



2nd July 2010

Mr. S.V. Ranganath, IAS
Chief Secretary
Govt. of Karnataka
Bangalore

Dear Sir,

Subject: Issues regarding the decision to widen more than 200 roads in Bangalore, displace lakhs of people and fell hundreds of road-side trees

There are several issues - legal, governance, social, human, economic, environmental - related to road-widening which need to be considered before going ahead with the decision to widen more than 200 roads in Bangalore.

1. Governance issues

BBMP to be the decision-making body: We hope that the decision on road-widening will be followed up with wider public consultations through the local ward committees (yet to be set up) and through public hearings with the affected communities on each of the roads. **Further, since the BBMP council is in place now and is the correct forum to take up this issue for discussion, we hope that it will be the body ultimately taking decisions on this issue, as per its Constitutional mandate.** We hope that our views will be conveyed to it to enable such decision-making.

2. Legal issues

2.1 Non-implementation of Karnataka Town & Country Planning Act: We wish to draw your attention that the Karnataka High Court, in its judgment of March 16, 2009, in a PIL (WP 7107/2008) filed by ESG (Environment Support Group) and CIVIC Bangalore categorically stated that road widening could be undertaken only if the BBMP "strictly followed" the provisions of Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act (KTCPA) and the Karnataka Tree Preservation Act. **The BDA, being the body to implement the KTCPA, has replied to an RTI application that it has not framed any scheme under Chapter 5 of the KTCPA for road-widening. Nor has it publicised it or called for public objections, as required under the Act. Hence the road-widening scheme is wholly illegal and if BBMP proceeds with it, it will be in contempt of the High Court decision.**

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2.2 Non-constitution of Tree Authority as per Karnataka Preservation of Trees Act: Since hundreds of trees are going to be felled, the forum where public can appeal against the decision to fell trees is the Tree Authority under the Karnataka Preservation of Trees Act. Since the Mayor of Bangalore is the chairperson of this Tree Authority, this body needs to be re-constituted with the new mayor as chairperson along with three non-official representatives and all decisions to fell trees approved by it, **to obey the High Court ruling.**

2.3 Suo motu disclosures under Sections 4(i)(c) and (d) of RTI 2005: The concerned authorities need to publicise suo motu, under Section 4(i)(c) and (d) of the National Right to Information Act, 2005, the facts and details of the plans to widen roads and implicitly fell trees, **and the reasons and justifications for the decision.**

3. Human rights issues

No displacement without ‘prior informed consent’

There are instances where officials have been informing residents that if more than a certain % of people on a road accept TDRs, they also have to accept TDRs and that they do not have any other choice. There are also instances of slum-dwellers living for decades on certain roads being **forcibly evicted without rehabilitation** to widen roads. These constitute gross human rights violations and TDRs cannot be considered as adequate compensation for involuntary resettlement.

A report “Finding solutions to forced evictions worldwide: A priority to meet the MDGs and implement the Habitat Agenda” by the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions (AGFE) submitted to the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT in April 2007 says:

“The practice of forced eviction is increasing although it is illegal and unjust:

... the practice of eviction without consultation or adequate alternatives and compensation is *illegal* according to international law; it is also *unjust*, with devastating consequences for those who are affected. Evictions have been conducted or tolerated by national and local governments, private property owners, developers, planners, property speculators, real estate companies and international financial institutions in violation of their own laws, constitutions and principles. They have taken place in the name of national security; for the sake of city beautification and development-based projects.”

No displacement without ‘prior informed consent’ should be acceptable in the case of any of the affected populations. **Prior informed consent** is a right of all, including marginalised groups like dalits, slum-dwellers, the homeless, and women.

“The practice of forced evictions constitutes a gross violation of a broad range of human rights, in particular the right to adequate housing, the right to remain, the right to freedom of movement, the right to privacy, the right to property, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to security of the person, the right to security of the home, the right to security of tenure and the right

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to equality of treatment. Furthermore, all persons should possess a degree of security of tenure which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions, harassment and other threats.”

