

B-TRAC project is on the right track

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VIEWPOINT



WILL TRAFFIC WOES END?

urated junctions where the solution could be a grade separator.

The second component is street furniture. People won't follow lane discipline unless there are properly demarcated lanes; people won't respect pedestrians crossing the roads unless there are proper zebra crossings and stop lines. It's essential to have state-of-the-art road markings along with accessories like reflective tubular cones, chevrons, delineators, road studs, object markers, hazard markers, etc. Road signages, if properly understood, can tremendously improve road user behaviour.

The requirement of manpower to manage traffic is steadily going up and this is where technology can play a major role. Every time a traffic signal is erected, we can deploy three-four policemen elsewhere. By effectively capturing traffic violation through technology, the practice of policemen physically stopping people and penalizing them on the roads can be done away with. Technology is the backbone of B-TRAC.

Signals with vehicles actuated cycle timings syn-

chronized with each other in the central area based on actual traffic flows is the main component of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). Already 170 signals have been connected to the traffic management centre through BSNL. Traffic density could determine cycle timings and later, this can be IT-driven, based on real-time data. Further, 204 new signals to be activated in next nine months, can release large number of policemen for deployment to neglected areas. Surveillance and enforcement of important junctions through cameras not only helps enforce better discipline and enhance safety but also provide useful data for traffic studies, which has to be a basis for design of Area Traffic Control (ATC). Currently, 40 cameras are in operation and this will go up to 80 by month-end.

Erection of Variable Message System is another component of ITS. It provides information on gantries about prevailing traffic conditions which may help make informed choices about travel plans.

Often, we hear the resolve to convert Bangalore into Singapore. This cannot happen unless we learn to drive the way we do while in Singapore. Attitudinal changes have to accompany infrastructure development. B-TRAC plays a major role in shaping the right behaviour of road users thereby enabling complete benefit of infrastructure development. This component includes construction of modern traffic training institutes catering to every section of road users.

Traffic woes can be eliminated by management of demand and supply. The solution lies in controlling demand for private transport by creating efficient mass rapid transport system and increase supply through creation of massive infrastructure as envisaged in CTPP. Optimum benefit can only be achieved through better road user behaviour, the main objective of B-TRAC.

(The writer is additional commissioner of police, traffic and security)

The question often posed to me is whether Bangalore Traffic Improvement Programme (B-TRAC) will end traffic congestion. It does not envisage creating additional infrastructure which can only be done jointly by BBMP, BDA, Railways, Bescom, BMTC and other private initiatives. Our present infrastructure is highly inadequate to cater to 35 lakh vehicles with additional 4 lakh vehicles put on the roads every year.



The real solution is creation of infrastructure and efficient mass transport system as envisaged in Comprehensive Traffic and Transportation Plan for Bangalore (CTTP 2007) which provided a 15-year blueprint with investment of about Rs 46,000 crore. Traffic management is the joint responsibility of every department associated with city planning and development. Holding traffic policeman responsible for congestion is an over-simplification, possibly because cops in white uniforms are the only visible aspect to a common man.

Where does B-TRAC fit in? It provides us the tools to manage traffic efficiently within existing resources. It ensures better road user behaviour through enforcement which will result in reduction in congestion.

The ambitious B-TRAC project, the first of its kind in the country, essentially has five components, the first one being Junction Improvement. The speed of traffic depends on road capacity of road and ease with which traffic clears the junction. There is very little traffic police can do to increase the road width. However, by scientifically modifying the shape of junctions e.g. making it bell shaped at the ends, creating channelizing islands and proper road marking and signages, the capacity can be increased. It doesn't solve the problem of over-sat-