

Ensuring Sustainable Urban Mobility in Indian Cities: Need for Creating People Friendly Roadside Public Spaces

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Abstract : Mobility, is an integral part of living and sustainability of urban mobility, is essential not only for, but also for addressing global warming and climate change. However, very little is understood about the obstacles/hurdles and likely challenges in the success of plans for sustainable urban mobility in Indian cities from the public perspective. Whereas some of the problems and issues are common to all cities, others vary considerably with financial status, function, the size of cities and culture of a place. Problems and issues similar in all cities relate to availability, efficiency and safety of public transport, last mile connectivity, universal accessibility, and essential planning and design requirements of pedestrians and cyclists are same. However, certain aspects like the type of means of public transportation, priority for cycling and walking, type of roadside activities, are influenced by the size of the town, average educational and income level of public, financial status of the local authorities, and culture of a place. The extent of public awareness, civic sense, maintenance of public spaces and law enforcement vary significantly from large metropolitan cities to small and medium towns in countries like India. Besides, design requirements for shading, location of public open spaces and sitting areas, street furniture, landscaping also vary depending on the climate of the place. Last mile connectivity plays a major role in success/ effectiveness of public transport system in a city. In addition to the provision of pedestrian footpaths connecting important destinations, sitting spaces and necessary amenities/facilities along footpaths; pedestrian movement to public transit stations is encouraged by the presence of quality roadside public spaces. It is not only the visual attractiveness of streetscape or landscape or the public open spaces along pedestrian movement channels but the activities along that make a street vibrant and attractive. These along with adequate spaces to rest and relax encourage people to walk as is observed in cities with successful public transportation systems. The paper discusses problems and issues of pedestrians for last mile connectivity in the context of Delhi, Chandigarh, Gurgaon, and Roorkee- four Indian cities representing varying urban contexts, that is, of metropolitan, large and small cities.

Keywords : pedestrianisation, roadside public spaces, last mile connectivity, sustainable urban mobility

Conference Title : ICIUDTS 2016 : International Conference on Innovative Urban Designing and Traffic Systems

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : June 06-07, 2016