India- Addressing Urban Indian Traffic Challenges

Vasantha kumara, Assistant professor, Department of history, Government first grade college, Ramanagara, Bangalore rural district, Karnataka state

Abstract

Urban travel in India predominantly takes place through walking, cycling & with the support of   public   transport, including intermediate public transport(IPT) facility . Indian traffic challenges are growing beyond control of the urban governments & this is causing heavily on fatal deaths , road accidents , congestions, suffocation   , Carbon emission & respiration disorders. This paper examines the importance of framing an integrated approach towards regulating traffic in urban areas.

Keywords: Traffic issues, transportation, infrastructure

Introduction

Urban traffic has been a cause of worry as the city is inflated with motorized vehicles emitting carbon. The vehicular traffic is so huge that any regulation falls short of good management. majority of the Vehicles do not have Road worthiness , emission certificates , transport licenses ,Driving certificates .Most of the regulations made by government do not have popular support Such as auto rickshaw drivers do not obey government regulation for including digital meters to their auto. The road infrastructure also does not include facilities for these modes. As a result, the operators have to violate legal policies to survive. Tiwari- Urban Transport In 2007).

Key indicators

1. There are   Indian's 285 million   urban   residents, nearly 100 million people live in urban slums. Travel patterns of people living in these slums & informal housing.
2. Generally,   cycling   and walking account for 50 to 75 % of the commuter trips for those in the informal sector.
3. The formal sector is dependent   on buses, cars and two wheelers. But despite high risks and a hostile infrastructure,   low – cost commutation   modes survive because their users lack choices.
4. The transport   is   the predominant mode of motorized travel in mega cities . Buses carry 20 to 65 % of the total amount of

passengers excluding those who walk.

5. minimum cost of public transport use accounts for 20 to 30 & of the family income for nearly 50 % of the city population living in unauthorized settlements. India has highest road accidents nearly 1.35 lakh people die in road accidents annually. there are 30 million vehicles in India & the rate is increasing by 15 % annually

6. 23 deaths per thousand vehicles in India .even though vehicle ownership is very less it is 26 per thousand vehicles in 2011-12. Two vehicles account to 65% of the vehicular traffic. Nearly 1.35 lakh people die annually through collision on road. The urban centers relate to nearly 35 % of the traffic & hence density is more in urban centers. (Urban Transport In India 2014)

Since transport is a state subject in the Indian constitutional set up central government did not have a policy or investment plan for urban transport infrastructure until 2006. city governments attempted to solve transport crises as isolated road improvement projects . Despite Investments in road infrastructure and plans for land use and transport

development , all cities continue to face the problem of congestion , traffic accident and air and noise pollution . All these problems are on the increase. Investments in road – widening schemes and grade-separated junctions which primarily benefit personal vehicle users (cars and two wheelers) only, have dominated government expenditure. (National Statistics For Road Accidents In India -report .Vol.6. Issue-1 year 2013).Rail based transport such as Metro rails , Mono rails , & LRT are becoming popular but they are capital intensive. The operating subsidies capital investment funding, underutilization of capacity & heavy initial expenditure through subsidies etc are very heavy & cost the government profoundly. It is noted through a survey that metro systems carry less than 20% of the available capacity thus incurring heavy losses. Besides only 5% of the transport problems are solved through this. But Indian government is investing on this because it has attracted private investment as well. Traffic and transport improvement proposals prepared by consultants before the JNNURM(Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission), include proposals for road widening, grade – separated junctions and metro systems. while the road – widening and junction -improvement schemes were improvement schemes were implemented in only a few cities,

public transport remained in the reports only because the finances required for metro projects are beyond the capacity of state or city governments. Besides there are other factors which has affected the metro rail system. (National Urban Transport Policy). It is too expensive, the land use patterns in India are different , urban slums people who travel in cities cannot afford to travel in metros. Affluent people use their own vehicles while the weaker section go for public transport at a cheaper cost. Governments have failed to identify these failures (Report on National Urban Transport Policy 2013). New state governments like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka are investing heavily on Metros. Instead of this policy makers have to think in terms of providing public buses which is most popular in all Indian urban cities. There are innovative methodologies being experimented like sky buses high capacity buses tram buses etc as an answer to solve traffic issues.

