

Reclaiming Urban Streets in Developing Nations through Ciclovía

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1. Introduction

Dancing groups of children, kids playing badminton, a mix group of adults and children performing activities like cycling, yoga, zumba, skates, hula-hoop, graffiti, pottery, etc. may sound like a view of a fair or playground to many of us, whereas few neighbourhoods in world witness this view on regular basis as part of Ciclovía. Ciclovía, in Spanish translates to “bike path”, refers to the permanent bike path or cycle way. However, now a days, it is referred worldwide as an event that temporarily closes streets for automobiles to provide safe space for walking, bicycling and social activities. Ciclovía was started 42 years ago as an initiative to reclaim streets by a group of cyclist in Bogota, the capital city of Colombia in 1974 and since then it has gained lot of popularity across various cities in world.

In India, to promote the use of non-motorised transport, to create awareness about empowering of pedestrians and to reclaim urban street space, the Ciclovía named as: “Cycle Day” and “Open Streets” in Bangalore; “Raahgiri Day” in Gurgaon, New Delhi, Bhopal, Navi Mumbai, Dwarka and Indore; “Equal Streets” in Mumbai; are conducted since October 2013 in Indian cities on a regular basis.

Streets are termed as public spaces which are to be equitably allocated to all street users. These events are organised on periodic Sundays and public holidays to convert public spaces into public places by engaging communities. However, this conversion of public space to public place in India is not a new concept and is happening since eons, largely as a part of Indian tradition in term of religious gathering for Ganesh Visarjan or Durga Puja or celebration of community festivals etc; but with the core aim of promoting walkability and cycling, it is definitely a new paradigm in urban transport.

2. Models of Ciclovía

"The Open Streets Guide" published by "Open Street Project" led by "The Street Plans Collaborative" examines the 67 case studies of Ciclovía event conducted in

North America and organise it into a typology of seven common model types. According to open street guide each open street initiative is unique but follows 10 common characteristics as mentioned (a) Population size, (b) Lead Organizing Entity (Public, Non-Profit, Private), (c) Year of Initiation, (d) Funding (Public, Non-Profit, Private), (e) Route Type (Loop, Arm & Loop, Neighbourhood Linear, Multi-Neighbourhood Linear, Regional Linear), (f) Route Setting, (g) Route Length, (h) Supporting activities, (i) Season, (j) Frequency.

However, seven common model types (Table-1) emerged on looking at few more specific lead characteristics: (i) Lead Organising Entity, (ii) Funding Structure, and (iii) Supporting Activities.

Table 7- Seven Common Model Type based on Lead Organising Entity and Funding Entity

| S.no. | Model | Organized by | Funding | Year of initiation |
|-------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| 1 | Seattle Model | Public | Public | 1965 |
| 2 | Cleveland Model | Non-Profit | Private | 2006 |
| 3 | San Francisco Model | Partnership (Public-Non-Profit) | PPP | 2008 |
| 4 | Portland Model | Public | PPP | 2008 |
| 5 | Winnipeg Model | Non-Profit | PPP | 2009 |
| 6 | Savannah Model | Partnership (Public-Private) | Private | 2010 |
| 7 | Kentucky Model | Partnership (Public-Private) | PPP | 2008 |

Source- Data derived from Open Street Guide & structured by author

3. Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of Ciclovía

Ciclovía event planning process reflects local conditions, politics, and constraints; however, the "Open Street Guide" has laid a set of actions occurring concurrently for planning of a Ciclovía event after study of 14 best implementation practices. Ciclovía event planning requires various tasks like bringing the idea to town, securing organisational and community support, planning the route, establishing a budget, scheduling the event, organising community outreaching strategies, coordinating traffic control, organising event activities, recruiting and managing volunteers and evaluating the events etc. Implementation of Ciclovía event requires good coordination among communities and various government sectors including transportation, law and order, sports and recreation and health. Proper implementation measures are to be taken care of to avoid events turning into fair or commercial activity, which may lead to enjoyment of public but not necessarily promote the use of non-motorised transportation.

Evaluation is an important process for any Ciclovía event to measure its success. Various municipalities across the world have formulated their respective methodologies which are dependent on different attributes to evaluate the benefits of Ciclovía events held in their neighbourhood. However, the "Implementation and Advocacy Manual" on Ciclovía have listed the important evaluation indicators which are common to evaluate most Ciclovía events.

4. Case study of Cycle day, Bangalore, India

Cycle Day initiated on 27 October 2013 which has been a monthly event for 11 months and then enhanced to weekly event anchored by DULT (Directorate of Urban Land Transport), Government of Karnataka, India, as a part of Bengaluru Coalition for Open Streets (BCOS), which is a non-profit collaborative comprising of various Government agencies like (BBMP, Bangalore Police etc.), community partners and individuals. More than 120 events have been organised till date in the period of 2 years and 7 months. Based on feedback survey of 552 samples, 14% of participators have bought cycle after attending the event and 26% started using cycles for shorter trips.

Based on visual observation survey and review of publications for case study, discussed below are few important factors that are to be kept necessarily in mind when implementing any Ciclovía event in developing nations:

4.1. Noise Due to Sound System: Supporting activities like public address system must be taken into consideration while allotting the space. Loudness of sound system should not distract the cyclists and residents in the neighbourhood;

4.2. Littering of Public Place: The waste disposals generated by campaigning or supporting activities should be taken care while planning for event. Waste collection methodology should be clear and efficient throughout and after the event;

4.3. Overcrowding of Space: Few activities may attract large public creating overcrowding of space making it difficult for pedestrians to walk and cyclist to cycle. Therefore, activities should be distributed in a way that avoids overcrowding of public place;

4.4. Promotion of Political and Commercial Campaign: Properly framed out Memorandum of Understanding between Public and Private or Non-profit organisations to keep event free from commercial and political campaigns, which can lead to deviation from the cause for which the event is being held and fosters other causes along with littering of space due to distribution of pamphlets or banners;

4.5. Cycle Rental: Ciclovía event aims at promoting ownership and usage of cycles by public but provision of cycles at events is a necessary feature to engage public in cycling activity at the event. This can be achieved by renting out cycle 'free on duration' basis or 'rental' basis depending on local conditions;

4.6. Ambulance for Casualties: Ambulances are necessary part of any Ciclovía event and should be available in sufficient number at the route to avoid any causality with a person during the event;

4.7. Awareness about the Event and its Objective: The measures to create awareness through street play, information provision etc. during the event are to be taken care of and before the event so that to avoid the unexpected inconvenience faced by public by barricading of vehicles on routes;

4.8. Activity Distribution: Activities are to be distributed evenly not only to avoid overcrowding but also to encourage public to walk and cycle in pursue of interest to visit all activity centres.

3. Conclusion

This paper discussed the type of Ciclovía, and major factors that are to be considered while planning for Ciclovía event, with the help of observations from a case study of Cycle Day, Bangalore city, India. These observations can be further developed as general toolkit for successful implementation of Ciclovía in cities of other developing nations.

Along with diversion of mindset of public from using vehicles to cycling and walking as mode of transport, Ciclovía provides for many other benefits that range from environmental benefits, community and social benefits to public health benefits. If conducted on regular basis, it may provide a platform to organise public health campaigns and educational campaign as parts of activities. It also aims at pulling off the implementation of Avoid-Shift-Improve (A-S-I) strategy as formulated by UNESCAP to develop eco-efficient infrastructure through conduct of well-planned events.

Keywords: *Ciclovía, Public Place, Urban Streets, Non-Motorized Transport, Cycle Day*