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## LUCKNOW CYCLE TRACKS: A PROJECT THAT WENT LIKE A BOMB OR SIMPLY BOMBED?

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**GOMTI NAGAR**

#### ABSTRACT

*As a lead participant in India Smart City Challenge - a competition inspiring innovation in cities to improve the lives of citizens, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) certainly has an edge over the other participants. One important reason for Lucknow being in the list of smart cities is its 102 kms long cycle tracks constructed in different parts of the city. Inspired by the Netherland, Mr. Akhilesh Yadav, who himself is an environmental engineer, conceptualized this plan to battle the ever increasing traffic, deadly accidents and increasing pollution and subsequently protect the environment, nurture health, prevent accidents, reduce pollution, provide safe mode of transportation to citizens and make Lucknow a Cycle Friendly city. The prime purpose behind conducting this study was to find out and understand people's perception towards cycle paths and ascertain the level of congruity between government's initiative of constructing cycle tracks in the city and people's receptivity in terms of its apt usage. A random survey was conducted among 100 people of Lucknow to find out their opinion about the separate cycle paths and the issues involved with it. The study highlighted that nearly 97 % people are aware about cycle paths and almost 77% people consider it as a great initiative. However, one striking fact revealed from this study was that only 24% people use cycle path everyday/ regularly which hints towards unidentified issues and hurdles present on these tracks. The study also focused upon identifying those issues and suggesting feasible solutions. The study concluded that the initiative is certainly great and one of its kind but the government needs to chalk out effective strategies to battle the bottlenecks and promote cycling to make Lucknow as one great cycling friendly city. Due to financial and time constraints, this research is rather limited and the results of this context may not be applied to other.*

#### KEYWORDS

smart city, cycle tracks, perception, safety, environment, attitude and behavior, societal change.

#### INTRODUCTION

In India, Cycle has been the backbone of transportation, especially in rural and town areas. Almost 65% people living in Indian villages use bicycle as an important means of transport. In fact, it is an integral part of many people's life or rather we can call it a specialist's accessory or a symbol of poor man's lifestyle. It is a low maintenance ride and people do not really worry about having the latest model of bicycle. It is more like a reliable and economically feasible companion to them and the older the camaraderie, the better the relationship between the cyclist and the cycle. On the other hand, in case of two and four wheelers, a single damage may incur huge expense on the vehicle owner. Further, cycling has many other positive benefits like sound health, less expenditure, low maintenance cost, reduction in diseases and other health ailments, decreasing air pollution and control on the emission of dangerous gases and energy and money saving. Cycle is a very economical ride with no side effects. India, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, lacs of people use cycle for their daily commuting to work, to access markets, school and other places at a very less expense. So, in a way, cycling has got immense benefits and if a nation wants to develop and sustain mobility, cycling should be promoted in a big way.

Uttar Pradesh, over the last few years, has been progressing in leaps and bounds. The scenario seems to be rapidly changing over here, with no dimension of development being overlooked. The construction of cycle tracks in different parts of the state is a testimony of its development and progress. The Master Plan framed for the construction of cycle tracks in different cities of Uttar Pradesh is mentioned in Table 1. Among all the cities of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow is shown to get the highest number of cycle tracks. It is expected that these 26 Tracks of 102 kms in different parts of Lucknow city would curb the problems arising out of pollution and prevent deadly accidents.

**TABLE 1: APPROVED CYCLE TRACKS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF LUCKNOW**

S. No.	Cities/ Janpad	Number/ Sankhya	Length in Kilometres	Expenditure in Lacs	Task completed	Task left	Remark
1	Lucknow	26	102.81	8885.17	14	12	
2	Agra	1	18.00	3940.59	-	1	Completion date for all the mentioned work is 12/2016
3	Itava	2	26.35	650.42	-	2	
4	Barabanki	1	0.85	77.90	1	-	
5	Faizabad	1	7.60	459.26	-	1	
6	Mathura	1	8.00	2325.65	-	1	
	Total	32	163.61	16338.99	15	17	