“In several cases, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has concluded that violations of Art. 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) had taken place due to the practice of forced evictions implemented or tolerated by States parties. The Committee has asserted in its General Comment n. 4 (1991) that “instances of forced evictions are *prima facie* incompatible with the requirements of the ICESCR and can only be justified in the most exceptional circumstances, and in accordance with the relevant principles of international law” (para. 18). (*India has ratified this Covenant.*)

“The General Comment n. 7 (1997) stresses that “States parties shall ensure, prior to carrying out any evictions, and particularly those involving large groups, that all feasible alternatives are explored in consultation with the affected persons, with a view to avoiding, or at least minimizing, the need to use force. Legal remedies or procedures should be provided to those who are affected by eviction orders. States parties shall also see to it that all the individuals concerned have a right to adequate compensation for any property, both personal and real, which is affected.”

The plan for road-widening must spell out as per above report:

- (i) the development goals for defining public interest
- (ii) the planning process including options assessments and criteria for choice
- (iii) the democratic structure and administrative mechanisms that would be involved
- (iv) the process which should be based on India’s domestic and international human rights commitments as well– legal, humane – for no enforced displacement and
- (v) just and fair rehabilitation – principles, provisions and processes with democratic, decentralised administrative structure.

4. Resettlement & Rehabilitation issues

The road-widening plan should recognise the human right to resettlement and rehabilitation of those threatened by displacement, as per above report. According to the above report, **the R&R plan should be informed by and consistent with both international human rights principles and constitutional obligations.** It should lay down minimum standards for rehabilitation based on human rights norms. Specific details related to location of the site, proximity to livelihood source, adequate housing, delivery of essential services, healthcare, education, and transport must be specified. A rehabilitation legislation without the articulation of minimum standards is meaningless. A clear time line for completion of rehabilitation is also missing. At every stage of the process, a minimum timeframe has to be clearly specified. No land acquisition must be allowed before all R&R obligations are fulfilled by the government. The norms should be: no enforced displacement; socio-environmental impact assessment; and effective, efficient and just distribution of benefits.

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4.1. National Resettlement & Rehabilitation Policy 2007

It is tragic that authorities have not considered it necessary in a project which is going to displace lakhs of people, to invoke the Karnataka Rehabilitation Act of 1987 or the National R&R Policy of 2007 and make these applicable to this project. But it is imperative to do so under the international commitments made by the country.

Following is a summary of the National R&R policy which should be made applicable to the road-widening project:

Preamble of policy

- ◆ Gazette Notif.: F.No.26011/412007-LRD.-
- ◆ Infrastructure often requires the exercise of legal powers by the state under the principle of *eminent domain* for acquisition of private property, leading to involuntary displacement of people, depriving them of their land, livelihood and shelter;
- ◆ These have traumatic, psychological and socio-cultural consequences on the affected population which call for protecting their rights

Applicability

- ◆ NRRP-2007 provides for the basic *minimum* requirements
- ◆ “all projects leading to involuntary displacement of people must address the rehabilitation and resettlement issues comprehensively”
- ◆ liberty to put in place greater benefit levels than those prescribed in the NRRP-2007.
- ◆ “The principles of this policy may also apply to the rehabilitation and resettlement of persons involuntarily *displaced permanently due to any other reason.*”

Principles

- ◆ Recognise R&R issues formulated with the active participation of the affected persons
- ◆ Benefits beyond monetary compensation
- ◆ Recognise plight of those who do not have legal or recognised rights over the land on which they are critically dependent for their subsistence
- ◆ The adverse impact on affected families - economic, environmental, social and cultural- needs to be assessed in a participatory and transparent manner.
- ◆ The national policy must apply to ***all*** (emphasis added) projects where involuntary displacement takes place
- ◆ Government should, *inter alia*, take into consideration the alternatives that will (i) minimise the displacement of people
- ◆ The options’ assessment may be in terms of alternative project plans, technological plans

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Requirements

- ◆ It must be mandatory to do social impact assessments
- ◆ provide all required infrastructural facilities and amenities in the resettlement area.
- ◆ specify clear timeframes within which the implementation of the rehabilitation package shall be accomplished.
- ◆ lay down an effective monitoring and grievance redressal mechanism.

