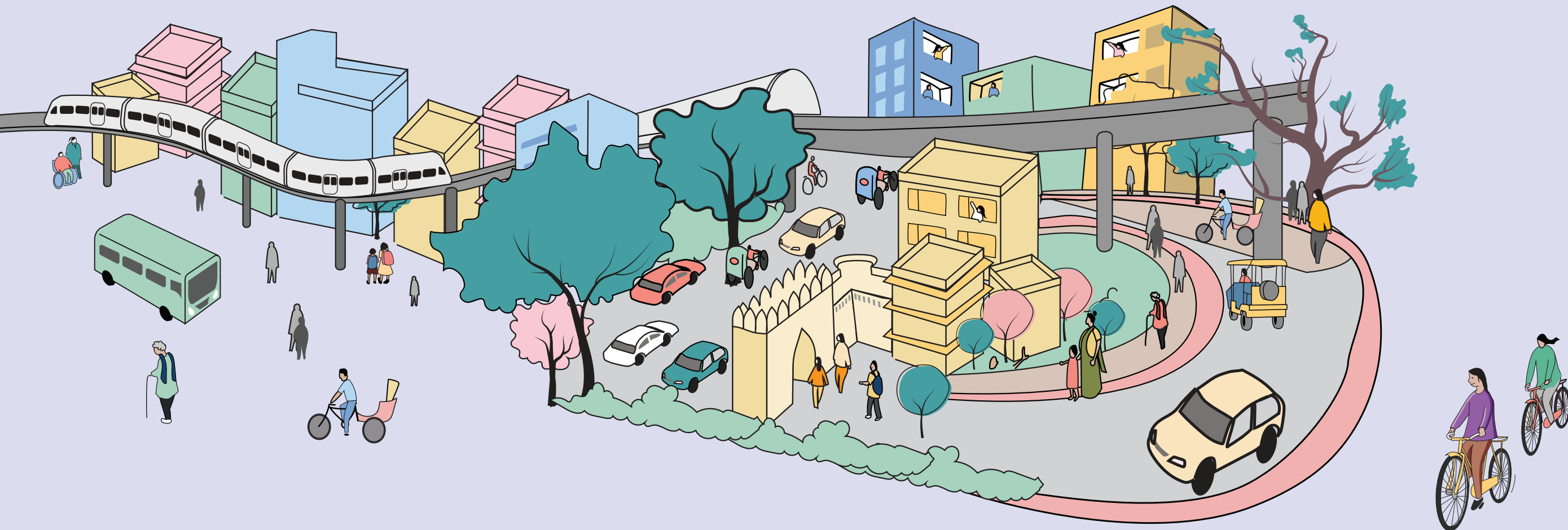
Stream 3
MOBILITY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Urban mobility is vital for everyone to participate in a city in all its dimensions. To ensure equitable mobility, a public transport system is an essential social good. Studies from around the world have shown that the travel patterns of women are different from men and mobility and transport are experienced differently by both. (Moscoso et al., 2020). Men tend to make trips with a single purpose during peak hours to work.

Women's travel patterns are more complex as they are defined by their caregiving roles, familial obligations, as well as income generating activities or employment. They are usually responsible for accompanying children to school, attending to medical needs, shopping for daily needs, and caring for the elderly. Hence, women often make multiple trips with breaks, or combine different tasks with breaks – referred to as "trip chaining."
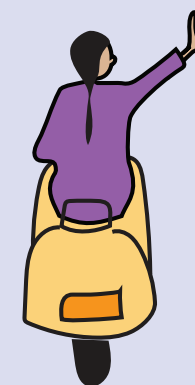
Women's trips are done both during peak and non-peak hours. However, the frequent breaks in the journey make their trips more expensive since they need to pay for numerous, albeit short, journeys. They often travel at times when the frequency of service is low, as these services are designed to cater to working hours, and spend valuable time waiting or changing modes of transport.

