

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS, URBAN TRANSPORT & CLIMATE CHANGE

*Financial Assistance for Purchase of Buses under
Public Transport Project in JnNURM*

The Allahabad Public Transport System

Vigyan Foundation
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The public transport services in Uttar Pradesh are provided by the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC). However the UPSRTC mainly serves on the long distance inter-city routes and does not provide services for the intra-city transport. In most of the cities in Uttar Pradesh the intra-city public transport services are provided by the individual private vehicles. These mostly consist of mini-buses, three-wheeler shared tempos, autos, cycle rickshaws etc.

To improve the intra-city public transport in the cities of Uttar Pradesh, the Financial Assistance for Purchase of Buses under Public Transport Project or the Bus Funding Project was sanctioned in seven cities of Uttar Pradesh under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM). A total of 1,310 buses were sanctioned for Uttar Pradesh of which 150 were marked for Allahabad. The cost of the project is divided among the Centre, State and Urban Local Bodies, with 50% of the project cost funded by Centre, 20% by the State, and 10% each by UPSRTC, the concerned City Municipal Corporation, and the concerned City Development Authority. The cost of depots, ITS, and the maintenance and running of the buses has to be borne by the Municipality /ULB.

This project was part of the 2nd Economic Stimulus Package announced by the Government of India on Jan 02, 2009, to deal with the global financial crisis. The project was supposed to give a boost to spending and investment in the Indian economy and revive the automobile sector. By Feb. 26, 2009 the Central Sanctioning & Monitoring Committee (CS&MC) under JnNURM sanctioned the Bus Funding Project for 55 cities to purchase a total of 14,240 buses at a total cost of about Rs 5000 crore, and the release orders for the 1st instalment of Central share of funding were issued by the Finance Ministry by March 06, 2009, although the final Detailed Project Reports for these projects have been submitted much later.

Bus Funding Project in Allahabad

Allahabad is the seventh-most populous city in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The Allahabad Metropolitan Area spreads over 2261 sq.km and has a population of 12.17 lakh, of which 11.17 lakh people live in an area of 82 sq.km under the Allahabad Municipal Corporation.

The city has about 5.0 lakh registered vehicles and public transport consists of only 36 UPSRTC buses. Most of the local commute is served by the 226 privately operated mini-buses, 995 tempos, a number of autos, and cycle rickshaws. The Bus Funding Project was sanctioned in Allahabad to improve the public transport system of the city, and to decrease the dependence on private motorized transport modes. Presently there is an increase in personalized transport vehicles numbers, due to the low and unreliable nature of public transport. The aim of this Project is to provide an efficient, reliable, and cost-effective public transport solution.

The total cost of the 150 buses approved for Allahabad under the Bus funding project in JnNURM is Rs 28.70 crore. Of these 150 buses: 60 are semi-low floor, 900mm, non-AC; 20 are semi-low floor, 650mm, non-AC; 10 are low floor, 400mm, non-AC; and 60 are mini-buses. A public company, Allahabad City Transport Services Ltd. was formed in 2010 to operate these buses in Allahabad.

Study: In 2014 a study was carried out in Allahabad by Vigyan Foundation:

- To see whether public participation was there during the implementation of this project.
- To see whether this project has helped the transportation needs of the people.

Methodology

A survey was carried out among 100 respondents who used the different modes of public and private transport. The survey asked respondents about the improvements in the public transport and changes in travel time and cost before and after the public transport buses came into place. They were also asked about the mode of transport that they used. Additionally, public participation in project, from the planning stage to the implementation stage was also asked about.

The survey was carried out in March 2014.

Respondents

Sampling was carried out randomly, with the surveyors going to different points in the city, so as to get a diverse sample. Other general information was also gathered from the respondents like type of housing, employment, monthly income, and access to services like water and sewerage etc. This gives a good socio-economic background of the respondents. For this purpose the housing, and income and livelihood data is presented below while the other details are presented later.

Housing

The survey found that 54% of the respondents live in pukka houses, 28% in semi-pukka houses, and 18% in kuchha houses. On the ownership status of the houses/land 12% of the people responded that they own the houses they live in, 28% responded that they live on rent, and 16% responded that they own the land but do not possess the papers. It is important to note here that during the survey it was found that 12% of the respondents live in the near-by villages adjacent to the city and commute daily to the city for work. The City Bus Services have been recently extended to some of these areas.

