

Rethinking a cycle friendly Kolkata

Overview

The marginalised who have no access to other modes of mobility, use cycles as their only mobility option. Therefore, cycle restrictions can have a significant impact on the lives and economy of urban societies. This info brief moves to explore how bicycles can help enable livelihoods of communities and provide critical support to urban economies.

A livelihood necessity



13% of people in India cycle to their place of work every day *(Scroll, 2015)*



In Mumbai, “**Cycle Chala City Bacha**” programme supports low-income household women by providing them free cycles. *(Times of India, 2021)*



In Kolkata, cargo cyclists are central to the city’s informal economy. *(The Conversation, 2018)*



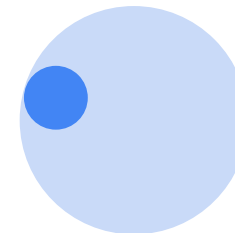
Zomato has over **5,000 cyclists operating across 12 cities** including Kolkata for delivery under distances of 2.5 kilometres. *(The Hindu, 2019)*

Major Roadblocks



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of Kolkata’s cyclists come from the working class. *(Scroll, 2017)*



● Total transport share ● Share of cycles

Although cycle share has increased by **10.5 times between 2013 and 2020**, cycles currently form **only 7% of the total transport share**. *(SwitchON Foundation, 2021)*



However, the lack of a cycling ecosystem and infrastructure in India prevent many urban citizens from switching to this eco-friendly mode of transport.

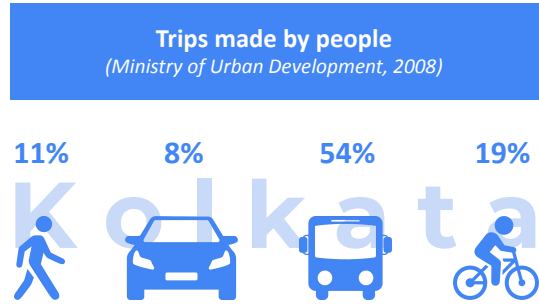
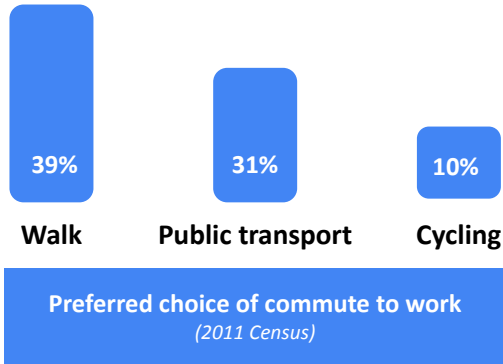
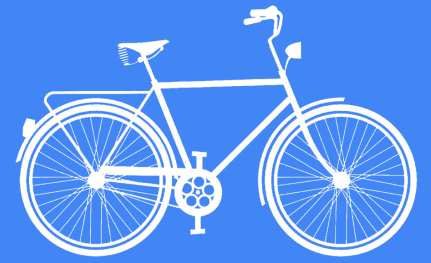


Where does Kolkata stand



Livelihood

Status based on cycling in Kolkata



Most riders of cycles in Kolkata are livelihood-based cyclists (WRI, 2020)

Way Forward

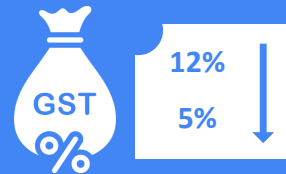
Translating economic benefits of cycling to people

India can save over Rs 1.8 lakh crore (\$255 billion) annually by adopting cycling to work (even for short distance travel) on a daily basis (TERI, 2019)

₹ 1.8 LAKH CRORE

Improve affordability of bicycles

Bicycles should be made more affordable for low-income households. This could be achieved by **reducing the GST rate** on bicycles costing less than from the **existing 12 percent to the lowest rate of 5 percent.**



Incentive cycling over car use

Several direct as well as indirect incentives could be brought in place to promote cycling, for instance -

- 1 Construction of well designed cycling infrastructure
- 2 Congestion and Parking pricing
- 3 Tax concessions for low income households
- 4 Concessions on salaries of professions promoting cycling to work.

