

GOVERNANCE & URBAN POOR

A policy watch on young children living in urban poverty
HUMARA BACHPAN CAMPAIGN initiative



TRANSPORT

Abstract

In India, usage of personal motors is due to poorly developed public transport network and its allied infrastructure. The focus of policies is to promote public transport but no provision is cited with respect to Child friendly public transport

Introduction

The Child Friendly Public Transport initiative, promotes the inclusion of children's (and youth) needs in planning specially in Public Transport Planning. It makes the case that it is mutually beneficial for children, youth, and planners to engage in a participatory planning process.

The overarching rationale for children's participation in planning is that they have fresh perspectives on the local environment as it pertains to their needs. Their input can be valuable for contributing to a more socially inclusive community, one that recognizes the limited mobility of children, the locations where they generally travel, and the specific hindrances they may encounter.

No policy is present for the development of Public Transport concerning children. The term 'child-friendly transport planning', and variants, is not being used in transport documents and planning literature, nor is it a concept familiar to the experts.

Present Status

India is one of the largest countries in the world, with a population of over one billion, with nearly 50 cities having population of over one million. By 2050, the population of India is expected to grow to 1.7 billion. By this time, there will be 15 cities with populations in excess of 10 million each and 85 cities with populations between 1 and 10

million each. This all is accompanied with the increase in purchasing power of the society, which has led to growth in personalised motor traffic with incapable and insufficient infrastructure to hold it.

From 2001 to 2011, the annual growth of population increased by 1.6%, but motor vehicles increased by almost 10% and we continue our planning to focus on improving mobility for car users rather than concentrating on urban public transport.

Today, the urban public transport in India, in general, is quite unsustainable, with increase in car ownership and use of cars and two-wheelers rising rapidly, and public transport system not meeting the demand of providing feasible and attractive alternatives. Additionally, other transport modes, like walking and cycling are becoming even less popular.

Issues

The "Child Friendly Public Transport" is critical. Parents who perceive the roads and public transport system feel unsafe due to which children are less likely to be allowed to walk to school or use public transport at a young age. The major issues are

Poor urban planning:

- ▶ Lack of "Bicycle Tracks in the neighbourhood"

Poor Public Transport:

- ▶ Lack of safe, secure and child-friendly walking environments which reduces the usage of public transport.
- ▶ Lack of transit discounts for students
- ▶ Lack of side railings inside the bus for support
- ▶ Lack of good quality buses in the cities
- ▶ Intermediate public transport with open doors
- ▶ Buses are over-crowded during school hours
- ▶ Waiting areas in the public stops / terminals are poorly designed
- ▶ Along with, no proper information dissemination about the incoming and outgoing buses, use of CCTV monitoring and other features of “Intelligent Transport System (ITS)” intact, for parent to feel secured and assured for their child’s travel.

Not much attention is given in existing policies to the above mentioned elements.

Existing Provision

Even though the condition of public transport is not very welcoming, certain provisions are added by the government to overcome the current scenario;

- ▶ Fare Concession on various PT modes
- ▶ Free ride in metro for minors
- ▶ Road Safety education programs
- ▶ Drivers Training programs

At present, number of journeys made by children and young people in automobiles has been increasing. It is, therefore, essential that the needs of children and youth receive as much priority as the needs of people of other ages to cover the planning gaps.

Learning

Child-Friendly Cities initiative (CFC) of United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF): It is a framework to assist any city to become more child friendly in all aspects of its environment, governance, and services. UNICEF has set up the CFC Secretariat at its Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy, in September 2000 to support city authorities in developing such frameworks and to support people working in different cities to change practice that are not at par with the needs and safety of children..

In Europe the **Dutch Institute for Design** has published design guidelines for children, in Dutch. Nic Nilsson has published *Barnperspektiv på planeringen* (Child’s perspective on planning), in Swedish. As well, Alex van Loon, with the Netherlands Ministry of Transport, has made specific recommendations towards improving the safety of neighbourhoods for child pedestrians and cyclists. A team

at the Stockholm Institute of Education is analysing data from a research project regarding children’s travel patterns and factors that influence children’s mobility in an urban environment.

In the United States, the **Community-Based Education Resource (CUBE)** is championing child-oriented communities. It has developed an educational resource for teachers to work with children on planning. CUBE’s premise is that a community designed for young people will work for everyone. The Bill of Rights for Kids created by Aspen architect, Harry Teague, says that the city shall be:

- ▶ safe
- ▶ in appropriate scale - no walls over four feet
- ▶ accessible - youth will have the ability to get from one place to another
- ▶ integrated - nature, the community, work, ages, sexes, all will be part of the whole
- ▶ a manifestation of tradition - youth will be able to identify cultural anchors whether they be building types and styles, monuments, landmarks, or natural areas

Planning for Public Transport

Salient Feature of Public Transport

The purpose of salient features is to describe the kind of system planned, designed and implemented for the users. Public Transport is characterised by features given below;

- ▶ **Service to All:** provide service to all age group and sexes.
- ▶ **Affordability:** It is subsisted for the purpose, so that people from all class or economic group can use it.
- ▶ **Sustainable:** Public Transport should be self-sustainable in nature, in terms of both financial and energy consumption.
- ▶ **Efficient:** Public Transport to be planned proficiently in a manner to provide its user seamless connectivity.

