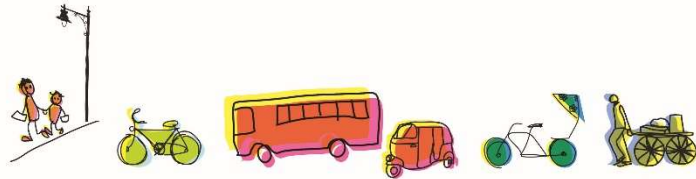


SUM NET India

Sustainable Urban Mobility Network



Date: 6th March 2017

To,
Shri Nitin J. Gadkari
Ministry of Road Transport & Highways
Transport Bhawan
1, Parliament Street
New Delhi 110001

Subject: Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017 – Recommendation for restrictions on pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles (cycles and cycle-rikshaws etc.)

Dear Sir,

We have perused the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture (Report 243) on the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2016 submitted to the Parliament on 8th February and note the following under (**Para 183**);

*“The Committee observes that the insertion of new sub-section 1(A) under Section 138 is very important step towards streamlining **the uncontrolled non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians**. It is a fact that pedestrians are the most vulnerable section among the road users and more often the victims do not have any insurance cover for him/her. **The Committee also stresses that the nonmotorized vehicles do not follow road rules and create a lot of nuisance. They are traffic hazard for others also.** The Committee recommends that for smooth traffic, there is a need of streamlining non-motorized vehicles by introducing minor penalty/punishment. Here the punishment may be prescribed as corrective measures like giving training on traffic rules and not as penalty in monetary term. **The Committee recommends that the non-motorized vehicles should not be allowed on National Highways and main roads of metro cities.**”*

We believe that this recommendation and the derisive language used to characterize pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles is utterly objectionable and against not only the stated policies and programs of the Government of India, but also anti-people, anti-poor and highly discriminatory. Further this recommendation, purportedly to promote road safety, has no scientific basis whatsoever.

The National Urban Transport Policy, 2006 very emphatically promotes the use of non-motorized transport and notes that these modes, primarily used by the urban poor are getting squeezed out and recommends “*reserving lanes and corridors exclusively for public transport and non-motorized modes of travel*” and provides detailed prescriptions in para 28 of the Policy.

Similarly, the **Smart City Mission Statement & Guidelines, 2015** mentions “*encouragement to non-motorized transport (e.g. walking and cycling)*” as an essential feature of a Smart City Proposal (SCP). **AMRUT Guidelines** similarly encourage non-motorized transport.

Addressing the safety of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles by proposing ways to protect these modes through measures such as providing safe and segregated pathways, reducing the speeds of motorized vehicles in urban areas, creating vehicle-free areas, stricter enforcement of traffic laws for motorized vehicles and increasing respect for the right of way of pedestrians and cyclists is the need of the hour. In fact, **unregulated, free parking and parking of motor vehicles on cycle tracks and footpaths in cities** is one of the prime contributors to the hazards faced by these modes. The use of cycles and

cycle-rikshaws in urban areas as last mile connectivity to public transport and as a low-carbon mode must indeed be aggressively promoted.

Banning these modes on highways and main roads of metro (or any city) for that matter, is retrograde and outmoded thinking and must be summarily rejected. Furthermore, this recommendation of the Committee infringes on the autonomy of the city/state governments to formulate their own urban transport policies and aggressively promote NMT.

We would like to register our strongest objection to this recommendation by the Committee and urge you to ensure that this – or any variant of this recommendation, finds no mention in the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2017.

We would also like to take this opportunity to recommend that the proposed Section 138(1A) should be entirely deleted and instead the **Government should consider enacting a completely independent Non-Motorized Vehicles Act.**

Regards,

SUM Net members

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cc:

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