

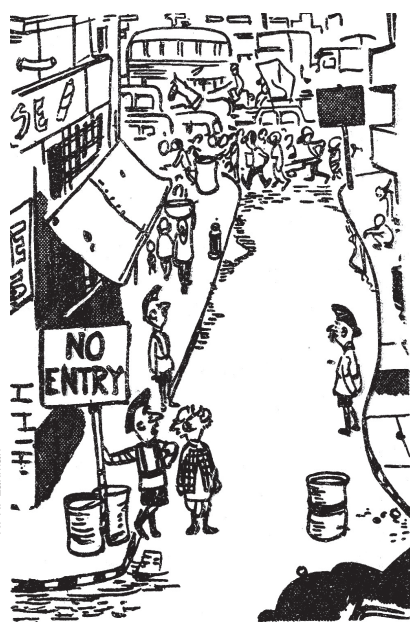


1/2009

# City Matters

25 years  
1983 2008  
CUTS International

## Conversation with Prahlad Singh, Traffic Constable



R. K. Laxman

This is an ideal way, I think to control traffic  
— we've put up a similar sign at the other end too!

While driving towards the Country Inn and Suites Hotel on Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup> of January morning, I was stopped on MI Road by Prahlad Singh, a traffic constable, because Rahul Gandhi's motorcade was hurtling towards the Collectorate. It was an interesting conversation that I had with the constable, as to why they are not as active in regulating the unruly traffic in Jaipur. His nonchalant response was that their duties are mainly to assist the smooth flow of VVIPs and the Jaipur traffic will remain chaotic. So, God help us!



This reminded me of two things: the citizens' outrage in Mumbai, following the carnage on 26<sup>th</sup> November, when people protested wildly against the security arrangements being only for the VVIPs and not for the ordinary citizens, who are paying taxes.

The second is that the traffic scenario in Jaipur is only getting from bad to worse. If one observes the body language of the few traffic constables on our roads, it only shows their callous disinterest in performing their duty. They are not trained, or even motivated, to perform...a serious matter which needs the attention of the police administration in the city.

When Rahul Gandhi addressed the conference on 'Police Performance and Public Perception' at the Rajasthan Police Academy on January 21, 2009, one wonders whether this issue was raised at all. A study done by the noted Massachusetts Institute of Technology was presented at the event. It showed that a little over a third, about 39 percent, of the people fear the police. The survey covered 22,773 people and 3,312 police personnel in Rajasthan.

In terms of following traffic rules, we have seen how this fear works. It is evident in how the two-wheeler riders wear helmets religiously, once the rule was made mandatory, and enforced. It is another story that many carry more than one pillion rider and there is no prosecution at all...it has become an acceptable 'crime'.

In fact, it is the two-wheelers in Jaipur which are one of the worst offenders. Many of them drive in a suicidal fashion, with little concern for their passengers or other road users. I call these riders a hybrid between a mosquito and a pig. They flit around you like mosquitoes and enter into gaps like pigs, if they can get their noses in. Using a mobile phone while driving is another bane. Two-wheeler riders are often seen with their heads tilted cradling a mobile and talking. Four-wheeler drivers too chat on their phones in spite of it being illegal. There is no fear because there is no prosecution. Consequently, all cars have scars on their body due to the two-wheelers and four-wheelers dashing into them from all sides.

We, the people of India, observe the annual Road Safety Week from first Monday of January for seven days. The shining feature of the Week in Jaipur was to book drivers with alcohol on their breath, thus causing some fear among those who often drink and drive. One good action that the Chief Minister has taken is to curb the opening hours of liquor shops, and cutting down their numbers as well. All these measures will have a salutary effect on not only driving but other aspects of our social life.

*Pradeep S. Mehta*

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

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# Water Crisis: The Urban Water Scenario

With urban expansion, population and lifestyle changes, urban water supply needs often exceed supply and availability. Most urban water supply authorities prefer to respond to this demand-deficit problem by augmenting existing supply via tapping new distant and often costlier water resources. But, there are obvious limits to this approach. It cannot be a permanent solution, because it would not be sustainable in the long run.

