URBAN ROAD FREIGHT MOVEMENTS-
SOME ISSUES

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URBAN ROAD FREIGHT MOVEMENTS - POLICY FAILURE

- Cities need freight but they tend to ignore this specific category of urban transport especially those moving on roads.
- Urban freight transport, despite providing thousands of jobs and services to the urban economy, has been neglected by studies, transport surveys and models, transport strategies and regional master planning and above all policy frameworks.
- NUTP (2006) in the Indian context carries on with this tradition with its fallout – JNNURM- having only an urban passenger component.
- NTDPC (2014) – has not even two pages devoted to it (p.425-426) – thus less said the better on policy concerning urban freight.
Urban freight is the transport of goods by or for commercial entities (as opposed to households) taking place in an urban area and serving this area.

This definition includes all movements of goods generated by the economic needs of a local business unit, i.e. all deliveries and pick up of supplies, materials, parts, consumables, mail and refuse that a business needs to operate. It also includes home deliveries to households, as they are generally done by means of a commercial transaction.
The above definition does not include private transport undertaken by people to acquire goods for themselves (shopping trips), nor does it include through traffic (trucks circulating in a city en route to another destination without serving any business or household of the city). These two kinds of transport are very important.

These activities are important for a city’s transport organisation and ought to be among the policy maker’s targets.

Invariably, a city’s priority is supposed to be given to accommodate and improve management of freight transport and logistics activities directly serving the local economy.

Does this happen? Especially in the Indian context?
In cities of developed countries, major changes have been taking place. The size of stores’ inventory stocks has shrunk as more and more businesses are supplied on a just in time basis. The number of products sold has considerably increased, and collections change several times a year. With the development of the service economy, the demand for express transport and courier services is soaring. All these features have made urban economies more dependent on transportation systems, with more frequent and customized deliveries.

Developing countries have experienced similar changes (not always at the same pace), with additional transformations, such as a growth in very small manufacturing activities at home or in small high tech parks. This generates differentiated transport services, in residential areas not needing freight supply before.
One of urban freight’s main characteristics is its phenomenal diversity. There are as many transport and logistics chains as there are different economic sectors.

In a single city, vehicles, delivery times, size of shipments may even vary according to each business or customer. When comparing different cities worldwide, the diversity of urban freight can be vertiginous. How can one compare a Yamato employee in his/her small hybrid multi-temperature truck delivering parcels to homes in Tokyo residential districts, to a farmer bringing his/her home-grown vegetables in a little pushcart to be sold on a street market in La Paz? Nevertheless, both of them contribute to the city’s economy and the well-being of its residents and businesses. And they actually share many issues.
MAJOR EMERGING ISSUES SHARED BY ALL CITIES AND SOME STAKEHOLDERS

• Urban freight is characterized by the “motor transition,” where non-motorized modes of transport have almost lost ground to vans and trucks.
• “Logistics sprawl” is a locational movement of warehouses and cross-docking terminals from the urban areas to suburban zones.
• Use of small vehicles to enter cities (larger ones barred except during nights)
• with some positive impacts (more modern terminals replace old ones) but also negative ones (more vehicle-kilometers are generated with consequences for pollution, congestion resulting from acute shortage of road space).
MAJOR EMERGING ISSUES (CONT’D)

- Road transport remains dominant.
- The issue of ban on entry of large vehicles – the difference in situation in cities of advanced countries versus those in developing ones.
- The fixity or non-fixity of timings on entry into cities- the case of huge number of cities in the Indian context.
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Is something like an UMTA required?
- An institution like - UFMA – Urban Freight Management Authority? – for planning and directing the implementation of an urban freight management system?
- Any one to take this forward?
THANK YOU