

## DHAKA CITY'S TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM : IS THERE ANY SOLUTION ?

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**ABSTRACT :** The governments of the territory previously known as East Pakistan and now, Bangladesh have been found to take many costly measures for solving the transportation problem of Dhaka city. However, in place of solving, each of their programs has increasingly aggravated the problem. In this article we have endeavored to find out the causes of these multiple failures. After analyzing these causes we have also presented the probable solution. While the problem of transportation of Dhaka city is the problem of a single city, in the country it is extremely importance because this one is the capital city of Bangladesh. We have opined that Dhaka's transport problem is caused among others by the vehicles coming from all corners of the country. Naturally this part of the problem is beyond the reach of the urban authorities and has to be addressed in the national level. We have also shown that various governments took up programs which have profusely enriched the concerned technical and administrative personnel. Even though the problem could have been addressed in unique way applicable in the context of Bangladesh, neither the planners and other experts nor the government ever endeavored to do the same. On the other hand they followed examples followed by countries having entirely different context. The transportation problem needs immediate solution. Its solution would act as blessing not only for Dhaka city, but for the entire country.

### INTRODUCTION :

Starting from the first government formed by Bangladesh Awami League in 1971, all the governments of this territory took many steps to solve the "transportation problem of Dhaka city" and all have failed. The present government also has taken up some measures with apparent signs of failure. The government has also declared "lucrative and safe policies" like : (i) underground railway, (ii) mono-rail, (iii) flyovers, (iv) elevated expressways etc. Any person with little intelligence might understand that these measures also would be proved failure in the long run. In connection with these ambitious, big budget and long term policies we have used two terms, "lucrative" and "safe". These policies are "lucrative" because there remains "play of big money" from which all the associated persons can make money. These policies are also "safe", because there exists almost no accountability in such projects. Such expensive projects need longer time, like ten or more years, to be materialized. After the project is finished it may be seen that those who advocated it as "excellent solution" have safely disappeared from the scene. The high ranking political personals may have taken shelter in foreign countries, bureaucrats might have gone on retirement and politicians, changed parties. And even if any related person is asked "why the project did not give the predicted result" the possible and safe reply would be, "well, other unforeseen developments nullified the solution".

We all know, how bravely the advocates of flyover told in its favor, even though some others opined that those would create more problems. The advocates won because of the financial attraction of such project. Now a number of costly flyovers have been constructed in the city and

these have created even greater problems. “Why ?” If one raises the question with the advocates they would give excuses like “number of cars, or buses, or people have increased beyond our estimation, the city expanded beyond our expectations” and so on. The solution like “underground rail line or Metro”, however, is really capable of solving the transportation problem with the creation of no or very little hazards. But no sensible and patriotic citizen of Bangladesh should ever advocate this solution because of its huge cost. Taking such a costly, lavish and complex project for solving one single problem of only one city of a poor, flood-prone, technologically lower-mid level country like Bangladesh should be considered nothing but mockery for the poor and distressed citizens. It may be interesting to note that while the entire country is suffering from numerous problems, Dhaka city even has not other crucial problems like scarcity of quality drinking water, sewerage problem, power shortage etc.

**WHY THE AUTHORITIES FAIL :** For long (2009 – 1971 =) 38 years the authorities of Dhaka city have endeavored to solve the transportation problem and have spent millions. In such a situation it is logical to first have a look into the reasons behind their failure. The three major reasons behind their failure may be mentioned as : (01) Kitchen-level solution, (02) Corrupt bureaucrats and political leaders and (03) Lack of prudence of the urban planners. We shall present hereunder their brief descriptions.

(01) **KITCHEN-LEVEL SOLUTION :** If the kitchen-maid is given the responsibility of solving the problems inside the kitchen, she would be able to do the same to the maximum extent possible for her. Since the activities and supplies of the kitchen are intricately related with other rooms of the house, for effective solution the interference of the house-owner is a must. Similar is the case with the ‘transportation problem of Dhaka city’. Here the problem is related with the entire country because people from the entire country contribute to ‘transportation problem’ with their visits and carrying of vehicles. The urban authorities do not have any instrument to control their flow or migration, where as the changes in their number are key factors in generation of the problem. Because of this reality we opined that the role of the Dhaka urban authorities is similar to that of the “kitchen-maid”, who does not have control over some of the major influencing factors staying outside her domain.

