

Endangering Pedestrian Safety due to Free-left and Closing of Right-turns in Hyderabad

C. Ramachandraiah and B. Vishnu Deepthi

Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad.

Malmö University, Sweden.

Contact email: crchandraiah@gmail.com

The Problem

- The World Bank estimates that 55 percent of Indian pedestrians become victims of road crashes at some point in their lives.
- Some of the key factors for pedestrian injury are vehicle speed, lack of safe infrastructure for pedestrians and inadequate visibility of pedestrians.

- In Hyderabad, footpaths hardly exist and are fast disappearing, and safe pedestrian crossings are non-existent.
- According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Hyderabad has the second highest number of road accidents in the country after Delhi in 2013.
- After introducing traffic rules like ‘free left,’ traffic dividing barricades, and closing of right-turns it became more hazardous for pedestrians to cross the roads.
- Hyderabad traffic police website lists 35 junctions where right-turns have been closed. But the list is not updated, as many new junctions have been closed recently for right-turns.

S.R. Nagar Junction on the National Highway

- A major four-signal junction with two large middle class colonies on either side.
- A number of educational institutions, working men/women's hostels.
- A number of middle class businesses.
- Traffic signals removed during metro rail construction.
- Vehicles users are obviously happy as it is providing a signal-free ride.

S.R.Nagar Junction(Before)



S.R.Nagar Junction (After)



Pedestrian crossing at S.R.Nagar Junction (Our survey)

The average number of pedestrians crossing over are –

- 5-6 pm - 2000.
- 6-7 pm – 1300.
- 9-10 am - 1300.
- **Vehicles move at relatively high speed as the road is wide, and there are service roads in this stretch.**

S.R. Nagar Junction

Video 1

Srinagar Colony Signal (Ameerpet-Punjagutta Road) on National Highway

- It's a T-junction where in the traffic from Srinagar Colony road joins the busy National Highway (Ameerpet-Punjagutta road).
- **This junction is located between the two busiest traffic points – Ameerpet and Punjagutta.**
- Traffic from Srinagar Colony road takes a Right-turn towards Punjagutta. This has been closed recently.

Srinagar Colony-Ameerpet(Then)



Srinagar Colony-Ameerpet (Now)





Srinagar Colony-Ameerpet stretch

- **Closing of right-turn is forcing the vehicles to turn left and enter into the busy Ameerpet stretch and take U-turn. This is causing traffic jam during peak hours.**
- **Average number of vehicles taking U-turn at Chandana Bros, from 9-10 am are 1362. The number is about 1440 during 7-8 pm.**
- **When the traffic is moving freely, it is becoming very difficult to cross the road at Srinagar Colony Road signal as well as at Big Bazar where the pedestrian flow is very high.**

U-turn near Chandana Bros.

Video 2

Because of this situation, wrong route drives are also increasing.

- To avoid going left towards Ameerpet, a number of vehicles are taking the wrong route (towards the right) at Sringer Colony Road signal (closed one) and cross the road in the space provided for U-turn and take wrong route again at Agarwal Eye Hospital into the adjacent lane. (Such number during 10-11am is about 660).

Conclusion

- **Closing of right-turns may be a feasible option in some specific situations but not as a general practice to ease traffic problems.**
- **In Hyderabad, the intention of the traffic police seem to be to increase the speed of the traffic flow of vehicles, and remove a traffic constable wherever possible.**
- **In the process while the traffic flow has increased at SR Nagar, it is not the case in Ameerpet-Srinagar Colony Road stretch.**

Conclusion...

- Construction of the elevated metro corridors has provided an alibi for the traffic police to close the signals and right-turns at many places.
- What appeared to be only a temporary measure at such places has been made a permanent feature.
- In the process, the pedestrians have been not only totally ignored, but have also been more endangered.

Conclusion...

- Pedestrian rights have to be brought back to the centre-stage of urban mobility discourse in Hyderabad.
- Now all the big claims are around the elevated metro rail, flyovers, road-widening etc. etc.

We would like to demand that the focus should be a new slogan in Hyderabad -

Pedestrians FIRST

Footpaths & Zebra Lines a MUST

Thank You

