

INVITATION



UNLOCKING INDIA'S WOMEN DIVIDEND

Accelerating the Journey from Education
to Economic Empowerment

10.00 AM TO 01.00 PM
FRIDAY, 6 TH MARCH 2026
MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER

THE PLATFORM

India has witnessed a significant rise in women's enrolment in higher education over the past decade. In several disciplines, women now constitute nearly half—or more—of graduating cohorts. Yet, this educational progress has not translated proportionately into workforce participation, sustained employment, or leadership representation.

A critical but under-recognised constraint in this transition from education to employment is access to safe, affordable, and enabling urban accommodation—particularly for women migrating from Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns and rural areas.

For many first-generation urban migrants, the decision to accept a job offer is shaped not only by salary or role, but by the availability of secure housing, proximity to workplace, affordability of rent, and social support systems. High rental costs, safety concerns, restrictive private accommodation practices, and lack of institutional housing options often deter or delay women's entry into formal employment. In some cases, these barriers lead to early career discontinuation.

Recognising housing as economic infrastructure—rather than merely a welfare provision—is essential to unlocking India's women dividend.

BACKGROUND

The conclave seeks to examine the structural link between women's urban migration, accommodation access, and economic mobility. Drawing upon a research study on Working Women's Hostels in Tamil Nadu, including the Thozhi Hostel model operating under a Public-Private Partnership framework, the discussions aim to:

- Understand housing as a determinant of women's workforce participation
- Examine institutional models that support safe and affordable accommodation
- Assess the impact of hostel infrastructure on autonomy, retention, productivity, and career progression
- Identify policy gaps and opportunities for scaling such models nationally

The report includes insights from online surveys, resident profiles, qualitative interviews, and a deep dive into the Chennai metropolitan context, culminating in policy recommendations.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- India stands at a demographic crossroads. Enhancing female labour force participation is not only a social imperative but an economic necessity. Even modest increases in women's workforce participation can significantly boost GDP, household incomes, and intergenerational mobility.
- For women from Tier 2 and Tier 3 geographies, urban migration represents aspiration, independence, and economic transformation. However, without enabling infrastructure, particularly safe accommodation, this aspiration often encounters structural friction.
- This conclave positions working women's hostels and urban housing policy as catalytic enablers of economic empowerment.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The conclave aims to generate actionable recommendations for:

- State and Central Government Ministries
- Urban Development and Housing Authorities
- Corporates and Industry Bodies
- CSR and ESG Frameworks
- Higher Education Institutions

A summary of recommendations emerging from the deliberations will be compiled and shared with relevant government departments as a way forward for strengthening policy frameworks around working women's accommodation

PANEL DISCUSSION

“Safe Stays, Strong Careers: Housing as the Missing Link in Women's Economic Mobility”

This panel will examine a critical yet under-recognised determinant of women's workforce participation—access to safe, affordable, and enabling accommodation. Drawing from the report's findings across the national context, the Tamil Nadu experience, and resident-level insights, the discussion will reposition housing from a welfare provision to core economic infrastructure. The panel will explore why many educated women from Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns struggle to sustain employment after securing jobs, how accommodation constraints influence career continuity and retention, and what lessons emerge from the Thozhi Hostel model. By integrating lived experiences, policy perspectives, and corporate realities, the session aims to generate actionable recommendations—including PPP frameworks, regulatory reforms, and employer partnerships—to transform working women's hostels into powerful enablers of economic mobility rather than merely social support schemes.

Programme

9:00 AM

Registration, Tea & Networking

10:00 AM

Welcome Address

Dr Debashis Sanyal

Director, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai

Introductory Remarks

Mr Lakshminarayanan D

President, MMA & Managing Director, Sundaram Home Finance Ltd

Overview of the Report “Unlocking Women’s Employment Through Safe Housing: Lessons from Tamil Nadu’s Thozhi Hostels”

Dr Vidya Mahambare

Professor of Economics & Director (Research and Fellow Program in Management), Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai

Launch of the report & Address by the Chief Guest

Ms Gangapriya Chakraverti

India Site Head & Managing Director, Ford Motor Company

Presentation of Mementos & Vote of Thanks

Gp Capt R Vijayakumar (Retd), VSM

Executive Director, MMA

10.45 AM

Tea/Coffee & Networking

11.15 AM

Panel Discussion

“Safe Stays, Strong Careers: Housing as the Missing Link in Women’s Economic Mobility”

Panelists

Ms Sharanya Ari, IAS

Additional Director, Social Welfare & Women Empowerment Department, Ex-officio Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Working Women's Hostels Corporation Ltd

Prof Poonam Munjal

National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi

Ms Ashwini Ramakumar

Manager, St Thomas Mount Thozhi Hostel

Mr Mahesh V

Executive Director, NCR Atleos, Mahindra World City

Moderator

Dr Arti Srivastava

Assistant Professor - Marketing, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai

12.45 PM

Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks

Mr Yash Merchant

Director, Brand Marketing, Great Lakes Institute of Management

01.00 PM

Lunch

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS

(CLICK ON THE PICTURE TO VIEW THE PROFILE)



Ms Gangapriya Chakraverti

India Site Head &
Managing Director
Ford Motor Company



Ms Sharanya Ari, IAS

Additional Director, Social Welfare &
Women Empowerment Department,
Ex-officio Managing Director, Tamil
Nadu Working Women's Hostels
Corporation Ltd



Prof Poonam Munjal

National Council of
Applied Economic
Research, New Delhi



Dr Arti Srivastava

Assistant Professor -
Marketing, Great Lakes
Institute of
Management, Chennai



Mr Mahesh V

Executive Director, NCR
Atleos, Mahindra World
City



Dr Vidya Mahambare

Professor of Economics
& Director (Research
and Fellow Program in
Management), GLIM



Dr Debashis Sanyal

Director, Great Lakes
Institute of
Management, Chennai



Mr Yash Merchant

Director, Brand Marketing
Great Lakes Institute of
Management



Mr Lakshminarayanan D

President, MMA &
Managing Director,
Sundaram Home
Finance Ltd



**Gp Capt R Vijayakumar
(Retd), VSM**

Executive Director,
MMA

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