Source: PWD Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow Office

#### LUCKNOW CYCLE TRACKS

One of the fastest growing and the largest city, Lucknow, is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. During the last few years, this city has witnessed immense growth and rapid development due to which, practically, most of the open space available has been occupied for construction of residential, commercial and office buildings. Increase in population density of city has resulted into increased pressure on management of services, facilities and amenities. Out of 32 lacs people, around 1.5 lac people use bicycle as a major means of transport. The most common users of bicycle are school students and daily wagers. With the increase in population, the city has paved a way for steady rise in industries and other factors of development leading to Economic growth, which, as a result, has increased the purchasing power of people as they are buying private vehicles. Everyone who can afford can buy a vehicle. There is no such a law to restrain them from doing so. It has resulted into heavy unbalance on the main road which is flocked by all sort of vehicles from cycles to heavy motors. The unbalance and chaos on the main road has led to many accidents and pollution. The urbanization and development in the city is not able to strike a balance with the receding/ depleting eco-system and the available resources.

To battle these bottlenecks, apart from constructing cycle tracks at various locations, the government has actively promulgated the use of non-motorized vehicles like cycle for small distance travel. In an attempt to persuade people to use cycle and cycle tracks, the **LCT (Lucknow Cycle Transport)** system was construed by the government to serve cyclists by providing them a direct, safe route to their destination and encourage cycling to save environment, prevent accident and make this city cycle friendly. To promote cycling, the government of Uttar Pradesh has taken several initiatives like hosting a National Level Cyclist Competition in 2015, distributing 2.5 lac cycles to labour class and the poor, compulsory cycle tracks for upcoming housing projects, installing a 59-feet tall bicycle sculpture in the sprawling Janeshwar Misra Park in Lucknow, deputing men in khaki riding bicycles to keep a tab on bad guys planning a heist in the meandering lanes of Lucknow, investing 167.93 crore rupees for the construction of an eight-lane velodrome in the Guru Govind Singh Sports College, Lucknow, creating a Wats App groups where more than 2000 schools and colleges are linked up and exempting cycle from Value Added Tax (VAT) to a certain limit

Despite the government leaving no stone unturned to promote cycling in a big way among people, these cycle paths still remain deserted and unused at several locations.



**POLLUTION IN LUCKNOW CITY**

Vehicular traffic is the main source of particulate air pollution in Lucknow city. The number of different categories of vehicles registered with RTO (Regional Transport Office) Lucknow is: 18,64,556 as on 31.03.2016 which is 9.06% higher over the last year.

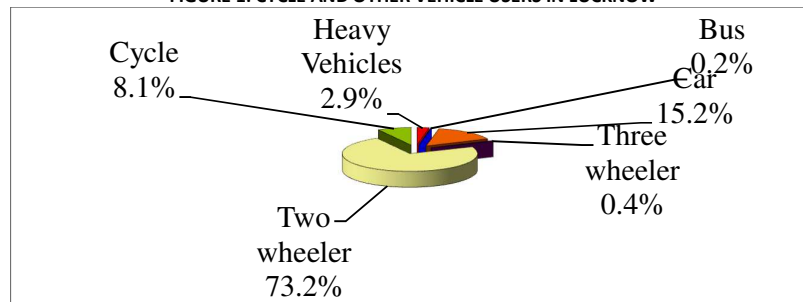
**TABLE 2**  
**Statement Of Area covered by Vehicle on Road**

Type of Vehicles	No. of Vehicles	factor	PCU	Area (SqM)	Area (SqKM)	% Area of Vehicles	% Area occupied on Roads	
Multi Axle Trucks	3514	9.0	31626	458577.00	0.46	2.52	19.91	
Truck	3389	4.5	15251	221132.25	0.22	1.21		
Bus	3306	3.0	9918	143811.00	0.14	0.79		
Tractor	23679	4.0	94716	1373382.00	1.37	7.54		
Tractor + Trailor	1580	4.5	7110	103095.00	0.10	0.57		
Others	4159	3.0	12477	180916.50	0.18	0.99		
4 W+	17541	3.0	52623	763033.50	0.76	4.19		
<b>Heavy Vehicles</b>	<b>57168</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>223721</b>	<b>3243947.25</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>17.80</b>		<b>16.29</b>
Car	9153	1.0	9153	132718.50	0.13	0.73		70.88
3 Seater	4360	1.0	4360	63220.00	0.06	0.35		
6 Seater	3202	1.5	4803	69643.50	0.07	0.38		
Car	244121	1.0	244121	3539754.50	3.54	19.42		
Jeep	26019	1.0	26019	377275.50	0.38	2.07		
Van	439	1.0	439	6365.50	0.01	0.03		
3W	3413	1.0	3413	49488.50	0.05	0.27		
2 W	1361787	0.5	680894	9872955.75	9.87	54.17		
<b>Light Vehicles</b>	<b>1652494</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>973202</b>	<b>14111421.75</b>	<b>14.11</b>	<b>77.43</b>	<b>70.88</b>	
<b>Cycle</b>	<b>150000</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>60000</b>	<b>870000.00</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>4.77</b>	<b>4.37</b>	
				35580738.00	18.23	100.00	<b>91.54</b>	
<b>Vacant Area</b>							<b>8.46</b>	

