Abstract

Anyone who has taken buses in India can attest to the difficulty in finding the right bus going to the destination desired in a timely manner. It usually involves running after a bus and asking the driver if that bus goes to your destination. This is hardly a full-proof method, as the driver may mishear you, or you may mishear him resulting in boarding the wrong bus or missing the right bus. Nearly every time I venture to a new destination I inevitably end up taking three buses to a place that has a direct bus.

The large majority of cities in India are reliant upon public bus service as the main mode of mass public transit. In most cities, buses are incredibly overcrowded with people hanging out of doors and packed in the center aisle like cattle being taken to slaughter. Many people climb off the bus looking as if they have just emerged from a fight; in fact, they may have. The current bus regime is far from perfect, but steps are being taken to reform the system.

Notably there have been moves to create more efficient bus services in Pune and Ahmedabad, with the institution of a Bus Rapid Transit System. In Indore, global positioning devices have been used to provide passengers with current information on arrival of buses. These steps in various cities provide examples of what other cities looking to reform their own bus regimes can do.

In Hyderabad, the buses are the main public transit system, followed by the multi-modal transit system: a heavy rail that shares the main Indian Railways tracks. Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) runs over 18,000 buses throughout Andhra Pradesh. The enormity of their fleet, coupled with the thousands of routes run daily makes change difficult, but all the more necessary. APSRTC services about 126.3 lakh people daily[1] and so must provide the best bus service possible.

To facilitate better bus information I worked with APSRTC in Hyderabad to determine the feasibility and demand for more accessible bus information. I specifically worked with two bus stops in the city to try and prove that new bus signs with specific line diagrams for routes passing through the station and timing information are necessary. This paper looks into the method for surveying these bus stops and conclusions found from such a survey as well as what can be done to reform the regime based on the findings.

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[1] Profile. < http://apsrtc.gov.in/About%20Us/Profile/Profile.htm>. Accessed 16 May 2007.