National urban transport policy 2006: A draft national urban transport policy was introduced in 2004 and adopted in 2006 . At the same time the national government introduced the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) to upgrade the crumbling infrastructure of urban areas. Through JNNURM, 63 cities were identified for provision of assistance in upgrading its road infrastructure.

(National Statistics For Road Accidents In India -report .Vol.6. Issue-1 year 2013). Detailed guidelines were provided to ensure that public transport gets priority scheduling & budgetary allocation. It also recommended that the transport infrastructure improvement schemes were to be in compliance with the NUTP (Report on National Urban Transport Policy 2013).

Since NUTP′ s focus is public transport, pedestrians and bicycles, cities are modifying the earlier road expansion projects to Bus rapid Transit (BRT) and bicycle – inclusive plans. BRT and bicycle- inclusive plans have been approved by the central government for five cities and another five cities are at different stages of preparation. It seems that pedestrian and bicycle facilities are not the focus of these projects. In six-lane arterial roads, two lanes are reserved for public transport buses, although there is the priority for space allocation for various modes in a restricted right of way. In order to accommodate two lanes for cars and an exclusive lane for buses, pedestrians and cyclists have been given less than desirable space. This is despite the fact that nearly 50 per cent trips are made on foot, by bicycle, or by intermediate public transport systems. The main motivation for preparing BRT projects have been to become eligible for the grant aid offered by the central government at the earliest. It

is yet to be seen whether public transport, NMV and pedestrian - friendly infrastructure is created when these projects are implemented.

Strategies

1. Indian engineers have developed (2014) jammer system which prevents mobile from working while car driving. This can be made more applicable with variations. Government should consider such innovations.
2. Smarter urban freight solutions can be more helpful. Western countries shave adopted certain technique in urban content shipment techniques & this can be applied to Indian context.
3. Global status report on road safety published by WHO recognizes the importance of good transport policy towards reducing road accidents.
4. Motor transport has to be segregated from other forms of transports in order to avoid risk of road transport
5. A gradual implementation of an organized transport policy is required to improve traffic problems in cities
6. A traffic management strategy has to be implemented by all state governments & central governments alike. This uniformity in traffic rules & regulations will check traffic challenges.

7. Transport telemetric system was proposed to be introduced to the areas of traffic data collection traffic management, vehicular parking system, traffic regulation system. These proposals should be introduced universally to all state urban centers.
8. An instinctive carpooling system, park & ride system, congestion time pricing etc techniques have worked well in Japan & Singapore.
9. Even In India these techniques can be introduced with regional innovations.
10. Group rapid transit SYSTEM can be introduced signaling systems can be rejuvenated Incident detect system can be made more user friendly.
11. Passenger / driver information facility has to be improved variable message signals, passenger warning software, driver data base , etc can be developed to prevent traffic hazards.
12. As traffic issues are commonly caused by lack of parking space, policy makers can streamline parking problems .
13. Research in making multi-level parking spaces with multi directional entry points is needed.
14. Above all , the urban people should realize that good thinking on their part will ease out all problems of traffic . Their negligence in parking, their audacity in driving, their opulence

in maintaining vehicles, their indifference to carpooling , their unconcern towards using cycle , their unresponsiveness to self-determination towards usage of non-motorized vehicles etc leads to traffic hazards . Unless & until they become sensitized towards self-determined efforts to control traffic by themselves all governmental regulations will fall apart.

Conclusion- thus Indian urban traffic needs a multi-dimensional approach in policy framing towards traffic regulation. Indian traffic hazards can be controlled through introduction of new & innovative traffic mechanisms. Western countries have been spending on traffic research & development activities in regulating urban traffic issues. But in India such an integrated approach has been sidelined. An awareness towards keeping the city clean & carbon free depends on the citizens.

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