Women primarily walk or use public transport, especially for care work in the neighbourhood. Further, in many cities, people living in low-income areas, slums and settlements at the periphery are underserved by formal public transport and use more informal means of transport.

The following factors need to be considered while planning gender inclusive mobility:
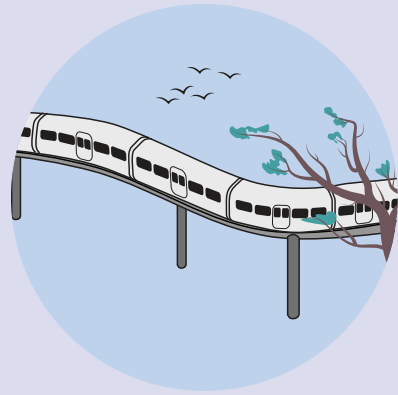
Public transport system: Public transport systems need to be planned and managed for a diverse set of users with special reference to women and girls. A city-wide coverage is needed with a focus on reaching underserved areas, settlements, and neighbourhoods at the periphery of cities. Further, it needs to be affordable so that even the urban poor can use it easily. Women are more dependent on public transport as they have less access to private vehicles, and therefore a good transport network and system is an equity issue. Also, until the formal public transport network is extensive, efforts need to be made to support and improve informal systems, which often serve the needs of millions of urban residents.

Last and first mile connectivity: A very important element of equitable mobility is safe, reliable, and efficient first and last-mile connectivity – that is good walking infrastructure and organised paratransit options. In many cases, at either end of the journey, people walk but it is not always possible to do so due to the distance or the quality of the walk. This gap is usually filled by Intermediate Public Transport (IPT) or paratransit which may have formal, informal, motorised, and non-motorised transport options available as feeder services to the main public transit system. Good first and last-mile connectivity makes the entire public transport system seamless and increases smoother, safer, and more efficient transitions between different transportation systems. A safe walking environment is central to the mobility needs of women. Further, since women frequently accompany children and the elderly, universal accessibility is crucial for them (as well as for people with disabilities).
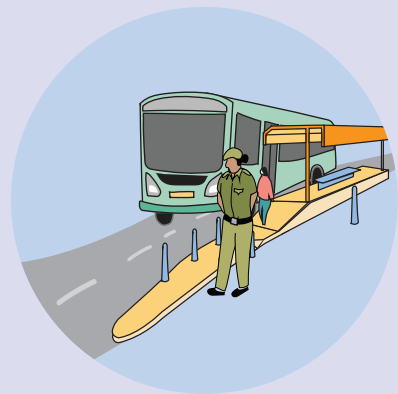
Safety in public transport: Sexual harassment is a ubiquitous problem in cities across the world (Cities Alliance, 2020). Different forms of sexual harassment, both physical and verbal, have been reported both inside transport vehicles and while waiting for transport. Reaching the transit stops or the destination is fraught with issues of safety. Despite the introduction of anti-sexual harassment measures in public transportation, women often refrain from registering formal complaints and instead adopt strategies such as travelling in groups or during non-peak hours to ensure their safety. Sexual harassment while accessing and using public transport leads to a fear of violence and has negative impacts on women's ability to access opportunities for education and employment.

Unreliable and unsafe transport services affect women more than men as they often juggle multiple roles to balance their domestic and familial responsibilities, and in some cases, their livelihood. The burden is higher on women living in low-income neighbourhoods on the periphery of cities. Such women are often engaged in the informal sector and spend substantial amounts of time and money commuting for their livelihood.

Women in transport sector: Besides being users of public transport, women are also employed in the sector. Women remain underrepresented in most transport-related industries, with only 17% of female employees on average across a sample of 46 countries (Ng et al., 2020). Both attracting and retaining women in the industry continue to be a challenge for governments and the private sector. The reasons for this are social barriers that identify the transport sector as masculine work as well as regulations such as special licences and approvals to drive heavy vehicles, years of experience, height etc that act as a deterrent for women to join. Even the finances required for such training are difficult for women from low-income backgrounds. Harassment and threats from commuters and colleagues, and the lack of facilities such as toilets also act as barriers for women (Shah et al., 2017).

