

Lack of display boards at City Market leads to travel trouble

SNEHA JHA

Bangalore— The City market bus stand is not equipped with display boards furnishing real-time, at-stop information to the commuters. And the civic bodies and public transport corporation exhibit a lackadaisical attitude towards these deficient facilities.

The bus stand, one of the biggest in the city, is thronged by hundreds of commuters every day. Some of them are daily users of the bus services while some of them are first-time users who are new to the city or are tourists. Speaking on the lack of suitable information dissemination at the bus stop, a commuter Sudha Reddy said, "Commuters have a tough time boarding the buses here. Every thing is so unorganized. One feels lost in the sea of humanity. There are no signboards, enquiry counters and display boards specifying the routes and numbers of the buses that frequent the stop. If you don't know what exactly is the arrival time of the bus you are waiting for,

it becomes very arduous."

The problem gets even more pronounced in case of first-time users, tourists who are on their maiden visit to the city and are not well acquainted it.

Mr. Raghav Saxena, who shifted to the city a week ago said, "Being new in the city I don't know which buses are operational in which area. It is a challenge for me to board the right bus to my destination because I can't identify the bus routes. The information system is also lacking. This makes the entire experience very daunting. How can Bangalore have such poorly managed bus stops?"

Bangalore is a place where the public transportation system is extremely popular among the urban dwellers. GS Nagaraja Rao, assistant traffic manager, BMTC (City market) felt that some measures to notify the details of

bus timings will only augment people's trust in public transport system. Apart from this it can carry information about the various stops on the way. He said, "This will facilitate in improving the condition of bus travel. It will also decrease the uncertainty and discomfort of the passengers. Pre-trip information also reduces the

nagar and majestic bus stand should also be a part of the City market bus stop."

Mr. Dastagir Sharief, chief traffic manager, BMTC said, "I am well aware of the problems faced by passengers at the bus stand but the matter is not under the control of BMTC. The area comes in the jurisdiction of the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagare Palike (BBMP).

They have the ownership of the area. If it were under our control we could have made it a well-equipped station like the Shivajinagar, Shanthinagar and majestic bus stand. Before trying to revamp the place we need to have allotted to us. Even if we try to provide these facilities, out of a sense of duty towards our users the boards will be pulled out in a matter of hours because the area is not under our jurisdiction.

The bus stand is more like a third-

grade *bazaar*. It brings bad name to the city. It is the oldest bus stand in the city but it is still not upgraded in terms of facilities."

Mr K Jagdeesh, assistant traffic manager, BMTC said that there are various problems that hinder the process of providing these facilities. "There are technical problems and the shop keepers and vendors object to the up gradation. Some of them even went to the court to protect their rights. The city market bus stand has 895 schedules operating each day making 6128 trips."

Mr. Puttaraja, public relations officer, BBMP, said that the civic body is responsible for the public toilets, bus shelters and bus bays not for the display boards. Rs. 53 crore have been allocated to the upgradation of the bus stand last year and plans are underway to improve the facilities.

Meanwhile the ill equipped bus stand paints a grim picture of the civic bodies that keep passing the buck to each other.

"The bus stand is more like a third- grade bazaar" – Dastagir Sharief, chief traffic manager, Bangalore Metro Transport Corporation (BMTC)

anxiety of commuters considerably. These things need to be meticulously planned. Bus network maps, route charts and directional sign boards that are present at the Shivajinagar, Shanthi

BMTC drivers not getting their dues

The drivers handling the duties of conductors not getting their remunerations for additional services

RITIKA KUMAR

Bangalore—The drivers in BMTC buses are not getting additional expenses for handling dual duties and the authorities sideline it as a 'petty issue'.

The drivers cum conductors in Pushpak buses of BMTC are the ones facing problem of issuing tickets and driving at the same time.

During the peak hours, there is large number of passengers boarding the bus from various bus stands. It becomes difficult for them to issue tickets to everybody at the same time, and this leads to confusion. Some of the passengers therefore take the advantage of the confusion and travel without giving the fare. As the driver has to do drive as well, he is not able to keep a track of the total number of tickets sold.

Mahesh, one of the drivers said that giving tickets and driving at the same time creates confusion for him. He added that it is difficult for him to concentrate on driving if he has to keep account of tickets sold. The authorities on the other hand have plans to continue this phenomenon of drivers handling dual responsibilities in future.

Mr Dastagir Sharief, chief traffic manager, BMTC said, "You see, we are trying to work on the lines of the foreign transport system, where they have just one, driver cum conductor." He called the problems faced by the drivers as "petty issues" and said that such drivers are given compensation expenses for their services. However the drivers denied of being given any extra remuneration for their services.

