

Women Leading the Transit Transformation with RRTS, Changing Socio-Economic Scenario for Women of NCR



As the world stepped into the 21st century, it found that women have put down the patriarchal baggage and taken the reins of the world. Many glass ceilings were broken and its debris had made the stepping stones for the young girls. Various sectors viz technology, infrastructure, civil engineering, aviation etc. that boasted of advancements and yet were far from being inclusive, had an eye-opening experience.

NCRTC, the agency implementing RRTS in NCR, not only stood a witness to this changing world but addressed it and put in efforts to be a part of this revolution. These efforts were two-fold, the change it intended to bring in society with the RRTS project and the efforts it made at the organisation level for gender equity. NCRTC pledged to make the journey of women and other commuters fast, reliable, safe, comfortable, efficient and sustainable with this transformative mobility solution.

RRTS, a rail-based high-speed and high-frequency public transit system with a design speed of 180 kmph is going to change the landscape of inter-city commutes. Being implemented in the

82-km long Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor, it is going to enable convenient and rapid journeys, bringing people and places closer.

The RRTS is designed to cater to the diverse needs of all sections of the society, including women. It is especially a boon for the women residing in the suburban areas of NCR. Afraid of metropolitan life, its pace and its challenges, their families often do not allow them to commute alone or stay in the big cities. This is not only a cause of despair for these women but also a loss for the country, which gets bereft of many doctors, engineers, sportspersons, and visionary leaders.

Safety and convenience are the most important concerns for women while travelling. Research conducted by Ola Mobility Institute stated that only 9% of women in Indian cities feel public transport is completely safe. Since its inception, NCRTC has focussed on RRTS to be a gender-inclusive public transport system. It will provide seamless and fast connectivity, and empower women through improved access to employment, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

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Women empowerment has been one of the priorities of NCRTC since its inception. With implementation of RRTS, we are achieving this in two folds. First is through direct employment and maximising the women contribution in construction, operations, and maintenance.

Second is the larger impact which we will achieve by providing a safe, reliable, and comfortable transit option for the women citizens along the RRTS corridor.

I am sure this will translate into more participation of women in various sectors of the economy.”

**- Mr Vinay Kumar Singh,
Managing Director, NCRTC**



NCRTC is taking numerous initiatives to make women feel safe during their journeys, even if they are travelling alone. RRTS infrastructure has been planned to improve the accessibility for women and other vulnerable commuters like children, the specially-abled, senior citizens, and so on. CCTV cameras are being installed in and around the station premises and security personnel will be deployed to monitor movements and enhance safety. To make the end-to-end journeys of commuters safe and reliable well-lit dedicated station pick-up and drop areas have been created on the stations and NCRTC has tied up with third-party first/last mile providers. Provisions for nursing rooms have been made at Intermodal stations. The RRTS trains also have a separate coach for women and in the other coaches as well, seats have been reserved for women, children, elderly people and specially-abled. Moreover, ergonomically designed support handles have been provided and an emergency button is given inside coaches for distress situations.

Not only did NCRTC gave thought to the intricacies to make it the best transit option for women, but women were an equal and important part of the team implementing this project. Some of NCRTC's most challenging civil construction assignments are being led by women engineers, and the digitization initiatives and use of digital tools in project delivery and monitoring are being piloted by women leadership. A few gems of NCRTC, making the difference are:

1. Aprajita Nagpal, Manager, Architecture-

When an entirely new system is built, its architecture plays a key role in building its identity and making it stand apart. Aprajita Nagpal, who holds the position of Manager in the Architecture team, has been working tirelessly with her team to define the nuances of the RRTS corridor and stations. Designing the RRTS stations in a way that will enable commuters to move from one mode of transport to another without exiting the station premise, is one such crucial design aspect. To make it possible, lifts, escalators and foot-over bridges are being provided. With her eye for detail, aesthetic yet practical approach and calm-in-the-storm personality, she has been adding value to her challenging role.

2. Ranjeeta, Assistant Manager, Rolling Stock



With a design speed of 180km/hr, RRTS rolling stock is the first of its kind to be implemented in India for providing high-speed, high-frequency regional commute. Ranjeeta, with her insight, meticulousness and dedication, has been invaluable for her team to get the rolling stock on track. Once operationalised, it will make many a dream reach their destination, flying on tracks.

3. Vandana, Assistant Manager, Signalling & Telecom



RRTS is implementing ETCS Level 2 signalling over the LTE network, which is being used for the first time in India and even in the world. To make it possible successfully, the team has persevered day and night. This technology will enable interoperability between all three priority corridors of Phase 1. With the efforts of Vandana and her team, this will translate into comfortable, safe, and hassle-free journey for even longer distances for the people of NCR.

NCRTC leadership has always focussed on empowering women through its various policies such as maternity leave provisions, prevention of sexual harassment (POSH) policy, flexible timings, gender-friendly sanitation facilities, equal opportunity employer policy, continuous training opportunities and many more.

Apart from this, to date, NCRTC has undertaken numerous community awareness sessions, including exclusive women sessions. It has also undertaken Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) sensitization programs for public transport service providers with an aim to make them aware of issues experienced by women and girls in accessing public transport. Further, NCRTC is providing self-defense skill training to girl students along the corridor to enhance their confidence and participation in all walks of life.

Addressing the issues of the past, the RRTS project is a present for the women of the National Capital Region to pave a path for their glorious future. NCRTC is going to operationalise the 17 km long Priority Section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor by this year and the entire corridor is targeted to be operationalised by 2025.