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of Projects

- ◆ SIA required for project which involves involuntary displacement of four hundred or more families *en masse* in plain areas –200 in hilly areas
- ◆ where both EIA and SIA are required, the public hearing done in the project affected area for EIA shall also cover issues related to SIA.
- ◆ The SIA report shall be examined by an independent multi-disciplinary expert group with two non-official social science and rehabilitation experts
- ◆ The SIA clearance shall be accorded as per the procedure and within the time limits

Appointment of Administrator and Commissioner for R&R

- ◆ Commissioner to supervise
- ◆ Administrator to be not below the rank of District Collector of the State Government
- ◆ to minimise displacement and to identify non-displacing or least-displacing alternatives
- ◆ hold consultation with the affected families
- ◆ prepare a draft scheme for R&R
- ◆ prepare a budget for R&R activities in consultation with representatives of the affected families
- ◆ arrange and allot adequate land for R&R, sanction benefits

Rehabilitation and Resettlement Plan

- ◆ Declare affected area; publish in at least three daily newspapers
- ◆ Undertake a baseline survey and census for identification of affected persons –90 days
- ◆ Survey to identify members resident/carrying on trade, families losing trade, livelihood, etc., SC/ST families, vulnerable persons, etc.
- ◆ Publish survey results and call for objections
- ◆ Submit report within 30 days
- ◆ Govt. to finalise survey within 45 days thereafter
- ◆ Administrator for R&R shall prepare a draft R&R scheme or plan for affected families after consultation with the representatives of the affected families including women
- ◆ Discussion of plan

Benefits

- ◆ Land for land
- ◆ Training and capacity building for suitable job or self-employment
- ◆ Scholarships for education

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- ◆ Financial support for transportation, construction of shops, temporary & transitional accommodation
- ◆ Housing benefit to landless
- ◆ Lifetime monthly pension to vulnerable persons and persons above 50 who cannot find employment, etc.

Grievance redressal

- ◆ A strong grievance redressal mechanism
- ◆ Includes standing R&R Committees at the district and project level, and an Ombudsman.
- ◆ The R&R Committees shall have representatives from the affected families including women, voluntary organisations, local elected representatives, etc.
- ◆ Post-implementation social audits of the rehabilitation and resettlement schemes and plans.

The above policy which is in line with international human rights principles and national commitments is not being followed in the current road-widening plan.

4.2 World Bank Operation Directive (OD) 4.30 on Involuntary Resettlement

Bangalore is aiming at getting its share of a \$ 87 billion World Bank loan for implementation of its Comprehensive Traffic and Transportation Plan, including **improvement of primary and arterial roads, which one can assume implies road-widening. Any World Bank project involving involuntary resettlement of people calls for the full implementation of World Bank's Operational Directive (OD) 4.30 on Involuntary Resettlement which will require that resettlement plans be built around a development strategy and package aimed at improving or at least restoring the economic base for those relocated. It says that cash compensation alone is normally inadequate. This would make the offer of mere TDRs as compensation inadequate.**

OD 4.30 requires that the content of resettlement plans should normally include a statement of objectives and policies, an executive summary, and detailed provision for the following:

- ◆ (a) organizational responsibilities (para. 6);
- ◆ (b) community participation and integration with host populations (paras. 7-10);
- ◆ (c) socio-economic survey (para. 11);
- ◆ (d) legal framework (para. 12);
- ◆ (e) alternative sites and selection (para. 13);
- ◆ (f) valuation of and compensation for lost assets (paras. 14-16);
- ◆ (g) land tenure, acquisition, and transfer (para. 17);
- ◆ (h) access to training, employment, and credit (para. 18);
- ◆ (i) shelter, infrastructure, and social services (para. 19);
- ◆ (j) environmental protection and management (para. 20); and
- ◆ (k) implementation schedule, monitoring, and evaluation (paras. 21-22).
- ◆ Cost estimates should be prepared for these activities, and they should be budgeted and scheduled in coordination with the physical works of the main investment project.

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“Resettlement plans should be based on recent information about the scale and impact of resettlement on the displaced population. Socio-economic surveys should describe (a) the magnitude of displacement; (b) information on the full resource base of the affected population, including income derived from informal sector. Valuation of lost assets should be made at their replacement cost. The environmental assessment (EA) normally classifies projects involving involuntary resettlement as Category A.”

If BBMP wishes to avail itself of the World Bank loan for road-widening, OD 4.30 will have to be mandatorily followed.

5 Public purpose and public interest

It has been recently stated by a Minister that the road-widening project is in “public interest” but there has been no document or public clarification on what is the “public interest” involved in road-widening.

A draft “Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation Bill” submitted by civil society and approved by the earlier National Advisory Council in 2006 says:

“A project serves a public purpose when it is intended to be used by people and is open to the community/public at large. This however may not necessarily serve public interest for e.g. an amusement park may be open to the public but is it in public interest? Public interest will have to be determined not by who or how many have access to it but in terms of

- a) its overall costs, who it benefits and to what extent and
- b) whether the new use to which the land is intended to be put actually serves public interest in a greater way than in the manner in which it is currently being used.”