Source: PWD Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow Office

A graphical representation of the above mentioned table is presented below: The graph clearly shows the steep rise of 73% in light vehicles whereas cycle is just 8%. Despite the infrastructure and the increasing pollution level in the city, cycle users are very less. It's quite challenging to encourage people to use cycles and cycle paths. People having cycles also use the main road for daily commuting.

**FIGURE 1: CYCLE AND OTHER VEHICLE USERS IN LUCKNOW**



Source: PWD Office Lucknow

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**CYCLING AND SAFETY:** Cycling, as compared to any motorized vehicle is safe and convenient. There is less injury risk involved in cycling, in case of any mishap. The following literature reviews attempt to demonstrate and support it. A study done by John Pucher and Ralph Buehler in their paper titled "Making Cycling Irresistible: Lessons from the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany" mentions how riding bicycle for daily commuting is safe and convenient in the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany and suggests that the construction of separate cycle paths along-side the main roads is highly important to achieve high levels of cycling among people. Conor CO Reynolds, M Anne Harris, Kay Teschke, Peter A Crompton and Meghan Winters in their paper titled "The impact of transportation infrastructure on bicycling injuries and crashes: a review of the literature" studied about the role of proper infrastructure and its impact on injury and crash risk. The study revealed that there is higher risk involved in using main roads, multi-use trails whereas separate off- road bike lanes/ cycles paths were associated with low risk. Another study by Kay Teschke, M. Anne Harris, Conor C. O. Reynolds, Meghan Winters, Shelina Babul, Mary Chipman, Michael D. Cusimano, Jeff R. Brubacher, Garth Hunte, Steven M. Friedman, Melody Monro, Hui Shen, Lee Vernich, and Peter A. Crompton in their paper titled "Route Infrastructure and the Risk of Injuries to Bicyclists: A Case-Crossover Study" presents a comparative study of cycling injury risk of 14 route types and other route infrastructure features and concludes that there is less risk involved in having a bike/cycle specific infrastructure as compared to the busy main roads. Proper bike transportation system will lower cycle injury rates, nourish people's health and promote cycling in a big way. Anne C. Lusk, PhD, Patrick Morency, MD, PhD, Luis F. Miranda-Moreno, PhD, Walter C. Willett, MD, DrPH, and Jack T. Dennerlein, in their paper titled "Bicycle Guidelines and Crash Rates on Cycle Tracks" revealed that the risk associated with bicycle crashes is lower in US cycle tracks than the crashes happening on road ways and supports the construction of cycle tracks for convenient and safe commuting. Another paper titled "How to make more cycling good for road safety?" by Fred Wegman, Fan Zhang and Atze Dijkstra highlights the importance of planning and designing safe and separate cycle facilities for promoting cycling. The study again highlighted the higher risk involved in cycling on main roads which are over flocked by speeding vehicles leading to accidents and deaths.

**CYCLING AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** Not much research is available in this area. However, with this amount of study done, it can be said that making a city cycle friendly requires good infrastructure and proper cycling facilities can be a major factor for encouraging cyclists and ensuring their safety. Cycling, for sure can be good, provided, the cyclists have a safe pathway for them. Cycling on main road is more risky and unsafe due to which lot of accidents take place on daily basis.