Income and Livelihood

The survey found that 60% of the respondents had temporary nature of work and lacked security of employment, and only 40% were permanent, while 68% are skilled workers and only 32% are unskilled or semi-skilled workers. 89% of the respondents were employed in the unorganised sector. The income distribution of the respondents is given in Table 1 and Table 2 gives the type of work people are practicing. It can be seen that only 16% people earn more than Rs 10,000, while 52% people earn below Rs 5,000 a month. Also the largest section of people 40% are self-employed, which is followed by other types of employment, and only 20% of people are salaried. Comparing this income distribution data and type of employment with the nature of work shows that most of the self-employed and temporary workers earn very less, although most of them are skilled workers.

TABLE 1: MONTHLY INCOME

Monthly Income (Rs)	Percentage
Below 5,000	52
5 – 10,000	32
Above 10,000	16
Total	100

TABLE 2: TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment	Percentage
Self-employed	40
Salaried	20
Labour	8
Other	32
Total	100

Awareness of the respondents about the project and public participation

The respondents were asked about the project, if they knew under which scheme it was being implemented. Only 6% people knew the name of the Mission under which this project is being sanctioned. When asked if there was any public consultation before the implementation of the project, none of the respondents knew about such a process. Additionally, the minutes of CS&MC repeatedly notes that the Centre continuously asks the ULBs to take immediate time-bound action for submitting the DPRs, the project endorsements by the State Level Sanctioning Committee, and fulfilling other requirements. It was even suggested by the CS&MC to shorten the tender notice period in view of the fact that this project is being taken up under the economic stimulus package. So no participation of the local people was there in the implementation of the project.

Means of travel

Table 3 describes the different means of transport of the respondents. For long commutes 48% of the people responded that they use bus or tempo, 40% use auto, and 12% use two-wheelers. However most of the people responded that for short distances they usually walk, cycle, or take a cycle rickshaw.

TABLE 3: MODE OF TRAVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Mode of Transport	Percentage
Bus & Tempo	48
Auto	40
2-wheeler	12
Total	100

Travel time & Cost

52% people said that there is no change in the travel time or cost, while 36% percent people reported a decrease in the travel cost and 12% people reported a decrease in travel time. Most of these people however travel from the villages outside the city to which earlier there were no public transport was available. The people living in the city reported no change, pointing out that the condition of road is so bad that it does not make any difference if one travels by bus or tempo. However the biggest problem reported by the people was that of un-fixed / unregulated timing of the buses and tempos.

Opinion based questions

The respondents were also asked some opinion-based questions during the survey about the changes in status of public transport services. The response to questions about improvement in transport are listed below in Table 4.

TABLE 4: IMPROVEMENT IN TRANSPORT

Question	Yes	No
Increase in no. of buses?	32%	-
Travel has become Comfortable?	32%	-
Improvement in Public Transport?	32%	-
Improvement in Traffic Signalling?	-	84%
Decrease in Traffic Congestion?	0%	100%
Crossing a Road has become easier?	0%	100%
Decrease in Traffic Accidents?	0%	100%
Increase in Women Safety?	0%	100%
Increase in Pollution?	84%	-
Increase in no. of Cars?	32%	-

Some questions about the change in availability of space for different modes and transport and other livelihood activities were also asked. The response to these questions are listed in Table 5.

TABLE 5: ROAD SPACE		
Space on road for:	Increased	No
Pedestrians?	0%	100%
Cycle?	0%	100%
Cars & Private vehicles?	100%	0%
Bus and Public Transport?	100%	0%
Hawkers & Vendors?	64%	36%
Labour chowks / markets?	44%	36%
Auto Rickshaw Stand?	44%	36%
For parking?	100%	0%
Public Convenience and Toilets?	44%	-

Thus some of the respondents feel that number of buses have increased and public transport has improved, but none of the respondents felt that there has been any decrease in traffic jams, and accidents, neither the safety of women has increased nor the traffic signalling or road safety. However, the number of buses has increased and the travel has become more comfortable.

Additionally, respondents felt that the space for pedestrians and cycles have decreased, while that for cars, buses, and parking of vehicles have increased. Some people responded that the public conveniences and toilets on roads have increased but there was mixed response for questions on increased space for hawkers, auto stands, and labour chowks.

60% of the people also reported that the public transport system in the city is not according to the city requirements, and 100% people said that the roads in the city are not according to the people's requirements. People said that there is no space for pedestrians or cycles in the whole city. The City Development Plan also notes that of the total number of fatal accidents that happen in the city, the victims are cyclists and pedestrians in 41.26% of the cases and two-wheeler riders in 30.53% of cases. It was also noted that 59% of these accidents are caused due to heavy vehicles, and 22% are caused due to speeding cars, jeeps etc.