(02) **CORRUPT BUREAUCRATS AND POLITICAL LEADERS :** The single strongest reason for which Bangladesh as a democratic country could not have expected level of development is, there is no transparent and well-spelt system of collection of money for bearing the cost of the political parties. In democracy the activities of the political parties is essential and the need of money for the same is obvious. But there is absolutely no system or provision for collecting the same. In such a situation the politicians collect money from all possible sources. The ruling government manages the same from the two major sources : (a) Big projects and (b) Booties from the law breaking persons.

(a) Hundreds of millions of Taka have been spent for solving Dhaka city’s transportation problems and all have failed. The ironic truth is, even though some experts correctly predicted their fates, those were taken up mostly for the cause of enriching the corrupt bureaucrats and fuelling the ruling political parties.

(b) Most of the time the people's elected leaders collect booty from persons enjoying illegal or unlawful opportunities. For example, the footpaths are meant for people's walking and not for trading. The local political leaders and monitoring personnel allow the hawkers to continue the same at the cost of kick-backs.

It will not be possible for any political party of this democratic country to take up projects entirely for satisfying the people's needs unless and until a transparent system of fund collection for the contesting political parties can be ensured.

(03) LACK OF PRUDENCY OF THE URBAN PLANNERS: The first proof of lack of prudence of the urban authorities is, they cannot even realize that they are playing the "role of the kitchen maid" in the project where 'house master's interference' is a must. It is evident that the local urban authorities do not have control over some of the internal and all of the external factors affecting the city's transportation domain. Dhaka city's transportation problem is intricately related with the following internal and external factors :

INTERNAL : (i) Government's policy regarding accommodation of inhabitants (e.g. density of population per unit area, taking into consideration the allowable heights of buildings) and commitment to strict adherence to the declared policies.

(ii) Policy of car occupancy.

(iii) Policy regarding type of city's physical expansion (i.e. whether it would take place as agglomeration, fringe area absorption, satellite growth or independent development etc.)

EXTERNAL : Policy regarding entry of people and vehicle from outside the planned area.

SOME PARADOXES: In Bangladesh some peculiar things can be noticed in the attitude of the urban authorities. It may seem strange that various programs taken up by the urban authorities shamelessly go for ensuring the financial interest of the land owners. Even though Bangladesh is a democratic country with equal rights for all, their activities reveal as if they are working for :

(i) Making the city a habitable area for only the affluent people,

(ii) Equipping and enriching the city with facilities, provisions and services such that people from all over the country and abroad could be compelled or allured to come here and spend money.

In the history of Bangladesh all the governments, with the lone exception of President H.M. Ershad, have shown utter ignorance of the interest of the people living outside Dhaka. President Ershad's "Upazilla Parishad" program was an excellent gesture of helping the citizens distributed all over the country.

Some of the means in which the urban authorities ignored the needs of the common people and endeavored to favor the rich are :

(i) Even though the first condition of efficient movement of people in any city is "footpath", the Dhaka city authorities have kept blind eyes on its improvement and maintenance. On many occasions they have allowed the rich people to use it as car parking, exclusive waiting space, storage space, garden, business outlet, office for the political parties etc.

(ii) The urban authorities discovered that rickshaws were the “hindrance” for the movement of the rich men’s cars. So they started eliminating those from the so called VIP roads. Now, however, they realize that the cars themselves are their worst enemies and act as obstruction for their movement even in wide roads.

It is interesting to note that at present the poor people feel amused to see that when they can somehow manage their movement in the ill-maintained footpaths and lanes by foot or rickshaws, the rich people, jammed in their own jungle of cars burn and waste fuel and suffer from severe pains. This situation however, has created golden opportunity for the car-traders to sell air-conditioned cars.

**MASS TRANSIT :** Quite often it is said that an efficient system of mass transit can solve Dhaka’s transportation problem. This solution in the “level of the kitchen-maids” may be workable only if the higher authorities (i.e. masters of the house) can ensure the following :

- (i) Control over the number of vehicles allowable inside the city,
- (ii) Control over the entry of vehicles from outside,
- (iii) Number of inhabitants etc.

In case the urban authorities continue its present program of increasing the city by absorbing the fringe areas, increase of allowable heights, construction on vacant lands etc., then mass-transit in large-bodied vehicles would not at all help because in that case “the roads would eventually be jammed by large bodied vehicles”.