Improving facilities in this direction by providing extensive infrastructure to the cyclists will go a long way in promoting cycle friendliness, improving health and ensuring safety of the cycle riders. John Pucher and Lewis Dijkstra mentioned in their paper titled “Promoting Safe walking and cycling to improve public health-Lessons from the Netherlands and Germany” that the fatalities and injuries were more in case of American pedestrians and cyclists than the Dutch and Germans, because Dutch and Germans used cycle tracks/ networks for cycling. In the same light, another research by Anne C Lusk, Peter G Furth, Patrick Morency, Luis F Miranda-Moreno, Walter C Willett, Jack T Dennerlein in their paper titled “Risk of injury for bicycling on cycle tracks versus in the street” suggests that the risk of injury on separate cycle paths is comparatively much lesser than bicycling on streets and hence the construction of separate cycle paths for cyclists should be encouraged. Additionally, Beth Thomas and Michelle De Robertis in their paper titled “The safety of urban cycle tracks: A review of the literature” found out that one way cycle tracks are safer than two-way tracks at intersections. By bringing in some tweak in the intersection method, constructing cycle tracks can be safer for cyclists. John Pucher and Ralph Buehler in their another paper titled “Why Canadians cycle more than Americans: A comparative analysis of bicycling trends and policies” found out that the Canadians, despite their cold climate, cycle nearly 3 times more than the Americans and one of the prime reasons for this is extensive cycling infrastructure and proper training programs for cyclists. John Pucher, Ralph Buehler and Mark Seinen in their other research paper titled “Bicycling renaissance in North America? An update and re-appraisal of cycling trends and policies” Cycling has increased in both USA and Canada since the year 2000 and the striking fact revealed here was that these cities have greatly expanded their cycling infrastructure giving us an indication around the significance of proper cycling infrastructure for encouraging cycle riders.

**CYCLING AND HEALTH:** Cycling is associated with many benefits, particularly health and physical fitness. Though not much concrete research is available in this area, however, a study by Jennifer Dill in her paper titled “Bicycling for Transportation and Health: The Role of Infrastructure” highlights the importance of well-connected neighborhood streets and proper cycling infrastructure for encouraging more and more American citizens to do bicycling and thus improving physical fitness. Another study by Kjartan Sælensminde in the paper titled “Cost-benefit analysis of walking and cycling track networks taking into account insecurity, health effects and external costs of motorized traffic” presents the cost-benefit analysis in terms of health, fitness and safety from walking and cycling track networks in three Norwegian cities and concludes that the benefit accrued from investment done in developing cycle networks is almost 4-5 times higher than the investment done in developing some other mode of transportation system. Such kind of investments could be very beneficial to society at large. P L Jacobsen, F Racioppi, H Rutter in their paper titled “Who owns the roads? How motorised traffic discourages walking and bicycling” investigated the result of traffic on level of walking and bicycling and concluded that proper interventions are required to reduce traffic speed and volume in order to promote walking and bicycling and thus resulting in public health gains. Research paper titled “Promoting walking and cycling as an alternative to using cars: systematic review” by David Ogilvie, Matt Egan, Val Hamilton and Mark Petticrew revealed that participants commuting actively in the trial experience witnessed short term improvements in health and fitness indicating the importance of cycling and walking.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objective behind conducting this study was to study people’s perception about these newly constructed cycle paths and see if there is some congruity between the government’s initiative of constructing cycle tracks in the city and people’s receptivity in terms of apt usage of tracks.

**METHODOLOGY**

A survey was conducted in different parts of the city to ascertain the usefulness of these tracks. The selection of respondents was a random process and the sample size was 100 people. The target of this study was to approach maximum number of people, but due to time and finance constraint, the study was limited to 100 respondents. The objective behind interviewing these people was to know the live experiences and difficulties of people using these cycle paths. Subsequently, another prime purpose was to find out whether the newly constructed cycle tracks are being utilized in the right way or it is just a waste of government’s time, money and resources. To find out an answer to these two questions, 100 people from different strata of society were randomly selected and the following questions were asked from them. Some respondents were a little fearful of the questions. Hence, in order to make the survey easy for the respondents, most of the questions were limited to Yes/ No response. Some respondents were also not comfortable answering lengthy questions. Hence questions related to problems and suggestions were provided with some options and space was offered to people who wanted to talk at length. The response received helped in creating a useful framework for developing this paper further.