Mr. Sharief also said that this is not a major issue as 50 per cent of the travelers are pass holders. But another driver, Shiva Kumar said, "There are so many passengers traveling in the bus, we cannot check the pass of each and every one."

When this reporter informed that the drivers are facing problems as heavy influx of commuters in the bus at the same time, Mr Sharief said, "I know that we wouldn't be able to bring the foreign system in our country because our population is increasing day by day, which increases the number of commuters also. But we are still planning to continue with no conductor system. We are thinking to introduce electronic ticket machines and smart cards in the buses in another one year."

Mr. K Jagdish, assistant traffic manager BMTC, said, "We do get complaints from the drivers regarding their problem. Therefore we are trying to encourage passengers to take bus passes." He also added that they have line-checking batches that go on rounds every morning and evening to check the passengers traveling without tickets. "But it is difficult to check them all. So it would be best if the passengers dutifully buy their tickets," he concluded.

The passengers on the other hand seem to be helpless. Sanjana, a commuter said, "If there are many passengers entering from my bus stop, I try to hold a seat first and then take ticket later." Himanshu, another commuter said, "I try to buy tickets but sometimes I become lucky when the driver doesn't come to know."

Compassion and care for canines

ANUYA ULPE

Bangalore—Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) managing stray dogs in the city have voiced that the reduction in the number of meat shops and dealing with waste mismanagement strictly can help the cause better. Next indispensable need is proper finances and well-equipped staff.

On the official website of the Stray Dogs Free Bangalore (SDFB)- www.sdfb.co.in, Dr B.N Dhanya Kumar, joint director directorate of Health and Family Welfare Services said, "More than 14 % of the Karnataka budget (and still insufficient) for medical supplies goes towards anti rabies vaccines and is insufficient. This is alarming".

The Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagra Palike (BBMP) had sanctioned Rs. 1.5 Crore annually to four selected NGOs- Animal Rights Fund (ARF), Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA), Karuna Animal Welfare Association of Karnataka and Krupa-loving animals.

Section 58, Sub Section 12 of the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act 1976 states, "It shall be incumbent on the corporation to make adequate provision for the destruction of animals causing nuisance and confinement and destruction of stray and owner less dogs."

The BBMP had assigned the NGOs certain parts of Bangalore city (packages) to cover. Under this package each NGO was to neuter 300 dogs per month. They followed the Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release (CNVC) method. This is an expensive method and the surgery takes about 45 minutes to one hour.

ARF has sterilized 1200 dogs monthly this year. Poornima Harish, managing trustee, said that

they first caught the dogs in a 'humane manner' with the help of butterfly nets and then weighed. They were then operated on or vaccinated in about 10 to 20 minutes. After an hour's recovery, they were released in the same area they were picked up from. She explained, "It's not a menace, and it's popularized by news. It is actually dog management'.

She said that it is only due to lack of awareness and education that people are so insensitive and 'unfriendly' towards each other let

Same with beggars also". Krupa has sterilized a total of 1000 dogs monthly this year, which amounted to 3,134 dogs in 2007.

As they work in tandem with the BBMP, they also follow the policy of the World Health Organization (WHO) that calls for humane treatment of animals. The PRO added that she opposed the killing of dogs since that way "it won't be long before dogs will become endangered". The funds they receive from the BBMP are 'just enough' for tackling the stray dog issue but not the other cases of treatment of injury, rescue in accidents, managing help line of other animals.

Therefore, they raise funds by themselves. Recently the government granted them two acres land in Kengeri to construct a dog hospital and shelter.

An ardent canine lover, Aakanksha Tavag said, "Well, I think that sterilization is a good option, especially if they want to curb the

population of dogs but they need to have an organized method of keeping track of how many dogs have been sterilized already". She had participated in a protest last year in her residential area to stop the dogcatchers from taking away the dogs. "Some people even hid the dogs in their houses till they were gone", she said.

She mentioned that CUPA does good work by providing hygienic conditions to the dogs and treats them well since they have a good staff.

She added, "Most of these places lack good staff, they need staff more than funds".



Finally city dogs have their day

Pic by Sohini Datta

alone dogs. She felt that not many people are ready to go that extra mile to help.

Another NGO, Karuna sterilized 900 dogs per month this year in 20 areas. It prioritizes dog menace more than other animal problems because the population of stray dogs is high.

At Krupa, a sister-concern of the ARF, the dogs are considered free-living beings just like humans. Shoba Naidu, public relations officer said, "It is not a dog problem or menace. We must correct people about this. Anything they don't like they call it menace.