“... In several countries (for instance the USA) there is an established practice that determination of public purpose/interest occurs through legislative action rather than executive discretion. And in all cases it is also subject to judicial review.”

The draft Bill says: “A project fulfils a public purpose and is in public interest when through a participatory and transparent process it is determined that:

- The project will benefit the community as a body
- The project is directly related to functions of government.
- The project does not have as its primary objective the benefit of a private interest.
- **The benefits of the project option outweigh the costs of loss of land, livelihood, shelter, habitat/culture, environment and other capital and operating costs incurred, and**
- The public interest thus created outweighs any public interest value accruing from the existing use of the land and everything attached to it.

No such assessment has been made for the road-widening scheme. Judging the current road-widening project on the above terms, it can be seen that only the private purpose of private vehicle

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owners is going to be served by road-widening and not the general public interest and the costs far outweigh the benefits, if any. All it will achieve will be the conversion of a whole lot of petrol into noxious fumes, the loss of the trees which could have absorbed the CO₂, and the hindrance of public transport buses and more environment-friendly modes of mobility.

Road-widening, if necessary, can be justified only if it is used for the purpose of creating lanes for non-motorised vehicles, such as cycles and cycle-rickshaws; Bus Rapid Transport Corridors (BRTS); and if it incorporates plans for retaining tree-lines, along with adequate R&R measures for those affected.

The recent road-widening of Bellary Road, Seshadri Road and Palace Road show that the above public purposes have not been met and that only private vehicles have been benefited.

6 Rationale for road-widening

RTO statistics reveal that every day 1300 new vehicles are registered in Bangalore. At this rate, even if all the 100 odd roads in Bangalore running to a length of 450 kms. (approx.) are widened as now proposed, then the widening exercise would have to be repeated in merely five years as these roads would be again full of vehicles. Hence road-widening is not a solution for de-congesting traffic.

Scientific study by professional body on traffic magnitude: In taking a decision to widen roads, a scientific study does not appear to have been done by an expert professional body, as per the National Urban Transport Policy, to gauge the current and future magnitude of traffic flow and the rationale for widening these roads. This becomes relevant as the proposed Metro will be passing through many of these areas - probably with feeder monorails also plying - and the quantum of vehicular traffic is expected to reduce on these roads as a result of these measures.

7 Economic issues

◆ It is estimated that the civil works for widening 450 km of roads will cost Rs 9,000 crore. The 91 roads proposed for widening in the first two phases involve about 35,000 properties. If it is assumed that each property is valued at Rs. 50 lakh, then it will cost BBMP Rs17,000 crore to acquire property to widen all these roads, if the true market rate for the land is paid as required. If the cost of civil work is added then the cost of road widening would be a whopping Rs. 28,000 crore.

◆ Now, more than Rs. 12,000 crore are already being spent on the Bangalore Metro on the assumption that it will solve the problem of traffic congestion in Bangalore. Thousands of crores are also planned to be invested on mono-rail and several ring-roads to supplement the Metro. If the Metro is already passing close to a road, is there a need to widen it? **If a further Rs. 28,000 crore are required to solve the problem of congestion through road-widening, it is an admission**

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either that the much-hyped Metro, mono-rail and ring-roads are not going to solve the problem or that it is a wasteful and unnecessary investment.

◆ We need to compare these figures being invested for Bangalore's transportation alone with the neglect shown for releasing funds for the Special Development Plan for developing the most deprived taluks of Karnataka which require Rs. 31,000 crore over a period of eight years. No money was released for this for seven years, Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 crore were given over a few years and only in the last three years, Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 2,000 crore have been released every year towards this.

8 Non-conformity with National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP)

Judging from the above instance, it is clear that the current plans are clearly at variance with the vision, mission and strategies enunciated in the National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) unveiled recently, which our state is bound to implement.