#### **MORE ABOUT THE PROBLEM :**

Even the affluent and developed countries could not still solve their transportation problem by keeping dependence on private cars. However, such countries themselves are manufacturers and exporters of cars, they never express anything that may go against their business. The phenomenon may be clear from the following examples :

(i) In Nigeria vehicles from the entire country used to rush to the southern port city, Lagos, creating tremendous jam. In order to reduce the number of cars, on one occasion the city authorities introduced a rule of allowing cars with odd (or even) numbers on alternate days. The problem was even more aggravated because many people bought a second car.

(ii) The developed countries love to advise the oil rich Nigeria for obvious reasons. As per their advise, the government of Nigeria started constructed multi-level vehicular roads (raised expressways) in Lagos for solving the problem of crossing, avoid jam and reduce travel time. After those were constructed in as many as 4 levels (as of 1990) it was seen that a vehicle could travel the entire 45 kilometer length of the city in 45 minutes. But then when a vehicle came down on land to reach its destination at say 2 kilometer apart, it needed several hours. Those who advocate multi-level vehicular streets should keep in mind that all vehicles using those roads at one time shall get down to the ground level to create extreme jam and in fact lengthening the travel time. Well, the situation could be made advantageous if only buses were allowed to ply in the expressways. However, being ex-colonial countries, neither Nigeria nor Bangladesh can not ever think of a solution that would help only the common people and not the car owners.

In the city normally the vehicles running in the main road continue journey while those on the branch roads are kept waiting. However, when the number of vehicles on the main road increases reducing the inter-vehicular distance 3 or 4 meters, the above rule needs to be reversed. At this stage the vehicles from the branch roads “by rule” are given the first preference, while those on the main road keep waiting. With the advantage and consequences of the multi-level expressways Lagos city has to adopt the same. Intelligent men might understand that unless the conventional rule is reversed, then no vehicle from the branch road would ever be able to enter the main road.

(iii) Flyovers smash the charm of a city. It is extremely difficult to construct flyover in the major two directions in built-up cities, not to say anything about left and right connections. Flyover without provisions of right and left turns create tremendous problem for the people to reach their destination. Standard flyovers with left-right turns (popularly known as clover-leaf) in spacious cities even do not save travel time because the vehicles need to move through large distances. However, since the drivers do not have to keep waiting, they feel psychological consolation at the cost of wastage of fuel.

The ironic fact is, the use of private vehicles in large number has not been able to solve transportation problems in any part of the world. Multiple level vehicular roads create tremendous environmental and sound pollution. Wider roads allowing speedy vehicles increase possibility of accidents. Accidents taking place in wide or multiple level roads result in severe damage and loss of life. One may imagine how difficult it is to send help to such nearly inaccessible places. The car-manufacturers and sellers are super-active to hide these facts. On the other hand they introduce passive solutions like, introducing cars with movie, internet, coffee-making facilities, provisions for exercise, book reading etc., saying these save the time of the owner. In the developed countries they usually bribe the politicians to adopt projects utilizing cars. Their influences have entered the arena of education also. The curriculum of Physical planning courses in those countries has been prepared ensuring maximum use of private cars. The universities of Bangladesh also have prepared their curriculum for those courses after their curriculums. In such a situation it is no wonder that the physical planners having degrees from home or abroad do not learn to think differently.

In course of his long experience in the developed countries, Dr. Fazlur Rahman Khan realized the above mentioned problem. On one occasion he opined, “The workers housing should be established nearest to the industries such that they can come on foot spending minimum time. The owners of industries love to construct those at far away places where land is cheap. They use buses to transport them. Such a system takes away considerable leisure time of the workers, involve unnecessary use of vehicles and create permanent loss of gas (gasoline or fuel) from the limited world reserve of fuel”. It was natural that his intelligent advice was not given importance by the capitalistic countries. But the irony is, what a Bangladeshi engineer could think while living in a western country, our planners fail to realize the same even after living in this poor country.

**HOW THE PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED :** We shall now present our proposal to solve the problem. One serious lacking of our policy makers is, they always look at the transportation problem as a “physical problem” and thus endeavor to solve it through “physical measures” only.

The fact is, transportation problem by nature has two aspects : physical and administrative, and needs to be addressed accordingly.

