

# AS CITIES GROW,

## transportation plans must head for future

Radheshyam Jadhav | TNN

**Pune:** One of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission's (JNNURM) visions is to have cities where the public mass transport system rules. Which is why projects like the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) have become so important in Pune and Ahmedabad.

But experts say that in states like Maharashtra where urban corridors in the vicinity of the cities are emerging as a result of intensified urbanisation, the city-centric focus of urban transportation must change to include a larger area that will cater to an urban conglomeration.

As far back as 1988, the national commission on urbanisation had identified 329 urban centres as generators of economic momentum (GEMs) where development activities should converge.

The government of India's 'National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation's (NATMO) study had identified 25 urban corridors. The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) study specifically looked at Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The findings of the study confirmed the emergence of the earlier corridors with a few new corridors.

The CPR study identified four corridors in Maharashtra— Mumbai (to Ahmedabad), Mumbai-Pune, Mumbai-Nashik-Dhule-Amravati-Nagpur, and Pune-Ahmednagar-Aurangabad-Jalgaon. It also indicated the likely percentage of population that would settle along these corridors. The picture that emerges is clearly one of strong and spectacular growth along the corridors.

"The implications of the corridor development are many. They will be multi-nodal, but not well-connected functionally. Such connectivity will require careful planning and policy choices on whether the corridors need to be continuous or not. The location of future economic activities, residential development, infrastructure together with integration of multi-nodal centres both spatially and functionally, would have to be planned and visualised," K C Sivaramakrishnan and B N Singh said in their

CORRIDORS	
The percentages of the urban population likely to be located in these corridors by 2021	
Mumbai-Thane (to Ahmedabad)	42%
Mumbai-Pune	11% (excluding Mumbai)
Mumbai-Nashik-Dhule-Amravati-Nagpur	21% (excluding Mumbai)
Pune-Ahmednagar-Aurangabad-Jalgaon	6%

(SOURCE - THE CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH)

study on urbanisation. Another study by the ministry of urban development, the total requirement of funds for urban transport in 87 identified cities by 2030 is estimated at Rs 4,35,380 crore.

The gap between the investment demand and likely availability of funds from budgetary sources of central, state and urban local bodies is wide. While it is difficult to ascertain the actual amount due to uncertainty of proposals from these government bodies, they have been advised to set up a dedicated urban transport fund at the state and city levels to mitigate the gap.

Former assistant director of the state town planning department Ramchandra Gohad who is now with the Pune Metropolitan Planning Committee's (PMPC) land-use committee said that the immediate need was to establish the Pune Metropolitan Development Authority (PMRDA).

"Once the PMRDA is a physical entity, JNNURM funds could be claimed for a wider network of the Pune metropolitan region area spread over 3,000 sq km. As per the 74th constitutional amendment, PMPC will prepare and implement an integrated development plan for a region. Areas falling under the metropolitan region includes municipal councils, panchayat samitis and gram panchayats, should get benefit of JNNURM funds," said Gohad.

On its part, the government has launched the Sustainable Urban Transport Project at an estimated cost of Rs.1439.01 crore. The proposal involves seeking grants from the global environment facility through the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme and loans from the World Bank to the cities through the state governments and central assistance under the JNNURM, urban transport planning and capacity building schemes, contribution from the states and the implementing agencies.

"Road conditions in cities like Nanded are poor and managed inadequately. The bus transport system run by the Maharashtra Road State Transport Corporation has become defunct," states the City Development Plan (CDP) submitted to the central government by the Nanded Municipal Corporation. The CDP has insisted on better connectivity with urban conglomerations.

The urban corridors surrounding the areas of cities like Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur are growing fast as people from other parts of the state and other states settle outside the main city because of housing affordability.

According to the Economic Survey of Maharashtra released in April 2010, there has been a rapid growth in the density of population. The 2001 census puts the density (number of people per sq km) of the population was 315 and this number may increase to 366 in 2011. This indicates a rise of 51 people per sq km putting an additional burden on the existing infrastructure. The survey also indicates a 5.4 per cent rise in the population of potential work force (15-59 age group) in 2011.