The VISION of the NUTP is:

- ◆ To recognise that people occupy centre-stage in our cities and all plans would be for their common benefit and well being

The MISSION is:

- ◆ Bringing about a more equitable allocation of road space with people, rather than vehicles, as its main focus
- ◆ Encourage greater use of public transport and non-motorized modes

Reservation of lanes and corridors: The NUTP says the vision and mission can be achieved “by reserving lanes and corridors exclusively for public transport and non-motorized modes of travel”. **As against this, the decision to simply widen roads, without plans to create cycle pathways, segregate different modes of transport, or have dedicated lanes for bus rapid transport systems, clearly encourages only private vehicles and disincentivises non-motorised and public transport, which is clearly against the NUTP. In short, the plans are not part of “an integrated master plan which internalizes the features of sustainable transport systems” as stated in the NUTP.**

Environmentally-friendly and equitable solutions ignored: The NUTP recognises that “a disproportionate amount of road space is being allocated to personal vehicles which makes the lower income groups effectively, ending up paying, in terms of higher travel time and higher travel costs.” The NUTP continues, “Non-motorized modes are environmentally friendly and have to be given their due share in the transport system of a city. The problems being faced by them would have to be mitigated. Apart from improving safety, the segregation of vehicles moving at different speeds would help improve traffic flow, increase the average speed of traffic and reduce emissions resulting from sub-optimal speeds.” Cycle parking spaces and cycle rental services need to be encouraged. **The current plans to widen roads do not incorporate these policy directives.**

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Acquiring more land with Central support: The Central Government has committed itself to ‘support formulation and implementation of specific “Area Plans” in congested urban areas that propose appropriate mix of various modes of transport *including exclusive zones for non-motorized transit*’ (emphasis added)’. The NUTP states that the Centre is willing to finance projects that “divert funds from projects that add to road capacity towards public transit systems” and “initiatives taken to promote non-motorized transport and improve safe access to public transport”. These points need to be noted and made use of to acquire more land, if necessary, along these roads to create separate lanes for non-motorised and 2- and 3-wheelers while retaining the tree-line.

9. Environmental issues

Bangalore is well-known as the ‘Garden City’. This implies that its trees are responsible for giving it this sobriquet. Road-widening to make 200 roads 6-lane roads will imply practically clear-felling hundreds of full-grown avenue trees. Trees constitute the soul of this city and cutting them will not only convert central Bangalore into a desert, but also kill its very soul.

While deciding to widen these roads, whether alternative technical drawings with the objective of retaining the trees were drawn up and their feasibility studied, or whether a single plan was drawn of widening the roads to a particular width with no consideration for the trees.

Alternative plans for retaining trees: Why can’t there be a plan to create dedicated lanes for cycles and two and three-wheelers on the other side of the trees, while retaining the trees on a green strip as the median. Why was this plan given up, after public assurances regarding the same were given in newspapers?

10 Alternatives to road-widening & Way forward

10.1 Legality to be established: First of all, the road-widening scheme should adhere to the current laws, the KTPCA, Kar. Tree Preservation Act and Right to Information Act.

10.2 Rationale and ‘public interest’ to be established: The rationale and “public interest” of road-widening has to be established in terms of the principles and cost–benefit analyses as per the Draft Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation Bill given above, taking into full consideration the social and environmental costs of loss of trees and livelihoods, costs of resettlement and rehabilitation, etc.

10.3 NUTP, National R&R Policy and WB OD 4.30 on Involuntary Resettlement to be followed: The road-widening, if necessary, should follow the principles enunciated in the National Urban Transport Policy, i.e. earmark equitable amount of space on roads for non-motorised vehicles and bus rapid transport corridors. **It should make the Karnataka Resettlement Act and National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy applicable to the road-widening project by issuing relevant gazette notifications and follow the norms given therein:** i.e., conduct socio-economic survey and Social Impact Assessment, get SIA Clearance through expert committee, appoint

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Commissioner and Director for R&R Plan, form R&R committees with affected people's representatives, set up grievance redressal and social audit mechanisms. If World Bank loan is being availed of, follow World Bank OD 4.30 on involuntary resettlement.

10.4 Public hearings to be held and BBMP Council to decide: BBMP should decide on the road-widening issue after wide-ranging public consultations and public hearings with affected communities in every ward through the councillors and ward committees. The recommendations from the individual wards should be consolidated at the council level and these discussed in the BBMP Council before a decision is taken on road-widening.

10.5 Invest in Suburban and Circular rail immediately: Instead of road-widening, investing in suburban trains on the semi-circular existing railway tracks, completing the circular rail by additional tracks and creating links to the airport on these existing tracks will save a lot of money proposed to be spent on road-widening and new links to the airport, etc. This can be undertaken immediately.

