

BOOK REVIEWS

vehicles everyday to its existing fleet, whereas the public transport experienced reduction in mode share from 60% to 43% during 2000–2008. The chapter concludes with preliminary points on discouraging the usage of cars.

The fifth chapter points out that the effect of first-generation reforms in Delhi like introduction of CNG, and improving air quality is already fading away and there is urgent need to implement second-generation reforms to maintain the gains achieved through the first level of reforms. In conclusion, the chapter presents what Delhi needs to do to address the mobility challenge. However, measures like procurement of buses may remain ineffective if not complemented by scientific route and schedule rationalization of bus services. Chapter 6 presents the agenda for reform to address congestion as well as pollution, and highlights the various reforms that have been introduced under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission.

The seventh chapter discusses the barriers in procuring more high-quality buses at lower cost and the limitations of bus manufacturing companies in India to deliver according to the rising demand. The chapter points out that the non-uniformity of bus specifications in different cities leads to quoting of higher prices by bus manufacturers. It also highlights the importance of standardizing the buses in different Indian cities. Chapter 8 discusses the cost barrier in improving the public transport systems in Indian cities. It suggests various ways of reviewing the cost and revenues to make the buses more affordable for purchase. The ninth chapter presents the barrier of taxation on buses and highlights an important point that the current taxation policy of the governments with respect to buses is contradictory to the very principle of sustainable mobility. The fact that greater the number of passengers carried, higher the tax, totally contradicts the argument of encouraging space-efficient modes like buses, which carry more number of people per unit of space. The chapter concludes that the taxation policy should be rationalized and should be heavy on private vehicles rather than public transport.

Chapter 10 highlights creating dedicated funds to make public transport affordable. It also presents various fiscal reforms to fund public transport like reducing taxes that reduce the capital cost

of buses, introducing congestion charging, and parking policy aimed at discouraging usage of private vehicles. The eleventh chapter summarizes the fiscal reforms attempted in other Indian cities like Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai, and provides learning lessons for Delhi. Chapter 12 is dedicated to various parking policies that can lead to the promotion of public transport and non-motorized transport. The concluding chapter (thirteenth) of the book rightly focuses on walking and provides a plethora of measures to make Indian cities walkable.

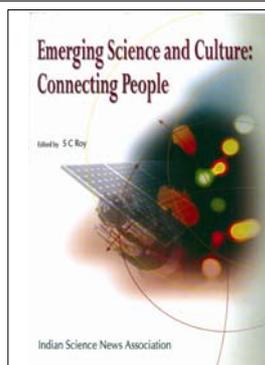
The book has many positive points. It presents good statistics about mobility and air quality issues in Indian cities, in particular Delhi, which will be useful for researchers, practitioners, bureaucrats, policy makers and politicians. Most importantly, it takes a comprehensive and unbiased view on the whole issue of mobility and air quality. On the negative side, the book is primarily focused on

Delhi and does not cover the scenario comprehensively for other Indian cities. Another aspect is that it is heavily number-centric and statistics-based; in other words, the description of methodological approaches and modelling behind various trends and figures, and suggested measures is minimal or often missing in the book. This makes it unattractive for students and inappropriate to be used as a textbook.

Overall, the authors' effort in touching the subject through this book is commendable. It will provide the right direction for many such books to be written in future, focusing on more Indian cities.

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Emerging Science and Culture: Connecting People. S. C. Roy (ed.). Indian Science News Association, 92, APC Road, Kolkata 700 009. 2010. xvii + 246 pp. Price: Rs 300.

The Indian Science News Association was formed in 1935 due to the efforts of Meghnad Saha and P. C. Ray. The journal *Science and Culture* also started in the same year, and as the name suggests, has touched upon issues of science and culture since then. To celebrate the platinum jubilee

of both the Association and the journal, the editor of *Science and Culture*, S. C. Roy, has compiled a collection of articles. This book indeed connects to a lot of people through the wide range of topics that would engage readers from as diverse fields as energy, communication, science and technology, and history and culture.

The section on energy is an account of depleting fossil fuels and the pressing need for green energy sources. Srikumar Banerjee has written about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and compared the situation in India with that in other countries. In the same section there are articles on thermal and solar power. M. S. Swaminathan writes about Norman Borlaug, father of the Green Revolution in India. Another interesting read is Ashok Sahní's essay on dinosaur nesting sites of India. His article is as fascinating as his talks on dinosaurs.

G. Padmanaban has traced the history of molecular biology. At the end, he writes: 'No other branch of science has influenced the scope of scientific research as molecular biology has done. . . In fact Biology has become too serious for biologists!' The last essay is about the country's biggest public library, the National Library of India in Kolkata. With the digitization of information, the need to review the services of this library has been expressed. Here I can only repeat a question raised in an editorial in this journal, 'Will the traditional library eventually become extinct?' I cannot answer, but I hope not, as I would prefer reading a book like the one under review in a traditional library.

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