

IMPACT OF SERVING PATTERN OF FREE BUS SERVICE SCHEME AMONG WORKING WOMEN'S

(With a special reference to Coimbatore city)

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ABSTRACT

This article has mainly focused on the innovative scheme of free bus travel and the benefits of the scheme for the women empowerment. The Tamil Nadu government has introduced a free bus service scheme for the development of women in this society. The motive of this scheme is to develop the women's mobility and savings. The scheme will help the women's to be independent. It is implemented for the women empowerment in the society. This study was carried out to find out the impact and benefits of free bus service scheme among the working women's. Using a structured questionnaire primary data was collected from 123 respondents. The problems faced by women passengers and their savings form were also analysed.

KEYWORDS: Innovative scheme, women empowerment, free bus service, develop women's savings.

INTRODUCTION

After swearing in as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister on May 7, 2021, M. K. Stalin announced a scheme that enables all working women in the state to travel free of cost in government-owned city and town buses with immediate effect. Since a concrete definition has not been given for the term "working women", every woman would qualify as a beneficiary in this scheme. The main intention behind this scheme is to increase the work participation rate of women and to promote public transportation. Since there is no restriction on the number of trips a day per month, it appears to be simple and straightforward scheme of open-ended subsidies for travel by women. The State government has announced an annual subsidy grant

of Rs 1.200 crore to State transport corporations, assuming that women contribute 40 percent of the Rs 3000 crore annual ticket revenue of city and town buses. The scheme has particularly helped women users by contributing to higher disposable income, enabling higher work participation, reducing dependence on family members for their mobility and fostering new opportunities for social networks and learning.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The study aims at impact of free bus service scheme among working women's in that most of the women's ascertained that free bus service is very helpful for them and they can save money and through this free bus service scheme. They strongly agrees that this free bus service scheme has increased transport usage and their dependency on family members have decreased.

OBJECTIVE

- ✦ To study the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.
- ✦ To know the awareness of the scheme among working women's.
- ✦ To study the benefits of the scheme among working women's.
- ✦ To study the impact of the free bus service scheme in the financial development of women's.
- ✦ To offer findings and suggestions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a way to systematically solve a research problem. It explains the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher to solve a research problem.

Research Design

The results of the study were obtained by descriptive analysis.

Area Of Study

Coimbatore city is the second largest city and is one of the major metropolitan cities in Tamilnadu. The study covers in the area of "Impact of free bus service scheme among working women's".

Period Of Study

The study covers a period of 3 months January 2023-March 2023.

Sampling Procedure

A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. 123 samples were selected by snow ball sampling method. It is one of the probability sampling techniques.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected through both primary and secondary data source.

- **PRIMARY DATA**

The primary data is gathered from sample respondents through the question that was made available online, along with random sampling.

- **SECONDARY DATA**

The secondary data material was gathered from various website and standard reference book.

TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSING THE DATA

Study has the objective of ascertaining “Impact of free bus service scheme among working women’s” for analysing the primary data the following statistical tools was used.

- Simple percentage analysis
- Ranking analysis

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gita Krishnan Ramadurai, Associate Professor, Department of Transportation, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, terms the move by the Tamil Nadu government to allow women to travel free in buses as an innovative one. “With public transit ridership falling, we need innovative ideas to boost ridership. Public transportation is a sustainable transport solution for our cities. It also provides equitable access to livelihood,” he says.

Gopinath Menon former Chief for Transportation, Land Transport Authority, Singapore. Getting more people to use public transport like buses is one way to combat traffic congestion and air pollution. Making fares affordable is a sure way to get more to use buses. Making it free for a section of the population, ladies who need to travel, should have a greater beneficial effect on the traffic situation, he says.

Sanskriti Menon, A senior transport expert from Maharashtra, while hailing the Tamil Nadu government's free bus travel for women, said Maharashtra and other states should take a cue and also invest in excellent bus-based public transport, especially now when people need support for economic recovery.

Pravesh Biyani, Head, Centre for Sustainable Mobility, IIIT Delhi says "I think it's a great step from the TN Govt and it will go a long way in bringing more economic opportunities for women,".

S. Raja Sethu Durai, Tamil Nadu's scheme facilitating free bus travel for women is laudable as it will boost their work participation rate, but the government must evaluate the actual demand and provide transport undertakings with adequate subsidy as compensation.

HISTORY OF THE FREE BUS SERVICE SCHEME

The state transport department had revealed that women in Tamil Nadu travelled in city buses under the free public transit scheme 131 crore times since last year. Let's look at what the scheme had done to not only under privileged people but for all women. When the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) came to power in Tamil Nadu in May 2021, various schemes were queued up for people's welfare. During the election, the party in its election manifesto announced several eye-grabbing schemes including free travel for women on city buses, Rs 1000 monthly honorarium for women heads of households and a subsidy of Rs 100 per cylinder.

Among them, free bus travel for women and Rs 1000 per month scheme for women heads very well received by the public. Chief Minister MK Stalin, who went to the legislature on the day of his inauguration, immediately signed the file for free travel on city buses for women.

In addition, it was announced that transgender people can also hold free travel on city buses. Thus, for the past one year, women have been provided free travel on ordinary city buses across Tamil Nadu.

ADVANTAGES

- ✓ Free bus service scheme had improved the work participation among the women's.
- ✓ Free bus service scheme for women's had increased their savings.
- ✓ Free bus service scheme had reduced the dependency on family members for women's.

DISADVANTAGES

- ✓ After the introduction of free bus service scheme the crowd in the free buses were increased.
- ✓ The arrival time of the buses were not proper after the introduction of free bus service scheme.
- ✓ The comfort of the passengers were not ensured after the implementation of free bus service scheme.