The transportation problem of Dhaka city has to be addressed from the following platforms :

01. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S DECISION AND COMMITMENT ON SOME FACTORS OF THE COUNTRY (HAVING EFFECT ON THE CITY'S TRANSPORTATION).
02. MACRO AND MICRO LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS BY THE URBAN AUTHORITIES.
03. URBAN AUTHORITIES' DECISIONS ON PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT.
04. URBAN AUTHORITIES' DECISIONS ON TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT.

We shall present hereunder brief description of the above.

01. Central government's decision on factors having effect on city's transportation: At the very beginning the government would have to decide whether they would continue the tradition of the British and Pakistani colonial government or act as a democratic government. In democratic system not the interests of the royalties and bureaucrats, but that of the common people comes first. During British colonial period, the bureaucrats shrewdly served their own interest by appeasing the British royalties. During Pakistani colonial period they continued the same, where the affluent people from Pakistan replaced the British royalties. During the military ruled pseudo democracy (from 1975 to 1990) the bureaucrats treated the military officials as masters. Even though democracy was initiated in the country in 1990, still the bureaucrats are could not change their allegiance. Still today they take up programs and projects where from they can collect money to satisfy the political party's and their financial interests. Since multinational companies, dishonest foreign companies and affluent businessmen unofficially finance the cost of the political parties, at times the bureaucrats are compelled to take up projects which can ensure the above conditions. The case of bribing one ex-prime minister's son by a foreign telecommunication company for getting business is one of many unexposed cases.

Even in democratic Bangladesh the bureaucrats have established clear cut difference between the privileged group (comprising of bureaucrats, influential politicians and affluent people) and the disadvantaged group (i.e. the common people). In the above context, no positive result should be expected unless the government changes the previous attitude. In doing so they must look into the interest of the entire country and not of Dhaka city alone. We put here our specific proposal for two measures which would express their honor for democracy. These are: (a) Decentralization of central administration and (b) Introduction of Social housing.

(a) DECENTRALIZATION: A city gets the essential finance from various sources, where one principal source is government fund. Dhaka city is now getting excessive source, the ill effect of which is being seen in price hike and excess of wealth including vehicles. At this context we propose that some ministries (say 10) be transferred to 5 divisional headquarters. As soon as these ministries would be shifted, it would on one hand ease the abnormal situation of Dhaka and enormously help the economy of the divisional cities. Nowadays digital technology has rendered communication extremely easy. The above mentioned ministries would have their liaison offices in Dhaka with such provisions that all digitally transferable information and documents generated in the Divisional level would be transferred to the city and vice versa. In addition there will be provision for physical transfer of documents in special courier within 24 hours. The

Ministers and other responsible personnel working in the divisions would take the help of ‘tele’ or ‘video’ conference when needed. In the greater interest of the country and as part of the solution to Dhaka city’s transportation problem, we propose that the following ministries be immediately shifted to the following divisional cities:

**MINISTRIES PRESENT LOCATION NEW LOCATION (PROPOSED)**

Ministry of Agriculture Dhaka Rajshahi

Ministry of Cultural Affairs Dhaka Rajshahi

Ministry of Food & Disaster Management Dhaka Barisal

Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock Dhaka Barisal

Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) Dhaka Sylhet

Ministry of Environment and Forest Dhaka Sylhet

Ministry of Water Resources Dhaka Khulna

Ministry of Textile and Jute Dhaka Khulna

Ministry of Chittagong Hills Tracts Affairs Dhaka Chittagong

Ministry of Commerce Dhaka Chittagong

(b) SOCIAL HOUSING : The concept of Social Housing is not yet popular in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh we are aware of two types of housing, like: (i) Government housing (or quarter), where only the government servants can live on highly reduced rent and (ii) Private housing, where both the common people and government servants can live on negotiable rents. As deviation from this concept “Social Housing” is the house constructed by the government where both the government servants and common people can live on negotiable rent.

Large cities like Dhaka is not the place where all people should live or wish to live for all time to come. The government should not patronize a system in which people, who are not essential for the city may be encouraged to live here. The system of renting houses by private owners helps huge number of non-essential people to live here. The present trend of owned-apartment has created some hindrance against the monopolistic house rent business.