10.6 Incentivise public transport: More than any other measure, public transport needs to be incentivised to a greater degree by reducing the tax on public buses, which are currently higher than on personal cars. The last mile connectivity from the public bus-stop should be provided by incentivising and promoting a **circular, frequent (every 5 minutes at least) and reliable system of mini feeder buses, cycle-rickshaws or feeder autos that ply in every residential area in Bangalore, which will bring commuters to a bus-stop on an arterial road near-by. From there larger buses at 5-minute intervals should ply along trunk routes** to twelve or more destination bus-stands all around Bangalore, from where commuters can again catch a feeder bus, cycle - rickshaw or feeder autorickshaw to their individual destinations. A reliable and frequent bus transport system will do more than any other measure to de-congest traffic. **By improving the bus system which can reach every nook and corner of the city, the problem of congestion can be solved at one-tenth the cost.**

10.7 Discourage use of personal motor vehicles: Widening roads has never provided the solution for congestion anywhere in the world. Only incentivising public transport and disincentivising private vehicles has led to the more successful de-congestion plans. Measures that discourage the use of personal motor vehicles would be more effective in the long run as has been the experience in several cities, such as London, New York, Singapore, etc.

a. **Higher taxes:** The government would, therefore, have to adopt measures that restrain the use of motor vehicles, through market mechanisms such as higher fuel taxes and longer time taken in travelling by personal vehicles vis-à-vis public transport, etc. It would also have to encourage the use of congestion pricing schemes, requiring the payment of special taxes by personal motor vehicles if they operate in the more congested parts of a city. Restrictions or wait lists could be created for registering new vehicles and / or second and third vehicles, **as in Singapore.**

b. **Higher fees for parking:**

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- ◆ Graded fees for entry into and parking in specific areas should be introduced, i.e., highest in the central core area, lower in the immediate surrounding area and lowest in the outlying areas, that recovers the economic cost of the land used in such parking. The objective would be to persuade people to use public transport to reach city centers.
- ◆ Those parking their second and third vehicles on roads should also be made to pay land rent to the BBMP.
- ◆ Preference in the allocation of parking space for public transport vehicles and non-motorized modes.
- ◆ Multi-level parking complexes should be made a mandatory requirement in city centres.

c. Private-vehicle-free areas: Declaring some areas as private-vehicle-free areas and allowing only public transport on them are other solutions, especially in central core area. Point-to-point buses in the core areas will reduce need for private vehicles. Only cycle-rickshaws (most environment-friendly and labour-intensive) and such modes of traffic could ply in the old 'pete' areas like Avenue Rd, Chickpete, etc., instead of widening these roads, destroying livelihoods and displacing people. If some areas can be declared as 'no-entry zones' for hand-drawn and slow-moving vehicles, some roads can be declared 4-wheeler-free zones as well. Why should only some, and that too the poorer sections, face such hardship.

d. Shared transport and car-pooling: Shared autorickshaws (8-seaters) that ply from point to point would also disincentivise private vehicles, are economical, create more employment and provide a more comfortable alternative to buses to wean away the more affluent from personal vehicles. Shared matadors would also reduce private vehicles. Car-pooling is another solution. Definitely that too should be incentivised and single-driver cars made to pay a fee. Government vehicles in the central core area of Bangalore can be reduced by making several officials share vehicles.

10.8 Set up professional body to study traffic: The Central Government has committed itself to “encourage the setting up of professional bodies that have the capacity to make scientific assessment of the demand on various routes and contract services that can be properly monitored”. Such a body should be created to create the data required to make long-term plans instead of ad hoc and knee-jerk plans.

10.9 Awareness campaigns: De-congestion can be helped much more by launching “intensive awareness campaigns that educate people on the ill effects of the growing transport problems in urban areas - especially on their health and well being”, which the Centre is willing to support. The campaigns should seek their support for initiatives like greater use of public transport and non-motorized vehicles.

10.10 Road-widening should be undertaken only if found necessary, after studying the benefits and impacts on congestion of the Metro, suburban and circular rail, improved bus transport systems (trunk routes with feeder systems) and awareness campaigns.

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These are our suggestions for an integrated, holistic, sustainable and equitable urban transport system for Bangalore. **The onus to establish the rationale, on the same lines, for the current ad hoc decision to widen roads and fell trees, lies on the current decision-makers. Until the rationale and justification for the current decision is established, we request that the plans to widen roads and fell trees be put on hold.**

Looking forward to a favourable response from you. Thanking you for giving us this opportunity to voice our concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Kathyayini Chamaraj
Executive Trustee
For CIVIC
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