

Exercise India, for a better health...

The extreme cultural diversities in India, lets you experience many kinds of solutions for mobility. There's luxurious transport next to an over crowded rickshaw with pitiful condition of people in it.

Many cities in India have a concept of 'Share Rickshaw', this means the rick driver runs between two points, picking up people at different locations. The rates are generally fixed and very cheap, and since its a daily activity hardly any passengers bother to ask the amount, everyone knows how much to pay.

In states like Gujarat this concept works well, it is kind of a better improved version of the BUS service, since its faster and stops only for a few passengers. The rickshaws are in abundance and not many want to travel through this medium, hence, it is a balance and one rickshaw fills up to its correct capacity of 4 people. Sometimes its 5 but still its not a very unsafe situation. The design of the rickshaw definitely can be improved but still its an evolved design, quite difficult to challenge.



Where as the same concept works in danger of lives in many states that are poorer and does not have many rickshaws to cater to the daily commuting passengers. They get much crowded, with cramped sitting, standing, or other uncomfortable postures and often lingering out of the design, leaving no inch of space and raising risk of falling off resulting in to an accident.

Its not surprising for people living in India to hear or see about this, and the sensitivity towards it is lost. May be this is the reason why the companies say they manufacture User Centric Design – a fancy term to cater to this misery by designing Auto Rickshaws much bigger and with no doors. The seating may seem to be of 9 here as its maximum capacity but I have always seen about 15 to 17 people commuting on this design with a poor engine. There is a reason why I am saying design and not a vehicle – because it is meant to be, it is designed to overload, the driver is happy to earn, the people don't find anything unusual, the company knows about it, and in fact caters to it, and the government ignores it. This is the reality of India and it hurts to find BMWs or Mercs passing by on the same road as if everything is just fine.



I may now come to a suggestive approach, and the first thing I need to say is that this situation I believe is quite unnecessary – there is no good excuse to justify such an unsafe journey. So what if the government does not have money and the people are used to it and the companies don't have sense - forget aesthetic sense, not even to safety. There are still solutions possible and the roots lie in design – a system design.

An improved private transport infrastructure can be in place say using CNG, the newest popular source of fuel in India. This could well make money and be popular amongst the commuters. An Industry - Government initiative is possible and the only ingredient required is 'concern'. Let me as well clarify a doubt, India really does not need charity in today's scenario, there is enough man-power, and enough funds. All it needs is balance, initiatives, directions and 'planned', or rather 'pre-planned' systems, and not those that get randomly evolved out of need.

A solution may be a Bus transport system, and it is not an innovation, right? But well I don't think we always need innovations, many times only a connection is required. A system that caters to smaller packets of group mobility with safety like the smaller sized rickshaws in the state of Gujarat can be introduced here. All of this and much more is possible.

India needs concerned people in power, thinkers, business thinkers, system designers, product designers and entrepreneurs to work together to break the evolved undesired systems and introduce better ones that can sustain and grow. There are ample opportunities here and no excuse good enough to justify why they still remain; – 'Opportunities'.

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