For an easy interpretation of the survey results, the answer to every question is presented through a histogram, the details of which are mentioned in the next section Findings and Interpretations.

**FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

**INTERPRETATION OF CASE 1**

The first case centered on finding out whether people are aware about the newly constructed cycle tracks or not. The answer was solicited in Yes /No form. The table and histogram below represents the findings:

**TABLE 1: CYCLE TRACK AWARENESS**

Bin	LABEL	Frequency
1	yes	97
2	no	3

In the above histogram and table, 1 stands for ‘Yes’ and 2 is for ‘No’.

From the above table, it can be seen that almost 97% people are aware of the cycle tracks and just 7 % are not aware. This shows that a good number of people are well informed of the government’s initiative. But there are still some who have no clue of the cycle tracks. Although the number is less, but the results may vary with the increase in sample size.

**INTERPRETATION OF CASE 2**

The **second question** focused upon finding out whether this initiative of Uttar Pradesh government is good or not. The answer to this question was again limited to Yes/ No form to stay specific.

Findings and Interpretations are explained through following table:

**TABLE 2: INITIATIVE-GOOD?**

Bin	LABEL	Frequency
1	yes	77
2	no	23

In the above histogram and table 1 stands for ‘Yes’ and 2 is for ‘No’.

From the above table, it can be seen that 77% people consider the construction of cycle paths a good initiative of the Government. However, 23% people feel that it just a waste of time, money, man-power resources and therefore they do not consider cycle tracks a good initiative of the government.

**INTERPRETATION OF CASE 3**

The **third case** digs into the details of number of people riding bicycle. The question asked was “Do you ride a cycle?” and the answer was again limited to ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ form.

Findings are explained through following table

TABLE 3: USE OF CYCLE

Bin	LABEL	Frequency
1	yes	58
2	no	42

In the above histogram and table 1 stands for 'Yes' and 2 is for 'No'.

From the above table, it can be seen that 58 % people said that they ride bicycle which is a positive indication. However, the fact remains that non- riders are no less and it is almost 42% which is not positive. These people have got bicycles but they do not ride them. This needs to be addressed, if the tracks have to be utilized properly.

**INTERPRETATION OF CASE 4**

The **fourth case**, focuses upon finding out how many people actually ride cycles on the tracks and not use the black top or main road. To ascertain the answer to this question, "Do you ride cycles on cycle paths or main road?". The respondents were supposed to answer in 'Yes' or 'No'.

The findings are explained through following table:

TABLE 4: USE OF CYCLE TRACK

Bin	LABEL	FREQUENCY
1	yes	71
2	no	29

In the above histogram and table, 1 stands for 'Yes' and 2 is for 'No'.

From the above table it can be understood that almost 71% people ride bicycles on cycle tracks whereas 29% people ride cycles on main roads.

**INTERPRETATION OF CASE 5**

The **fifth case** emphasizes upon the frequency of cycle tracks usage by cycle riders. The findings are explained through following table:

TABLE 5: DEGREE OF USE OF CYCLE TRACK

Bin	LABEL	FREQUENCY
1	everyday	24
2	never	21
3	once a month	7
4	sometimes	48

In the above histogram and table, 1 stands for 'Everyday', 2 is for 'Never', 3 is for 'once a month' and 4 is for 'Sometimes'.

From the above table it can be seen that most of the people are 'Sometimes' user of the cycle track. It is also noticeable that number of people never using the cycle track and number of people using it every day are almost same, which indirectly hints at the problems and issues involved in using cycle tracks daily/ regularly for commuting in the city.

**INTERPRETATION OF CASE 6**

The **sixth case** tries to find out the reason people do not prefer cycle tracks and ride bicycles on main roads. The findings are explained through following table:

TABLE 6: REASON FOR AVOIDING CYCLE TRACK

Bin	LABEL	FREQUENCY
1	disconnectivity	19
2	lack of lighting	5
3	obstructions	55
4	others	21

In the above histogram and table, 1 stands for 'Disconnected cycle paths', 2 is for 'Lack of lighting', 3 is for 'Obstructions' and 4 is for 'Any other reasons'. From the above table, it can be easily understood that the main reason behind people not using the cycle tracks is hurdles in the way/ on cycle paths. Some people also consider that disconnected paths, risky intersections on cycle paths and improper lighting prevented them from using the tracks. Some people also gave their own views for this question.

