

As Commissioner of Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) and Ex-officio Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Government of Karnataka, Manjula Vinjamuri is one of the most prominent women in the transport sector. She has previously worked in numerous sectors including rural and urban development, energy, education, and training. She also held the position of Director General, Administrative Training Institute, Mysuru.

# Manjula Vinjamuri

COMMISSIONER OF DIRECTORATE  
OF URBAN LAND TRANSPORT (DULT),  
GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

INDIA

## **In your view what is a feminist transport system?**

In my view, a feminist transport system is one which is designed to cater to the mobility requirements of women, with a focus on accessibility, safety, convenience, and comfort. Such a system will proactively gather comprehensive insights on travel challenges faced by women in the cities, across transport modes, and would use such insights for embedding gender-inclusive interventions in policies, plans, and projects.

## **How have you used your role to promote more inclusive transport systems?**

As an organization, we strive to ensure that planning, designing, and funding of transport systems considers the needs and concerns of people of all ages and abilities. We engage with and obtain feedback of diverse groups through focus group discussions, community meetings, charettes, etc., to understand their perceptions and challenges with respect to usage of public transport and active mobility modes, aiming to target desirable outcomes.

## **Has there been a transformative experience that has guided your work in the field?**

Formative years in my professional career, during which I worked in diverse sectors, equipped me with the skills and confidence needed to manage complex issues innovatively. It is difficult to pinpoint a single experience as transformative.

As a woman in a male dominated system, one had to constantly deliver high-quality output and demonstrate the ability to face challenging situations. Public acceptance and appreciation and the respect that I have received from peers as a result of my determination and work are motivating factors.

## **Did you have an 'enough is enough' moment?**

At times, when you are trying to push a strong reform and you find yourself stonewalled from various sides, by your male colleagues and politicians, you do wonder whether you have reached your wit's end. Nevertheless, I have realized over time that if you learn to disregard skepticism and criticism from others and continue to pursue what you believe in with single-minded focus, you will get there.

## **Many feminist advocates say they get tired of saying the same things and having the same fights over and over. How do you stay motivated?**

I tend to believe that every reform, plan, or project has its "sweet spot." The key is to keep working on it until that moment arrives. So, even when I momentarily feel demotivated, I push myself out of that zone, constantly telling myself that sooner or later I will be able to make progress towards my goal.





**Do you have any advice for other people who want to be part of a feminist reshaping of the transport system?**

Mobility is “the sector” to be involved in, considering the challenges and opportunities for innovation and the potential for personal and professional growth. Women and men alike should be sensitized to distinguish and incorporate women’s travel needs and concerns at all stages of planning, design, and implementation. They must equip themselves with skills to utilize data and technology for policymaking and the development of plans.