

THE POLITICS OF URBAN MOBILITY – TOWARDS A NATIONAL URBAN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

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Mobility as Productivity and Creativity

- Urban centers as mega cities, cities and towns owe their growth to economic activity which is dependent on mobility as connectivity
- This requires standards, regulations, systems and inter linkages
- Our systems are linear and like silos with poor linkages and this hampers mobility policy and implementation of an integrated transport system

What can be done to improve ?

- All cities are different and one set of prescriptions cannot apply to all
- Problems may be viewed differently by cities – some have pollution as the key, some have congestion as primary issue, some have slower modes of transport as important, others need higher speed, some need multi model systems etc.
- Each city has its own set of issues and solutions and they must identify it themselves

Issues of town planning

- Urban authorities dealing with planning plan for cars and ignore non motorised forms and bus systems.
- Public spaces are encroached and not available for creating structures
- There is need for civil society involvement in ensuring that public spaces are used as public spaces and not appropriated for private use.
- Modernisation of transport offices and processes is essential as it is one great source of corruption which prevents modernisation

Impact of climate change debate on national transport policy

- Air pollution is one of the main aspects of urban environment and transport is a big contributor to it
- Promoting cleaner fuels, public transport over private transport as a long term policy and integration of non motorised and motorised transport is important
- Safety in all systems is the key to providing good public transport
- It has to be sensitive to different needs like those of women, children, disabled, old and has to be planned involving all these aspects and not just putting more buses on the roads.

Financing the system

- Creating public transport infrastructure is expensive and issues of who pays
- Private players are prone to take risks with safety and quality and this discourages growth of public transport as people buy cars as they get richer
- Can we get people to use buses as they get richer is the question ?
- We can provided we are willing to invest in a system which meets different peoples needs

Financing public transport

- The debate on self sustainability and subsidy is raging in this sector
- Some say if cars are self financed why not public transport ?
- This is not a good argument if we have larger goals to achieve like better city life, cleaner environment, healthy life,etc
- We need more variety in public transport a one size fits all approach is going to fail
- We have few players like TATA and AL and we need more players and better competition to reduce prices and make it more affordable

Financing transport

- A transport fund is necessary to be funded out of pollution cess, higher taxes of private cars, cess on polluting fuels, to promote cleaner public transport, pedestrian paths, cycle tracks
- Public – private partnerships in transport are the way to go the state has monopolised the permit system for too long with poor results
- Regulate but ensure a broader way of doing so on many parameters and not just permit system
- Use of ITS can be very rewarding but is primitive so far in its use in India.

For the future

- Green agenda will drive the world and transport is in the center of it
- Check private vehicles by providing better public transport for different needs
- Government must not hesitate to provide the first push to be supported later with public contributions like higher charges
- Have a system of higher accountability like a Transit Authority which integrates different players into the system
- Regulate but do not micro manage

The road map for future

- Create dedicated system of bus corridors and pedestrian pathways and cycle tracks to ensure lane driving for higher safety and faster movement for different modes of transport
- Integrate, integrate, integrate different systems and don't allow each system to become an empire by itself which is the bane of transport system today and leaves citizens needs out in the cold and is the root cause of failure of policy
- Improve competitiveness to prevent monopoly tendencies which create poor conditions.



■ Any questions ?