Other Transport Infrastructure

On a question about the status of concurrent infrastructure, namely bus stations, bus depots and terminals as well as ITS etc. that the State Government and Urban Local Body were required to set up under the project, neither was there any information available, nor these could be seen anywhere on the ground. Under the initial project sanctioned these infrastructure components accounted for 29.7% (Rs 16.08 out of 54.08 crore) of the budget; however this budget was later reduced from Rs 54.08 crore to Rs 27.80 crore.

In August 2012 it was reported that the of total cost of the 7 projects in 7 cities of Uttar Pradesh under which a total of 1,310 buses were sanctioned, only 1,140 buses were purchased, and Rs 335 crore has been spent. Of this cost 50% was provided by the Centre, 20% by the State, and the remaining 30% by the concerned ULBs. The operation and maintenance cost was also provided by the concerned ULBs. It was reported that this has resulted in a loss of Rs 180 crore for the ULBs. In September 2013 it was again reported that for Allahabad only 130 buses have so far been procured against the sanctioned 150 buses.

Other general survey questions

Housing: 20% people said that they have built their own home, while 52% said that they got it built through a local contractor, and 28% people live on rent. On the question of the size of house 12% people reported to live in a dwelling unit of less than 10 sq.mt, 28% in 10-25 sq.mt, 24% in 26-50 sq.mt, and 36% in 51-100 sq.mt.

Toilets: 48% said that they had pukka toilet and bathing space, 20% and 24% said that they use public toilet and have kuchha bathing space respectively, while 32% and 28% reported to go in the open. However, only 31% people have individual taps for water supply, 64% depended on the common municipal tap, and 5% on other sources. All the 100 people reported that they have open drainage system which is a cause of several problems.

Livelihoods: The number of family members as reported by all the respondents was quite high between 8 to 10, and the number of working members between 2 to 3. Highest number of people reported that they carried out their work from the roadside: 29%. Other places for work were reported to be as follows: 16% in offices, 4% in factories, 11% in shops, 9% in houses, and 31% in other places. The number of working hours for most of the people was very long. 9% workers worked for 8-10 hours a day, 25% worked for 10-12 hours, 60% worked for 12-14 hours, and 6% workers worked for 14-16 hours daily.

People described several problems that they face at work. Of those working as self employed: 30% said they have to pay bribes, 23% said that there is lack of opportunity, 20% said that the market is not stable, 10% said they are unable to access credit, another 10% said that they lack skills, while 17% said that they are unable to sell their products due to competition.

Of the other workers: 27% said that there is lack of work, 24% said that they do not get minimum wages, 42% said that they are harassed at the workplace.

Organisation: 68% of the people said that they are associated with community based organisations, from which they do get some help from time to time.

Conclusion

The Allahabad Funding for Buses under Public Transport Project was launched with the objectives of providing a reliable, timely, fast, high quality and pollution free public transport service to the people. The Bus Funding Project was sanctioned to improve the public transport system of the city, and to decrease the dependence on private motorized transport modes. It was supposed to be an efficient and cost effective solution to the problems faced by the people during daily commuting.

However, our survey shows that although the number of buses for public transportation in the city has increased which has somewhat improved the transport system and increased the comfort of travel, but there is no fixed time of buses, nor are they any better than the tempos.

Also there is no improvement in the traffic congestion, number of accidents, safety or decrease in pollution. It is true that providing 150 buses could not be expected to eradicate all these problems; however each transport project is supposed to be based on the findings of a City Mobility Plan (CMP).

And before finalising this project also the ULBs were supposed to prepare a CMP. The CS&MC has even made it mandatory to finalise the CMP for the release of the second instalment of this project. But on the other hand it has been pushing to fast track the project as it was a part of Second Economic Stimulus Package, and it finally overlooked its own requirement and released the 2nd instalment. This clearly shows a top-down planning approach, which is against the principle of community participation and 74th Amendment promoted through JnNURM.

This resulted in completely zero participation of the people in the designing and implementation of the project. The Quarterly Progress Report of JnNURM Uttar Pradesh of June 2014 even reported that the CMP for all the 7 cities is still to be made.

The range of issues and problems identified and the suggestions and ideas offered by people during this study shows the capacity and need to discuss any project and plans with the people in open forum so as to have a better understanding and grasp and come up with better solutions. This study also shows that due to lack of planning and involvement of the local population before implementation of the project, the project was not much successful and is actually running in a huge loss.



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