Stream 3 Key recommendations:

- Collect gender disaggregated data to understand women's travel needs and patterns.

- Plan and design inclusive and safe public transport systems.

- Ensure adequate availability and coverage of public transport system, including intermediate public transport for safe and efficient first and last mile connectivity.

- Provide well-lit public transit stops with a safe and comfortable walking environment, shops, and street vendors around the stops to ensure safety.

- Provision for wheelchairs and storage space for items carried by women vendors in public transport.

- Schemes to promote non-motorized transport (NMT) and improve last-mile connectivity.

- Affirmative hiring policy for women in the public transport sector.

- Provision of separate women's toilets at transit hubs.

- Form Sexual Harassment Committees in transportation centres and departments.

- Ensure gender sensitization training for all transport staff.
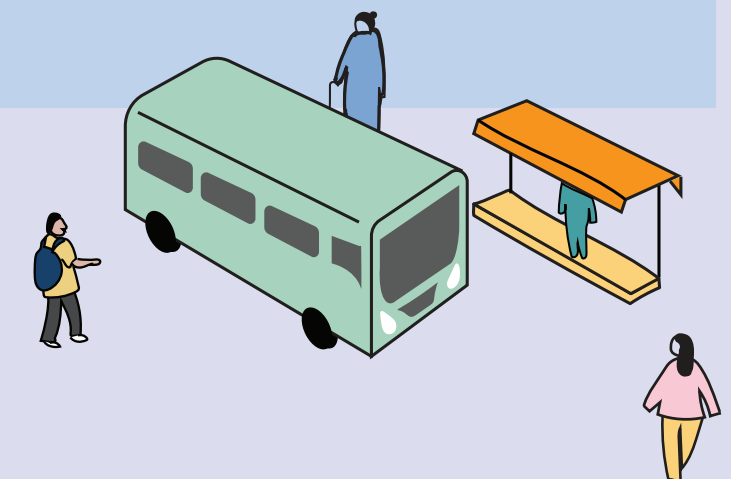
Stream 4
### RESPONSES TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The three streams discussed above have a running theme of perception and actual lack of safety in urban spaces faced by women that impede their participation in city life. The perception of risk and fear of violence looms large in women's lives and translates into restrictions and reductions in freedom.

Women and girls face sexual violence in private and public spaces in cities around the world. In public spaces, sexual harassment takes the form of unwelcome sexual remarks, staring, touching, flashing, and sexual assault in any form of sexual touch such as groping, kissing, and rape. It takes place on streets, in public transport and at transport stops, in public toilets, parks, in and around educational institutions, workplaces, and other public spaces.

It is essential to have prevention and response mechanisms in place to deal with violence and other forms of discrimination. Cities must provide a range of services to survivors of violence, as well as prevention measures and a commitment to not tolerating any form of gender-based violence. This will include a range of actions including policies and robust response mechanisms, as well as strong prevention measures like campaigns, gender sensitization, and capacity development of institutions.

The following mechanisms need to be addressed for improved prevention and response to Gender Based Violence.

