Cycling infrastructure can help decongest city traffic

New Delhi, Sept 28 (India Science Wire): The current health crisis has created a gloomy picture through the world. But there are some positive sides too. Reduced vehicular movement has provided us with the opportunity to improve the facilities like transport infrastructure. According to a study conducted by Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI) if proper cycling infrastructure is provided in Delhi dependence on public buses and private vehicles for short trips (6km or less) can be reduced by up to 40% within the next three years.

The study further says that a three-pronged strategy is advisable to adopt in a phased manner Short (within 6 months), Medium (within 1 year) and Long term (1-3 years). The four months long study, started in April has advised that Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) should be encouraged and revived as most of the urban trips are clocked less than five kilometres. “NMT offers perfect opportunity to implement this amid COVID 19 crisis as it requires low cost, less human resource, easy and quick to implement, scalable and environment friendly”, said Dr Mukti Advani, Scientist CSIR-CRRI, who conducted the study. Use of cycle for commuting short distances can also help reduce vehicular congestion and pollution.

Dr Mukti Advani, CSIR-CRRI

The study used projections on commuting patterns and the use of different modes of transport after comparing data from before and after the lockdown. The study utilized secondary data from different sources to project at least a 15% increase in cycling trips from pre-COVID months. It says that traffic on city roads is slowly increasing ever since the government has announced the step by step relaxation in the restrictions imposed to control the spread of the coronavirus under the unlock guidelines. Before the traffic volume again increases on the road like it was there at the time of the pre-COVID level, the government should improve the infrastructure to encourage non-motorised vehicles for short distances.

The study highlighted that the number of bicycle trips estimated for the year 2023 is 10 lakhs if no improvement for bicycling is done. However, if city level bicycle-friendly infrastructure is provided,
this is estimated to be more than 40 lakhs. As per the study, it is estimated that there could be a 21% reduction in the use of two-wheelers, 14% in cars and 11% of Metro and 40% of buses.

“We should utilise this time when the traffic on road is actually very less as compared to before COVID. Currently, a large percentage of the working population is at home. If we can provide the cycling infrastructure now, it will help people gradually get used to it. By second or the third year when the workforce will be back in full strength, cycling, especially for short distances, would have become normal,” said Dr Advani. (India Science Wire)

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