**INTERPRETATION OF CASE 7**

The **seventh case**, underscores different suggestions received by respondents for encouraging more and more people to ride bicycles on these paths. In order to prevent distraction and avoid communication barriers, certain options were provided to the respondents.

The findings are explained through following table:

TABLE 7: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Bin	LABEL	FREQUENCY
1	awareness	13
2	proper linking	26
3	Remove obstruction and hurdles and regular maintenance of tracks	44
4	other	17

In the above histogram and table 1 stands for 'Awareness', 2 is for 'Proper Linking', 3 is for 'Removing hurdles' and 4 is for 'Any other suggestions'

From the above table, it can be seen that most of the people suggest that the hurdles on cycle paths should be removed. Proper connectivity between tracks is also suggested by good number of people. Some people also suggested that there should be a provision to send complaint letter directly to CM and so on.

**Some more dignitaries from the city were interviewed to understand their perception about the same.**

**Mr. Rajshekhar, Former District Magistrate Lucknow, said,** "No one can deny that it is the best mode of transport. It's a very unique project and first of its kind in India and especially the objective behind this is to provide a safe pathway for the cyclists. So, this is a new beginning of the good way of local transport and a healthy way. Many people have shifted from the conventional way of transport like bike, scooter etc. to a cycle. And now it has become a healthy symbol of the transport." This mode of transport will certainly help in reducing the air pollution.

**Mr. V K Singh, Chief Engineer, Central zone, Lucknow, Public Works Department: also the Nodal person for this project said,** "Cycle is a good mode of transport and cycle track project is a great initiative but it is clutched by some bottlenecks which are Cyclists and Pedestrians do not feel their ownership on the main road. By ownership I mean a sense of security. The tracks are not linked with each other due to the non- availability of sufficient road width at some places. The most important one is the Encroachment by local vendors, sellers, residents, etc. Local residents find it very problematic because their houses are situated by the sides of cycle tracks.

**RESULTS**

From the above survey results, it is clearly evident that investment made by the government is not considered a waste by general public as nearly 77% people appreciate the concept of cycle tracks in Lucknow. However, a major concern which arises out of this study is that almost 58% people like to use these tracks for riding bicycles and remaining 42% people do not like to use cycle tracks and only 24% people use the tracks daily. A deeper probe into the same concern highlighted the main causes of not using these tracks. The most important of all is hurdles on tracks in the form of potholes, trees planted in the MIDDLE of these tracks,

uneven construction, vendors, squatters and hawkers blocking the paths for commercial activities, stray animals using the paths as shelter, local residents parking their vehicles on these paths and lack of regular maintenance of the tracks. The second important cause of not using cycle tracks is disconnectedness of tracks at various locations. This disconnectedness causes too much inconvenience to the riders as they have to ascend and descend these tracks several times before arriving at their destination. Hence the riders find the black top/ main road more comfortable for them.

## CONCLUSION

The study clearly indicates that Lucknow Cycle Tracks Project is considered a great initiative, a wonderful concept by maximum number of people. For promoting more and more people to use cycle tracks, proper infrastructure is very important. To an extent, Lucknow city has already got it but the chink in the armor in form of several hurdles which discourage cycle riders from using it, can be worked upon and removed by taking appropriate action. This project was inspired by cycle paths in the Netherlands. Today, Netherlands has got one of the best cycle transport facilities in the world. However, to come to this level, the Netherlands took 20 years and in case of Lucknow it is just 2 years of progress. With time, the bottlenecks may be removed and more and more people can be motivated to use these paths. Hence the government should chalk out effective strategies to remove various hurdles from tracks and motivate more and more people to ride bicycles and use tracks for their safety.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Keeping in mind the issues raised in this study, the government should launch more awareness programs through TV/Radio/Social media platform and simultaneously work on battling the bottlenecks present on these cycle paths. Since 93% of communication impact is visual, more and more advertisement could be done through several media and particularly the endorsement by roping in some celebrity can be a great way to start off. Frequent training/ awareness programs for cyclists and non-cyclists and including local residents, cycle association for keeping a close watch on the miscreants will help cyclists in a big way.

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