DATA ANALYSIS

CRITERIA	OPTIONS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Age	18-25 years	73	59.3
	26-32 years	34	27.6
	33-39 years	10	8.1
	Above 40 years	6	4.9
Occupation	Self-help groups	26	21.1
	Profession	38	30.9
	Business	25	20.3
	Employee	34	27.6
Area of residence	Urban	85	69.1
	Rural	38	30.9
Marital status	Married	50	40.7

	Unmarried	73	59.3
Monthly Income	Rs.10,000 – Rs.15,000	18	14.6
	Rs.15,001 –Rs.20,000	47	38.2
	Rs.20,001 –Rs.25,000	39	31.7
	AboveRs.25,000	19	15.4
Educational Qualification	UG degree	75	61
	Diploma course	21	17.1
	Doctorate	21	17.1
	Uneducated	6	4.9
No. of. Familymembers	2-3	23	18.7
	3-4	70	56.9
	4-5	27	22
	Above 6	3	2.4
Use of free bus	Often	30	24.4
	Work time	45	36.6
	Sometimes	36	29.3
	Occasionally	12	9.8
Effectiveness	Very effective	40	32.5
	Effective	56	45.5
	Neutral	20	16.3
	Non-effective	6	4.9
	Less effective	1	0.8
How about the scheme	Social media	39	31.7
	News	42	34.1
	Friends	25	20.3
	Own experience	17	13.8
Required factors	Comfort	34	27.6
	Reduced dependency on family members	41	33.3
	Convenient	25	20.3
	Availability of bus	23	18.7

Comfortable factors	Economical	47	38.2
	Comfortable seats	21	17.1
	Travelling easily	37	30.1
	Availability of bus	18	14.6
Uncomfortable behavior of drivers and conductors	Improper way of communication	27	22
	Attitude towards women passengers	36	29.3
	Not stopping of bus at a proper place	35	28.5
	Not accepting more no of women passengers	25	20.3
Preference	Private bus	36	29.3
	Public bus	87	70.7
Opinion for availability	Yes	82	66.7
	No	41	33.3
Infrastructure suggestion	Good	64	52
	Neutral	59	48
	Bad	-	-
Used transport usage	Yes	109	88.6
	No	14	11.4
Satisfaction level	Highly satisfied	15	12.2
	Satisfied	66	53.7
	Neutral	37	30.1
	Not satisfied	4	3.3
	Highly not satisfied	1	0.8
Increased savings	Yes	104	84.6
	No	19	15.4
Mode of investment	Bank deposits	32	26
	Gold schemes	32	26
	Chit funds	20	16.3
	Self-help groups	9	7.3
	Others	30	24.4

Issues	Crowd	44	35.8
	Time schedule	43	35
	Not fully available for limited range	29	23.6
	Inefficient service	7	5.7
Identification	Colour of the bus	64	52
	Name of the bus	28	22.8
	Preferred by others	24	19.5
	Others	7	5.7
RANKING FACTORS BASED ON THE REASON TO TRAVEL IN FREE BUS			
S.NO	FACTORS	SCORE	RANK
1	Cost saving	406	I
2	Safety	381	II
3	Short time of bus	365	IV
4	Comfort bus service	369	III

FINDINGS

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

- ❖ The most 59.3% of the respondents age is between 18-25.
- ❖ The more 30.9% of the respondents occupation is profession.
- ❖ The most 69.1% of the respondents area of residence is urban.
- ❖ The most 59.3% of the respondents marital status is unmarried.
- ❖ The more 38.2% of the respondents monthly income is between 15001-20000.
- ❖ The most 61% of the respondents educational qualification is UG degree.
- ❖ The most 56.9% of the respondents are from 3-4 family members.
- ❖ The more 36.6% of the respondents use free bus service scheme at work time.
- ❖ The more 45.5% of the respondents opinion for free bus service scheme is effective.
- ❖ The more 34.1% of the respondents are become aware by news.
- ❖ The more 33.3% of the respondents will look for reduced dependency on family members in a free bus service scheme.
- ❖ The more 38.2% of the respondents feel economical as comfortability while travelling in a free bus service scheme.

- ❖ The more 29.3% of the respondents felt the attitude towards women passenger as uncomfortable about the drivers and conductors of the free bus service scheme.
- ❖ The most 70.7% of the respondents prefer public bus after the implementation of free bus service scheme.
- ❖ The most 66.7% of the respondents recommended yes for availability of sufficient free buses.
- ❖ The most 52% of the respondents preferred good for the infrastructure facility of the free buses.
- ❖ The most 88.6% of the respondents preferred yes for the usage of public transport have been increased after the implementation of free bus service scheme.
- ❖ The most 53.7% of the respondents satisfaction level of using the free bus service scheme is satisfied.
- ❖ The most 84.6% of the respondents preferred yes for whether the savings has been increased after the introduction of free bus service scheme.
- ❖ The more 26% of the respondents have invested their savings amount from the free bus service scheme in both the bank deposits and gold schemes.
- ❖ The more 35.8% of the respondents faced the limitation of crowd in the free bus service scheme.
- ❖ The most 52% of the respondents identify the free buses through the colour of the bus.

RANKING ANALYSIS

- ❖ The most of the respondents preferred cost saving is Ranked 1.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that free bus service scheme has lot of benefits for the women's. Many women's were benefitted through this free bus service scheme. The free bus service scheme has increased the usage of public transport among the women passengers. Women passengers had started to make savings and invest them in various scheme's. The implementation of free bus service scheme also has some disadvantages like behaviour of drivers and conductors of the free bus service scheme among women passengers and so on. The government should survey the timing of the buses. The infrastructure should be improved in the free buses. If the above suggestions were implemented many women passengers will be benefitted through this free bus service scheme.

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