



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Friday 31st February 2020

RV College of Engineering Professor Dr. Radhakrish said about Traffic woes

MANY WAYS, BUT NO WILL

GET A MOVE ON Urban Experts Say City's Traffic Woes Are A Fallout Of Years Of Unplanned Growth, But They Can Be Easily Fixed

SwathyR.Iyer@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: A survey by Tom-Tom, an independent location technology specialist, revealed Bengaluru is the most trafficcongested city in the world, but urban experts say it could be easily decongested if authorities put their mind to it.

From congestion pricing along existing Metro corridors and increasing the fleet of BMTC buses to staggered hours and work from home options, solutions offered by experts are far-ranging.

Rama NS, CEO of Electronics City Industrial Township Authority, which houses a large number of IT campuses, pointed out that staggered office timings, a uniform distribution of office districts and a transit-oriented development approach are some solutions that will ease congestion leading up to Electronics City.

“Having schools, residences and offices all in one place will ensure congestion at certain choke points is eliminated,” she said. “This does not happen in Bengaluru right now, where nothing is this organised. We have implemented several steps to ease congestion inside Electronics City such as synchronising signalling, redesigning toll plazas and improving several junctions. However, traffic congestion ahead of the elevated corridor in BTM Layout is still an issue we have not been able to tackle,” she said.

Congestion pricing

She said schools could also consider letting buses out in batches so as to ease congestion. She said a solution must be found to BWSSB and other agencies rampantly digging up roads, which cause the condition of the road to deteriorate.

Mobility experts recommended occupancy-based congestion pricing as an immediate step to get more commuters to turn to public transport.

“Congestion pricing is the easiest and quickest way to tackle the problem,” said Harsha K, a researcher from Fields of View, a city-based research organisation. “This will push more people towards public transport, carpooling or ridesharing. Revenue generated through congestion pricing can, for now, be given to fundstarved BMTC, which can use it to increase its operational efficiency.”

Harsha went on to say, “Congestion pricing can be easily implemented in places where there is good public transport connectivity such as Indiranagar and Malleswaram which are well-connected.”

Ashish Verma, associate professor, transportation engineering lab, department of civil engineering, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), said the best way to tackle the problem is to drive people out of personal vehicles and into public transportation.

Reducing personal vehicles

“If we want to ensure Bengaluru does not have a bleak future, some immediate measures to be taken include bringing down the share of trips in personal cars,” Verma said. “This is the only way to clear up space and make travel in the city more space-efficient. The city also needs more scientific traffic management practices. People with the right skills must be roped in to improve traffic flow.”

Radhakrishna, head of the civil engineering department, RV College of Engineering, said the reason for the city being ranked at the top for traffic congestion is unplanned growth and unscientifically designed developmental activities.

Poor policing

“Bengaluru has grown without a proper plan and even now, civil projects are taken up without any planning,” Radhakrishna said. “Newly-laid roads are dug up in a matter days and to make matters worse, traffic police are not interested in managing traffic flow. They are more focused on collecting fines.”

Vinay K Sreenivasa, member, Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike pointed out that over the past five years, less than 50 buses have been added to BMTC’s fleet. “Public transport is the most cost-effective and easy solution,” he said. “We must improve reliability of public transport and we need more buses. Metro will not help much since by the time the Metro network is completed, the number of vehicles on city roads would have doubled.”

Joint commissioner of police for traffic BR Ravikanthe Gowda did not respond to multiple calls and messages over two days.