

Pro-poor mobility - Policy guidelines and case studies

Executive summary

Mobility has a critical role to play in the socio-economic development of the population. Provision of adequate and quality mobility choices for all sections of the society is being widely recognized as a mainstream challenge for the cities in the developing countries where demand-supply mismatch is commonplace and cities encounter high levels of spatial and temporal imbalances in transport supply. The low income population and the urban poor are the most affected because of the inadequate mobility options in the cities and are also most vulnerable to the negative externalities on account of transportation such as, high levels of emissions, traffic congestion, unsafe pedestrian and cyclist environment, poor road safety, etc. Therefore, the cities in developing countries face a twin challenge of augmenting the transport supply, especially to meet the mobility demand of low income groups and at the same time to limit the negative impacts of transportation to the minimum.

Enhancing mobility options for poor is of prime importance to the cities as mobility is the first step to improve the socio-economic conditions of the poor population, as higher mobility implies higher access to socio-economic opportunities. A pro-poor mobility approach while planning for transportation is important as it is this section of the society, which faces severe mode-choice constraints, due to the inability to own personal modes, low levels of affordability for public transport services, locational disadvantage and unusual demand character (e.g. long-distance travel in odd hours – early mornings and late evenings).

It has been observed that non-motorized transport (NMT) i.e. walking and cycling is the primary modal choice for poor. For distances which cannot be traversed by either pedalling or walking, the poor depend on the cheapest available mass motorized options, like public buses, but only if they are affordable. If public transportation is not accessible to low-income population, either due to financial, spatial or temporal constraints, then they depend on different ad-hoc transport solutions to meet their mobility requirements.

Efforts are being made to improve the existing transportation systems, with special consideration being given to evolve more efficient and pro-poor transport systems. There is a need to learn from such successful initiatives in order to replicate and scale up the tested pro-poor mobility solutions. The report on 'Pro-poor mobility - Policy guidelines and case studies' consists of 50 best practices on pro-poor mobility solutions from across the developing countries. The compilation of case studies is intended at providing information on the kinds of efforts, actions and initiatives that are being undertaken in different parts of the world, and thus help other cities in the developing world to appreciate the importance of pro-poor mobility as a critical component of growth and development of cities and, thereby motivate them to prioritize the issue of pro-poor mobility and design appropriate initiatives. The case studies included in the report cover a wide array of actions and approaches, which have been successful in enhancing mobility of poor.

The case studies have been categorized into five sections:

- Organizing informal transport sector
- Reducing environmental impacts of informal transport sector
- Providing public transit connectivity to urban poor areas
- Pro-poor mobility policies and planning
- Pro-poor transport infrastructure planning and development
- Promoting NMT: Innovative pilot projects.

Conclusion

Cities in developing countries are witnessing rapid growth in their population, which is also reflected in a sharp increase in travel demand. Usually, the rise in urban travel demand outpaces the expansion in transport infrastructure and services, creating an acute shortage of transport supply, thereby affecting the socioeconomic development of low income populations. It is now being widely recognized that there is a need to address the mobility concerns of the poor in the most efficient and sustainable manner to ensure equitable socio-economic growth and reducing poverty. The report 'Pro-poor mobility - Policy guidelines and case studies' brings together best practices on pro-poor mobility initiatives from across the developing world. The report is expected to offer useful insights to the cities in the developing countries that are aiming to address the mobility concerns of the poor.

The case studies and best practices presented in the report highlight different types of pro-poor mobility initiatives ranging from provision of public transport and NMT infrastructure to improvement of the informal transport sector. The best practices relating to informal transport sector improvement from cities in India, Indonesia, South Africa, etc., highlight that most of these initiatives have been taken up by individuals, without any government support. The majority of the initiatives involve small actions, but such actions have changed the entire socio-economic and mobility scenario in the context area, by significantly improving the condition of operators, as well as increasing the level of mobility. Some of the case studies on informal transport sector improvement from Bogota and Dar-es-Salaam indicate the kind of actions that can be adopted by governments to improve the informal sector. These case studies show that government can intervene through legislative reforms and incentive-based policies to encourage the informal transport sector to become more efficient, complimentary to existing public transportation and eco-friendly.

The case studies also provide some insights into solutions for improvement of environmental performance of the informal transport sector and indicate that the city governments would have to play a pro-active role to limit environmental pollution caused by informal transport modes, while also ensuring that the levels of mobility offered by these modes are not reduced. Case studies from Manila, Ahmedabad and Kathmandu are some of the few examples where the governments have undertaken steps to ensure that the urban poor population is served with eco-friendly fleet. Governments are promoting use of cleaner technology like 4-stroke engines and cleaner fuels like CNG, electricity and solarpowered transport modes to cut-down on emissions.

The best practices in this report also highlight that usually the national and city governments lack targeted policies and plans to deal with mobility concerns of the urban poor. Thus, indicating a need for formulating policies, visions and plans at national and city-level to guide the future actions of cities with regard to pro-poor mobility. Case studies from the Philippines, South Korea and India clearly show the importance of strong policy and vision in achieving pro-poor and people-friendly transport systems. The example of the National Urban Transport Policy of the Government of India indicates the shifting focus of policies in developing world; policies and plans are beginning to realize the importance of people-oriented rather than vehicle-oriented mobility planning. Policies and plans need to promote mobility solutions for the 'people', especially the 'low-income groups', which implies that NMT and public transportation need to be promoted to achieve inclusive development in cities. Case studies from Manila, Seoul, Sao Paolo, etc. show that initiatives like,

developing non-motorized transport infrastructure like, NMT network, bicycle parking, etc. are key to improving mobility options for the poor. In cities where there aren't enough motorized modal choices for the poor, improvement of NMT infrastructure becomes important from the perspective of mobility for poor as the poor are highly dependent on NMT to meet their mobility needs. Some cases indicate that significant improvements in levels of mobility of the poor have been experienced through improvements in NMT network and initiatives like distribution of bicycles among the low-income population. In some cases, linking of low-income residential areas to important activity areas of the city with NMT networks has yielded successful results by directly increasing the socio-economic opportunities for the poor.

Further, the world experience reveals that even capital intensive improvements in public transportation are considered incomplete without improvements in last mile connectivity, for which walking and cycling are the primary modes. The importance of NMT improvements is well demonstrated in examples from Cape Town, Seoul, Marikina, etc. It is important to understand at this point of time that besides government actions, community interventions and pro-activeness can also play pivotal role in development of pro-poor transportation systems, as is demonstrated in case of Bengaluru, Mexican cities, and Hanna-Nassif neighbourhood in Dar-es-Salaam.

The low income population largely depends on public transportation for long-distance commute in the cities, as it is one of the cheapest modes of travel. But, in most of the cities, public transportation is unable to cater to the rising travel demand, which results in overcrowding in buses, inadequate frequency of buses, inadequate spatial coverage of public transport network in the cities, and poor state of public transportation services. In such situations, it is the low-income neighbourhoods, which have to suffer the most due to their locational disadvantage and low levels of affordability. Some of the case studies included in the report highlight measures taken up by the governments in various cities to address issues of inclusion of urban poor in provisioning of public transportation. Examples of BRT system planning from Quito, Ahmedabad, Lagos, etc. clearly depict the efforts undertaken by these cities to cater to the mobility needs of the economically poor section of the society. The best practices presented in this report provide example of various approaches that can be adopted to address mobility concerns of the poor. It is expected that the wide range of case studies and best practices presented in this report along with a set of policy guidelines would assist the cities in the developing world in planning socially inclusive and at the same time environmentally sensitive transport systems that address the mobility concerns of the poor.