The Second Part Of The Series On JNNURM's Projects And The Problems It Faces Focuses On How City-Centric Mass Transport May Not Work Because People Are Settling Along Corridors Outside Cities And Will Need Connectivity

file photo



### Walk, don't run for life

- ▶ Walkability reflects the quality of facilities and conditions that make it safe, comfortable and convenient
- ▶ Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, paths, crosswalks, stairways, curb cuts, ramps and transit stops
- ▶ They should be well-designed and connected to help pedestrians to take the shortest direct route to destinations safely
- ▶ However, walkers are ignored, footpaths are being narrowed to provide more space for carriageways
- ▶ Huge investments made in roads, and elevated roadways have not helped solve the congestion problem

## Walkers have little space on many widened roads

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**Pune:** A sizeable number of people in Pune, Mumbai, Nashik and Nanded walk or cycle to their destinations. These are among the 65 identified cities which have availed of funds from the JNNURM to improve public transport. In the process, experts said, they have become pedestrian unfriendly.

Union minister of Urban Development Jaipal Reddy recently directed the states to make adequate provision for dedicated paths for the pedestrians and cycle-users wherever roads are being built or widened. "The central government's initiative to promote public transport and create facilities like footpaths and cycle tracks is definitely a welcome step. But the fact remains that the cities which have availed of funds for public transport and have promised the centre to create pedestrian-friendly facilities have done very little," said Jugal Rathi, president of Cycle Prathisthan in Pune.

He said the civic bodies had developed a few cycle tracks and even those were in poor shape. The city has about 123 km cycle tracks and the civic body has used about Rs 31 crore to construct them. "The government had allocated Rs 2 crore for the outreach programme but the civic body has not done enough to promote cycle tracks. Non-motorised transport and public transport are the only solutions for the city's traffic problem," says Rathi.

Pune is increasingly becoming a pedestrian-unfriendly city even though 37 per cent of the people walk to their destinations while 18 per cent use the cycle. But this 55 per cent non-motorised transport is among the most ignored in traffic planning and at risk because they have to share the same right of way with the motorised modes.

This grim picture has been put forth in the concept note for a Comprehensive Transport Policy (CTP) for the Pune

### THINK FAST, ACT QUICK

- ▶ It is imperative to ensure that the road design does not increase dependence on and usage of personal vehicles. The policy focus must shift to public transport, walking and cycling.
- ▶ The government should mandate pedestrian plans and make it conditional to infrastructure funding. City development plans under JNNURM should have pedestrianisation and funding linked with it.
- ▶ Immediately reform engineering and environmental guidelines for walkways and make their implementation mandatory. Ensure these guidelines are incorporated by all road building agencies.

Harmonise existing laws for effective implementation. While relevant laws will have to be harmonised it will have to be combined with more direct legal protection of pedestrian space and rights.

A road-users act for pedestrianisation that will have segregation of space, penalty for encroachment on pedestrian space, prevent usurping of pedestrian space for motorised traffic without justification.

Urban local bodies must implement walkability audits of pedestrian ways, public transport plans must include pedestrians plan for multimodal integration and zero-tolerance policy for accidents

The programme for small and medium towns under the ministry of urban development should make the pedestrian plan mandatory.

Municipal Corporation (PMC). Pedestrians are the most important component in traffic and transportation and one that is the most ignored, the concept note said.

Roads are designed and built with automobiles and two-wheelers in mind. Not enough consideration is given to other users like pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Heritage sites and open spaces are increasingly being sacrificed to accommodate the needs of private auto-vehicles, it added.

A recent study in Mumbai concluded that more than 65% space in the city's arterial junctions are occupied by cars, with only around 40% passengers. Buses at the same junctions occupy just 8% of road space and carry 45% of the passengers.

Moreover, a mere 10-20% increase in the number of buses and designated bus lanes can ease congestion and pollution at such junctions or other arterial roads in Mumbai,

the study says.

Nagpur's CDP says that 27 per cent of the population use cycles. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) findings on how walkable are our cities found that in most Indian cities, walkers out number those using vehicles. Yet, pedestrians walk in extremely unsafe and hostile conditions, in constant conflict with motorised traffic and are easy victims of crashes and accidents. Countless people trip over potholes, slip on sludge, or are grievously hurt by bumping into numerous obstacles along the footpaths. There is continuous erosion of space for walkers even though every journey begins and ends with a walking trip. Our civic authorities have little respect for them, the findings said.

In Pune, pedestrians have to put up with reading kiosks, party offices and halls have come up at public places like gardens, footpaths and even inside housing societies, with backing from political outfits.