Planning for Public Transport

To ensure that there is impeccable service provided by the public transport, some of the points that need to be discussed during the planning stage are:

- ▶ Ensuring good quality public transport service within walking distance of homes, jobs, and amenities
- ▶ Maximizing public transport capacity in densely developed areas. Create Safe, reliable and comfortable public transport services and facilities.
- ▶ Integrate public transport with Intermediate Public Transport and cycle facilities to improve accessibility
- ▶ This will ensure the sustainable and efficient nature of public transport.

Component of safe Public Transport - Accessibility

- ▶ Safe accessibility to public transport modes- Implies;
- ▶ Short trips
- ▶ Safe pedestrian paths
- ▶ Safe at grade crossing facilities
- ▶ Access to Public transport nodes
- ▶ Use of technology
(Camera, Panic Buttons, priority signals etc.)

Planning of Child Friendly Public Transport

Education and Awareness

Planning sometime fails, if the users have no inkling of the system been introduced or implemented. Therefore, planning for the “Child Friendly Public Transport” includes

- ▶ Training for Drivers of Public transport
- ▶ Publicity measures and awareness campaign: Telecasting / broadcasting of TV spots / Radio Jingles, displaying cinema slides, hoardings, organizing Road Safety Weeks, Seminars / Exhibitions, All India Essay Competitions, printing of handbills / stickers / posters / calendars.
- ▶ Road Safety Education in Schools, distribution of Road Safety Publications games in Schools.
- ▶ Public transport information: routes, timing, fare and concessions for students.

Creative Planning

The concept of creative planning upsurge the possibility of usage of public transport by children and can create sureness among the maternal in terms of security and reliability of their young ones. Some concerns need to be looked are;

- ▶ Identify where children and youth want to go or need to go, to the extent possible, provide ways of getting there by foot.
- ▶ Provide separate sidewalks used by children and youth from heavily travelled roads.
- ▶ For older children and youth, ensure that destinations that cannot be a walk away are no more than a bicycle ride away.
- ▶ Ensure that every part of a transit system is safe and affordable.
- ▶ Avoid transfers by routing vehicles and make transfers easy where necessary.
- ▶ Establish or adapt one or more forums for children and youth to ensure that their perspectives are considered by planners.
- ▶ Examine every aspect of a transit system from the perspective of a parent with a child in a stroller, and make adjustments to meet such a traveller’s needs.

- ▶ School policies and practices favour walking and cycling to and from school and other modes of active transportation
- ▶ Post and enforce much lower speed limits around PT corridors.

Existing Planning Documents Need Attention

Within the transport and planning literature, there are concepts and guidelines that may be helpful in the preparation of child-friendly planning guidelines. They include:

- ▶ **Comprehensive Mobility Planning:** Understanding of the costs and benefits of transport on children’s wellbeing and the limits to their mobility must be included.
- ▶ **Universal Design:** The concept often refers to transport systems that meet the needs of people who may experience an accessibility challenge, including children, adults with baby carriages, and cyclists. Developing child-friendly Public Transport guidelines would assist efforts to create more inclusive and accessible transport systems.
- ▶ **Neighbourhood Planning:** Should promote walking and cycling as children can walk to school and parks.
- ▶ **Transport Resilience:** This concept is usually applied to transport planning regarding security and a system’s response to emergencies. The Transport Demand Management (TDM) strategies contribute to the resilience of transport systems by providing greater transport diversity.
- ▶ **Transport Technology:** Should promote security and response to the emergency. This concept should disseminate reliable information pertaining to the Public Transport modes for creating patronage among children and their parents.

Self-Assessment Checklist

The purpose of creating the checklist is to help facilitate discussion on areas of child friendly transportation focusing on safe and easy ways for parents to take children with them on buses, in cars, by bike or on foot.

Existing Policies

Different policies and guidelines are available in India such as;

- ▶ NUTP-2006
- ▶ National Road Safety Policy
- ▶ National Sustainable Habitat Mission (NSHM)
- ▶ 12th Five Year Plan- Short Term Plan
- ▶ National Transport Development Policy Committee (NTDPC) - Long Term Vision Plan.

All cover the need and planning of public transport but no focus on child friendly public transport or urban planning in any of these guidelines and policies mentioned above.

Overall policy intervention is necessary in this respect to give way for “Child Friendly Public Transport”.

Focus of Policy

To make our cities most liveable in the world and enable them to become the “engines of economic growth” that power India’s march towards becoming a developed country.

“Mobility to All”

Policy Recommendations

We have to put in lot of effort in this direction at central, state and city level for planning and intervention of policy. It should include:

- ▶ Involving children and young people at all levels of planning and implementation for various policies/legislation
- ▶ Ensure that transport facilities are safe and easily accessible
- ▶ Interface among urban planners, transport experts, policymakers and children to encourage children participation
- ▶ Roads with sidewalks for children’s safety, zebra crossings and traffic signals near the slum areas



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