Almost all-urban water supply systems are characterised by poor and unreliable water services, predominance of illegal connections, high levels of water losses in conveyance and distribution, low and a biased tariff structure with cross subsidisation between domestic households, industrial and commercial sectors, and low water charge recovery.

Jaipur, which has the second-highest urbanisation rate of 49.35 percent, is facing immense scarcity of potable water. The Rajasthan Urban Housing and Habitat Policy has strongly recommended the need for a water policy, so that every house gets water by the year 2010. The situation is even worse in areas where water availability is restricted due to quality issues.

Over 500 lakh litres of drinking water is lost in Jaipur every day because of the inefficiency of the government. The losses are more than the amount of water supplied to all the villages in Rajasthan.

Figures compiled by the State Government to assess the water supply scene in the State indicate that the PHED is pumping out more than 3,200 lakh litres of water daily for the people of Jaipur. Of this, 500 lakh litres of water never reaches the consumers and goes waste, indicating a daily loss of nearly 22 percent of the total supply. A major portion of this water is lost while it is being transmitted and distributed from the PHED stations to the consumers. The remaining goes unaccounted because of faulty and illegal connections.

The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has formulated 12 drinking water supply schemes, which would transfer water from surface water sources like *Indira Gandhi Nahar Pariyojana* (IGNP) and its various lift schemes, *Chambal River* and *Bisalpur Dam* to the deficient areas. The estimated cost of these projects will be around Rs 6600 crore.

The main reservoirs of the PHED also have major holes. As a result, huge amount of water seeps out. The study conducted by the PHED on water supply systems in the city revealed that the entire system needs to be overhauled, with immediate effect, to contain wastage of water. The State Government has not paid much attention to the water supply infrastructure in the past two decades and as a result, the system has become rusty and full of faults.

The Department has now launched a project for laying a new supply system for the city, with the assistance of the Asian

Development Bank (ADB). A survey of the city has been commissioned with this objective. But, this is unlikely to check the wastage. According to official sources, the Department needs huge amount of funds to stop the uncontrolled flow of drinking water.



## TCS Project

### Before Studies, Video Recording and Conflict Analysis

One research component in the project – ‘Traffic Calming Strategies (TCS) to Improve Pedestrian Safety in India’ – primarily includes Before Studies & Its Analysis. Out of the 31 short-listed sites for the purpose of final selection for ‘Before Studies’, the behaviour of traffic at each site was observed and analysed, and compared with the First Information Report (FIR) data collected from various police stations across Jaipur city.

Till date, the team has successfully completed video recordings at 21 locations across the city. Almost six and half hour per day recording is done at each identified study site for four days.

All the video footages would be analysed, identifying the total number of severe conflicts per site against which some measures would be suggested to the concerned authorities. This will help to reduce the number of accidents in the future. The process has already started with the initially chosen seven sites: *Gopalpura Crossing*, *Pinjarpole Goshala*, *Sector 3*, *Haldi Ghati Gate*, *RIICO Gate*, *Galta Crossing* and *Phakiron Ka Mohalla*.

Once the implementation of the suggested model takes place, another important study part, i.e. ‘After Studies’ would be conducted on sites, which would help these authorities to think of implementing similar measures across the city of Jaipur, reducing the number of ever increasing road accidents.





Jaipurites endure appalling road conditions across the city with the hope that improvements in the upkeep and repair of roads will sooner than later catch the attention of those incharge of this basic civic amenity. People from various walks of life have stressed that the government should re-work on the city infrastructure plan and have demanded more than 50 percent of funds for maintaining road and sewerage system in the city.

People of the city believe that poor condition of roads is due to the lack of coordination between various government departments. Every now and then, city roads are dug up by Water Works, Electricity or Sewerage department making the situation worse. Many feel that administration wakes up only when a problem arises. For instance, only in rainy season does it think of working on sewer lines and roads. Some others feel that while Jaipur city roads are witnessing a heavy rush due to increase in number of vehicles and lack of parking space is assuming critical dimensions, the government is prioritising upgradation of the highways.

