



Pedaling towards Healthier India- Cycling Habits & its impact on Urban Physical Fitness

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Abstract

Cycle was long considered as a poor man's transport, hobby of the rich & health guide of a old man Now it has evolved into a competitive & professional sport in India. With urbanization sprawling cycle can be the best commutation facility one can afford with declining health status of urbanites cycling can become an important technique of health rejuvenation people should understand & identify the importance of resolving traffic through appealing for strategies for popularizing cycling The policy makers should frame regulations specially for cyclists in Urban India with a multidimensional approach. This paper addresses the issues of cycling as a urban habit & this paper considers the impact of cycling on urban physical fitness.

Keywords: cycling habits, mechanism, traffic problem

Introduction

Most medium and large cities in India have about 56 % to 72 % people making very short trips within 5 kilometers offering a huge potential for bicycle use. Educational institutions, offices, business centers, shopping centers etc come within a peripheral of 5 – 6 kilo meters. But Indian cities are overcrowded because all these urbanites want to use cars / motor bikes, buses trams / metro rail services to reach these destinations. Communities in these cities have a latent demand for bicycles and walking trips, which can be realized with suitable facilities and resources. More bicycle trips will be attracted with a coherent, direct and safe

bicycle infrastructure. However, the absence of safe infrastructure and high cycle fatalities deter these potential groups from shifting to bicycle use in large Indian cities. Policy makers often ignore cyclists & cycling habits. Even urban planners & engineers have ignored the role of cycling in an ever expanding urban India. This explains the reason for the absence of any policy & regulations regarding cycling in India.

National urban transport policy

The national urban transport policy has recognized the importance of cycling as urban habit & has made several recommendations regarding



this. The importance of cyclists as a commuter group has been recognized. The safety the easiness & the importance has been shared by government.

Cycling benefits

Physical activity is one of the key determinants of good health. A physically active lifestyle, including walking, cycling or participating in sport, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke and promotes good mental health. In fact, a reports on good health claims Regular exercise, such as cycling, halves the chances of suffering from heart disease, the single largest cause of death in world over. Some source claim that in addition to being good for heart, cycling can also improve other areas of health .the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology report states that regular exercise, such as cycling , provides protection from strokes, diabetes and certain types of cancer. (Rudra prakash pradhan- does infrastructure play an important role in urbanization).

Also, just thinking about cycling shows it is a low impact activity and therefore is one of the safer ways to exercise without risk of over – exertion or strain to muscles and joints. cycling deaths/ cycling injuries/ cycling serious is very less The BMA(British Medical Association) in their report Cycling: Towards Health and safety concluded that

the benefits of cycling outweigh the risk of injury .(THE BMA REPORT 2014)

Global paradigms-

1. Copenhagen has adopted a community friendly bicycle
2. Amsterdam's called the bike capital of the world where nearly 40 % of the people use bicycle to work
3. New york city has more bicycles as nearly 50% of the population have bicycles

The Impact on Physical Fitness

Physical activity is essential for healthy growth and development of children .Regular physical activity in childhood develops cardiovascular fitness, strength and bone density. Physical activity plays an important role in the health, well-being and quality of life helps to prevent chronic diseases like cancer, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease later in life. Establishing positive habits early in childhood and adolescence can last a lifetime. (Cycling federation of India - official website 2014).

Physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of over 25 chronic conditions, including coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, breast cancer, colon cancer, Type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis. Regular physical activity and higher levels of fitness allow daily tasks to be accomplished



with greater ease and comfort and with less fatigue. (Cycling federation of India - official website 2014)

The Challenges

1. bicycle tracks have not been an integral part of road network in urban India
2. absence of bicycle networks is another major hurdle
3. bicycle clubs / organizations are almost nonexistent in India
4. as an answer to traffic management strategy bicycle tracks have been ear marked in certain fly over & bridges but not all Indian cities have uniformly made this
5. bicycle specific traffic signals are necessary this calls for innovative signal mechanisms
6. street signs & tricky inter sections are necessary foe cycle riders
7. mileage markers are important which have to be readdressed
8. Bicycle paths are often separated from the main traffic lanes and sometimes have their own signal systems .But this need attention as Indian urban roads do not have such separate paths for cycle riders
9. network of reliable and fast bicycle routes has been developed

10. theft-prevention programme has set up at regular intervals or near college campuses ,bus stands , railways stations ,etc
11. separate monitoring of cycle riders through official registration / path survey, comprehensive recognition is needed
12. A large of number of bicycle sheds are to be added at key points.
13. allocation for bike accessories needs funding support

Individual Benefits

1. Easy ridership
2. No license requirement
3. No fuel requirement
4. Cycle trips are free & require no official procedures
5. No need to register or scheduling
6. less traffic faults & burdens
7. Less room for accidents
8. Less on pocket hence easily affordable
9. needs less space for parking
10. less on repair charges & maintaining
11. Cost effective hence can reach all income brackets & groups
12. Saves income which can be channelized to other welfare aspects.

Role of Sports Organization –

cyclling has been challenged by urban people as demanding security & safety . The complete



absence of Antitheft software applications, innovative traffic signal information, easy riding paths, earmarked tracks etc cause disturbance for urbanites who wish to use cycle. But these can be addressed by urban policy makers by allocation of proper funds & proper urban transportation forming. (Rudra prakash pradhan- does infrastructure play an important role in urbanization 2013).

Sports organization can be a role model for making urbanite trouble-free on cycling through following methods. an integrated approach with public transport need an immediate attention

1. Sports organizations can sensitize urbanites to ride cycles daily

1. As cycling supports to a pollution free environment, cycling habits can be motivated with a eco friendly touch.

2. As these days urbanites are more health conscious, sports organization can appeal to them in a positive way.

3. cycling races can be held regularly in schools colleges & educational institutions offices where individuals can be stimulated to cycling habits,

4. cycling can be made a part of tourist destination & foreign & indigenous tourists can be made to cycle through linking destinations.

5. sports organization can appeal to policy makers to make segregated lanes meant for cycling without disturbing fast moving traffic.

6. small by lanes for kids for safer cycling can be promoted by these organizations

7. separate lane marking for cyclists can be moved by organizational support.

Conclusion – this reinforces traditional relations with nature this promotes a active life style it helps planning infrastructure & accommodation. More bicycle trips have to be attracted with a coherent, straight and safe bicycle infrastructure. However, the absence of safe infrastructure and high cycle fatalities deter these potential groups from shifting to bicycle use in large Indian cities. This can be addressed by premeditated policy on cycling in India. Governmental budgetary allocation has to enhance to deliver safe urban traffic. Health & security should be the top priority for a cyclist. Community at large & policy makers should heed to these demands.

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