

## 《深圳拟推出女性专用车》

The city of Shenzhen, in south China's Guangdong Province, has decided to take a hands-on approach in fighting gender-based harassment on subway trains by introducing the country's first women-only carriages – however, not everyone is welcoming the move with open arms.

The local government of Shenzhen is planning to run a trial test this month on women-only subway cars to help female passengers avoid sticky situations in public places that are usually overcrowded.

Three lines will be chosen for test rides which will see certain cars exclusively carrying women during rush hours, before authorities make a decision on whether the plan is feasible for implantation on a bigger scale.



Women-only passenger cars in Japan. /CFP Photo

Chaotic scenes are a feature of subways, especially during rush hours, and there have been cases of male passengers in China taking advantage of the overcrowding to grope female commuters or carry out indecent

assaults.

In April 2016, a video of a brave young woman confronting a man who secretly filmed her on the subway, and forcing him to delete the footage he had taken, took Chinese social media by storm with netizens applauding the woman for standing up for herself.

A survey by China Youth Daily published in 2012 found 13.6 percent of subway passengers in China had experienced sexual harassment, although 59 percent of respondents blamed women dressing scantily.



Rush hour on subway trains means pushing and overcrowding. /ND News Photo

In an online survey by Yangcheng Metropolitan News in Shenzhen to canvass opinions about the proposed carriages, 67 percent of respondents supported the move. Meanwhile, of the 16 percent who thumbed down the proposal, 60 percent are men.

Concerns of gender segregation, possibility of social isolation of women and difficulties in implementing the plan have made their way to public discussions about such carriages in China and around the world.

"It may not be the right time to have women-only carriages," said Zhang Haiyan, an official from Guangzhou Metro Transportation Group. "In rush hours, getting into the carriages is much more important than the concept of women-only trains. If one man gets into the designated cars, others will follow. We need to make fundamental changes to the whole system, otherwise these cars are but for decoration".



Women-only passenger cars in Japan. /CFP Photo

This is not the first time the idea of women-only cars was put forth in China, however none has come to fruition.

In 2015, two members of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) proposed such plan on the Beijing subway during rush hours.

Similar proposal in South Korea was scrapped as it faced staunch opposition from male passengers who argued it reflects gender prejudice.

A few Asian countries have, however, applied women-only passenger cars, including Japan, Malaysia and India.