Faulty construction of speed breakers have added to the problems on the roads. These have been constructed on accident-prone sites but many lack white and yellow stripes causing accidents particularly at night. Lack of proper marking on the speed breakers causes problems for the drivers, as they cannot

see them from a distance forcing them to apply sudden brakes. Three speed breakers were constructed on *Gopalpura bypass* but the concerned authorities failed to put proper white-coloured stripes on the speed breakers. Similar situation is evident in other locations like *Jagatpura bypass*, *Royalty Tri-junction*, *Pratap Nagar*, *Vaishali Nagar*, *Shastri Nagar* etc.

The concerned authorities ignore the guidelines of the India Road Congress, which specifically says that there should be two types of speed breakers in the residential and accident-prone areas. Roads with heavy traffic should have breakers with a width of 5 metres and a 10 cm raised centre and a slope of 1.5 metre on both the ends. Roads with light traffic should have 3.7-metre wide speed breakers with a 10 cm raised centre forcing the vehicle to cross at a speed limit of 25 km per hour. Locations that require zero limits should have speed breakers in form of hurdles/rumble strips (multiple speed breakers).

After reviewing and analysing the existing road conditions of Jaipur city, experts from Malviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT) are of the opinion that every speed breaker should be ideally marked with yellow and white stripes with a warning indication at a distance of 40 metres making drivers aware of a speed breaker ahead.

The Chief Minister (CM), Ashok Gehlot, seems to be aware of the problems

experienced by common citizens while moving on any of the city roads. Expressing his concern over the high casualty rates in road accidents in the State, he has constituted a high power committee to suggest ways to control the menace. The committee will suggest measures to control overloading, over speeding and road quality improvement.

Importantly, the CM feels that amendments/modifications in State Traffic Laws are needed, which may create safer roads for all. He wants to identify some credible non-government organisations (NGOs) that are working on traffic awareness programmes and could be taken on board in creating discipline on roads and awareness in big cities of Rajasthan like Jaipur. He directed the concerned Public Works Department (PWD) to carry out necessary modifications in the accident-prone areas and install signboards and speed breakers at junctions on a priority basis. He allotted Rs10 crore for repainting of road marks, construction of the dividers and other such works.

This is the time for the concerned departments to not only act in terms of bringing small, innovative and technically acceptable changes on the roads but also involve NGOs in creating awareness on road safety issues and involvement of technical experts or referring to the road research studies prior to bringing some changes on city roads.

### Special Buses for Women

In a bid to facilitate women going to work, the Rajasthan Roadways would be launching eight special buses for women in the city. The buses would criss-cross the city and head towards the secretariat area at specific hours and would allow only women travellers.

According to Vijay Gandhi, General Manager, Operations, "We have been studying the flow of traffic for quite some time. The office hours are very rushed and it becomes a cumbersome task for women to travel in buses during these hours. Therefore, we decided to launch the special buses for women".

(Tol, 03.02.09)

### Metro Train in 2 Years

Calling Jaipur the most suitable place for setting up a metro network in the desert state, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Managing Director E Sreedharan said that if the government gave him a

proposal, a survey could be completed within nine months.

However, he had not received any proposal from the state government so far. He said the final reports of setting up metro services at Pune, Cochin, Lucknow and Ludhiana have already been submitted and that wherever the project was being implemented it was being shared at 50:50 ratio between the state and the Centre. (RP, 05.02.08)

### Addressing School Fees Hike Issue

The unprecedented fee hike by unaided schools in the city took a political turn when parents' association met Chief Minister, Ashok Gehlot.