Laws and Policies: With the recognition of sexual harassment in public places as a form of violence against women, strategies, laws, and policies have been put into place by different agencies to deal with them as well as offer services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, which was passed in 2013, lays out procedures for complaints and inquiries, and actions to be taken. Sections of the Indian Penal Code such as the Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013 also lay out details for different forms of sexual assault, acid attacks, voyeurism, stalking etc. Detailed guidelines and protocols by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India (2014) guide health professionals to understand sexual violence, the needs of the survivors, and the responsibilities of hospitals towards survivors. While many of these are strong policies, strengthening is needed at the level of implementation.
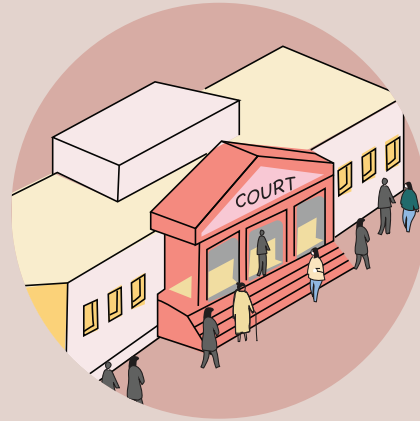
Helplines: To support women in distress, helplines have been set up by governments at different levels – city, state, and central. Helplines are intended to offer immediate and emergency responses to women affected by different forms of violence. Some of these helplines are run by the police, others are by the national and state women's commissions. Some are even run by organisations or NGOs. One problem often voiced by women is the large number of helplines that make it difficult to remember and reach out in a moment of danger or need. One recommendation has been a single number national helpline for women in need, like the 1098 Childline. Another issue is the quality of the service and the training and protocols for the helpline operators.

Crisis centres and shelters: These have been established to provide timely response and services, including health and psychological support, and legal and police services to survivors in one place where women feel safe. There are different kinds of crisis centres that are currently available – some are located in hospitals and others in police stations. There are also crisis centres that are run by NGOs and women's groups, which often support the work of these government supported crisis services. Shelters refer to spaces and services for women facing violence and in need of a temporary place to stay. In addition, cities in India also have night shelters to provide basic space to homeless women. The key issue here is to ensure that these services are sensitively designed, responsive to the needs of survivors, and located in safe areas.

Gender mainstreaming and sensitisation: In addition to response mechanisms, a commitment to prevention of violence is also very important. The law has provisions for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Committees in all institutions and organisations, which will help in creating a safe and enabling environment for women to work and access opportunities. Gender sensitization training as well as standard operating protocols need to be put into place in all institutions including transport departments, police, education, and health institutions so that the services are sensitive to the needs of women and girls.

Stream 4 Key Recommendations

• Ensure effective implementation of all policies and laws addressing GBV.

• Launch a single national helpline for women facing any form of violence or discrimination.

• Provision of adequate number of functional crisis centres and shelters for survivors of violence and homeless women.

• Design and implement strategies and campaigns to change attitudes and behaviours to promote women's and girls' rights to enjoy public spaces free from violence.

• Promote transformative activities in schools and other settings to promote respectful gender relationships and gender equality.

• Design capacity development programmes and standard operating protocols (SOP) for key sectors – police, health etc. on sexual harassment and sexual assault, including ways to extend support to survivors.

Join us on the journey towards gender transformation of cities

Over the past nine years, Safetipin has been working with a range of urban stakeholders to improve safety and accessibility in cities. The learning from the lived experiences of women and girls across cities in the world led us to reflect on transformation and unpacking the elements that need to be addressed and changed. This framework, which is a result of this process of reflection, will guide our work with cities towards gender transformation. We recognise that gender exclusion in cities has repercussions beyond the gender binary. Our work till date has primarily focused on women, but we hope that this framework can be used to understand non-binary lived realities in cities as well.

The framework will be accompanied by a set of indicators that can be used by urban stakeholders to assess a city on the four streams of urban living. The framework along with the indicators are designed to identify key arenas and specific parameters where changes and interventions are required for the creation of responsive, inclusive, safe, and equitable cities.

We hope this framework along with the indicators will nudge cities along the path towards equity and the care economy as guiding principles without which they will never be truly transformed. Measurement and data are central to bringing about change. Safetipin has several tools to help with these assessments, analysis and recommendations for change. You can read more about these at www.safetipin.com

We also recognize that the capacity development of different urban actors and stakeholders is needed to mainstream gender inclusion and gender responsiveness in all aspects of urban life. Towards this end, Safetipin is developing training materials and curriculum at different levels to mainstream this framework in city planning and management.

We hope this document generates conversations and engages all urban stakeholders in this process of transformation towards caring cities where diverse voices are given space. It is a journey that will take time, but one that will be well worth the ride. In the words of Jane Jacobs,

"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."

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