



BUS, BENEFITS AND BEYOND

A study of transport equity through Karnataka's Shakti Scheme

PRAJWAL NAGESH

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, MIDS

CHAIR

KRIPA ANANTHPUR

Professor (Retired), MIDS

DISCUSSANTS

TAMOGHNA HALDER

Assistant Professor of Economics
Azim Premji University

AILA BANDAGI

Research Scholar, Department of Geography
University of Nevada, USA

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MIDS, 79, 2nd Main Road, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, Chennai 600020 | www.mids.ac.in

The *Shakti* scheme of the Karnataka government is a new addition to a growing list of cities implementing fare-free public transport (FFPT) for women based on a distributive justice philosophy. Despite the scheme's popularity, its impacts—benefits, biases and barriers—remain unaccounted, invisible, and disconnected.

Prajwal Nagesh will present the background and a proposed project plan, to study the Shakti scheme from a demand (user) perspective and a supply (transport personnel) perspective. The project will be conducted in Mysuru, Hubli, Kalaburagi, and Kavar. It will employ mixed-methods research and intersectional approach. In the first phase of studying user perspective, apart from the obvious affordability component of the scheme, this project will employ the 4As framework (accessibility, availability, acceptability and affordability) to understand their experiences comprehensively. In the second phase, the study will focus on the supply (transport personnel) perspective through focus group discussions with bus personnel (drivers and conductors), bus depots and office staff. The study will aim to capture the scheme's invisible, unaccounted and disparate impact on bus users and society at large.

This seminar will be an amalgamation of Prajwal Nagesh's doctoral and post-doctoral work on urban mobilities and the intersection of gender and ageing with an upcoming project which studies Karnataka's fare-free transport scheme, Shakti. The seminar will include a presentation on the upcoming project and its research objectives, tools and fieldwork plans to elicit comments before commencing the fieldwork.