He assured them of taking measures to check the abrupt fee hike by school management and claimed the issue is on the government's priority list. He said that there should be a regulatory body which governs the fee structure of private schools. (Tol, 28.12.08)

### More Ventilators Needed

The government hospitals in Jaipur are facing severe shortage of essentially required life saving equipment – Ventilators. Conditions are so acute that sometimes the ventilators are being allotted to the patients on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Most of the cases being brought to Sawai Man Singh Hospital, Jaipur are referred from other small hospitals, but unfortunately are not treated adequately because of shortages in life saving equipments.

Out of 47 existing ventilators at SMS, eight are out of order. Same is the case with J K Lone Hospital where the quantity is much less than required. Therefore, special budgets should be allotted to arrange at least 50 ventilators for SMS, 20 for J K Lone and 15 for T B Hospital. (RP, 29.12.08)

### Electricity Boxes: A Threat

Taking a forward step towards the embellishment of Jaipur city, the Electricity Companies removed the hanging wires from the streets and laid them beneath the ground but invited major problems in the form of Connection Pillar Boxes.

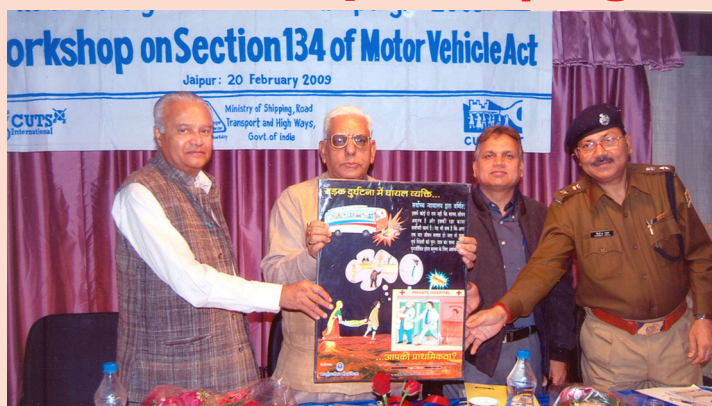
These boxes are mostly installed in inappropriate positions in narrow lanes, which is a cause of concern for the people living in these localities. They reported that the boxes not only cause accidents but being haphazardly placed also give electrical shocks to the passerby. (DB, 16.02.09)

### New Parking Policy for the City

With the heavy increase in the number of private vehicles, the parking problems in Jaipur are getting worse day by day. The current parking policy – designed and enforced by Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) – is being reviewed to provide benefits to the contractors under Transfer of Development Rights.

A decision has been taken in a meeting of Traffic Control Board, conducted on February 09, 2009 to prepare a 'Base Paper on Future Parking Policy'. P K Pandey, Chief Town Planner has been assigned to prepare this Base Paper to modify the existing parking policy of Jaipur. (RP, 25.02.09)

## Road Safety Campaign



L TO R: PRADEEP S MEHTA, SECRETARY GENERAL, CUTS; BRIJ KISHORE SHARMA, TRANSPORT MINISTER; NIRANJAN ARYA, TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER; AND VIJENDRA JHALA, SPTRAFFIC

CUTS, with the support of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), New Delhi, has organised various road safety awareness programmes since January 2009, which concluded on February 24, 2009. Activities include: Eye Testing Camps, Glare Recovery and Reaction Time Tests and Road Safety Training Workshops for RSRTC drivers. Besides, two workshops on Section 134 of Motor Vehicle Act were organised which attracted a variety of stakeholders including school children, teachers, medical practitioners, officials from traffic and transport department, traffic wardens, representatives from civil society organisations etc.

CUTS put up a stall displaying road safety initiatives at Jawahar Kala Kendra on January 05, 2009 as per invitation from the Transport department in connection with the road safety week 2009. Honourable Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot visited CUTS' stall (with the staff) and appreciated CUTS' concern towards road safety. Brij Kishore Sharma, Transport Minister was the chief guest of the workshop on Section 134 of Motor Vehicle (MV) Act held on February 20, 2009.

Sources: DB: Dainik Bhaskar; RP: Rajasthan Patrika; Tol: Times of India