Even though better than the renting system, the present system of owned-apartments have got severe defect. Usually man rent house for temporary living. On the other hand they purchase house or apartment for security and as an asset for all time to come. However, the way owned-apartments are being constructed, sold and managed, these no more exist as “permanent asset”. At present the owners of the apartment building are given equal right and share on the land. In almost all the apartment buildings no owner would ever be able to construct an independent house on the tiny land he owns. Land is usually known as a permanent asset. However, a tiny land mentioned above in no way can be treated as permanent asset.

Multi-level apartment buildings are constructed with cement and steel. These materials have fixed life-span. The life of a building depends upon on its design, system of construction, environment, natural hazard etc. Even if we ignore the case of natural hazard which may smash a

building at any time, all buildings have limited life. In Engineering field the life of a brick building is taken to be about 60 years and that of a concrete building, 80-100 years. Even though the prediction has been proved to have been true in case of brick building, it has not been still been proved for concrete building, because the age of cement and concrete still did not come to this level. From the available information, one of the earliest apartment building constructed in Mumbai collapsed after 30 years.

Even though the apartment buildings constructed in Bangladesh at the initial stage may get longer life, the recently built buildings may not be that lucky. We can explain the reason here. Nowadays, the developers treat and use apartment buildings as “salable commodity”. Earlier apartment buildings were constructed at the initiative of a number of owners, who used to sell the excess units to outsiders. Naturally the owners in their own interest used to place utmost importance on the life and safety of the building. But after such buildings have turned to “salable commodities” the developer’s interest lies in increasing the difference between cost of construction and sale of units. After the sale is complete the developer is relieved from all responsibilities including the life of the building. The developer knows that good finishing fetch good price and defects like (i) use of less water in curing, (ii) less cement in mortar, (iii) old or inadequate bars in concrete can never be detected after the building has been finished. The developer can easily lessen the cost of construction in the following ways :

- (i) Inadequate structural design,
- (ii) Excellent structural design, but less use of materials during construction,
- (iii) Defective system of construction.

For example, curing or ‘application of water at proper time’ ensures strength of concrete. Life and strength of concrete depends upon proportion of cement and sand. It is possible for a developer to make money by ignoring these factors, where the prospective buyers have no scope to know those.

In the above situation it is possible that the apartments treated as “salable commodity” would get lesser life-span. Now let us see what may happen after a building is collapsed. Let us say, a building with 40 owners has collapsed ten years after construction. Now say, the number of owners by this time has increased to 60. Considering the realities including loopholes in our judiciary, is there any possibility that these 60 owners would be able to organize themselves and take a program for the reconstruction of the building ? The inevitable reality is to sell the land to the companies at negotiated price. And that also would be possible if none of the 60 owners come up with any law suit regarding ownership.

In the above situation it is logical and at the same time very easy for the government to introduce Social Housing. Also the situation is ripe for it. For example, in Dhanmondi the land has been given lease for 99 years. After the expiry of this period the government may introduce social housing here. Most of the buildings in Azimpur government housing society are now in dilapidated condition. In place of repairing, the government can take a program of providing social housing here. In this endeavor the government may go for construction of 20 or more storied apartment buildings with no less than 100 ft inter-building distance. When used in social housing concept the government can collect considerable rent from such buildings. The most



encouraging thing on the part of the government will be, the government can declare that for the first time in the history of this sub-continent they could ignore and go beyond the colonial tradition of providing accommodation for the government servants only.

We have explained how hundreds or thousands of apartment-owners are being deprived of the concept of “permanent asset” in their “salable commodity”. We have also explained how the house owners get the scope of living in the city, even when they are not essential here. Introduction of “Social Housing” can efficiently take care of both these problems.

02. Macro and Micro level administrative decisions by the Urban Authorities : In the Macro-level solution, the urban authorities may decide on the manageable physical extent of Dhaka city. At present the land enclosed by the waters of Buriganga, Sitalakhya and Turag rivers may be taken to be maximum manageable extent of the city. This region may be called Central Dhaka. Then, its extensions on the other banks of the rivers may be termed as Dhaka East, Dhaka North etc. These sub-regions should be developed as independent cities in points of utilities, infrastructure and socio-economic facilities. Large bodied vehicles like inter-district bus, train, steamship etc. should not be allowed beyond the water barrier of the central city. Also all vehicles entering Central Dhaka should be subjected to payment of toll.

It should be noted here that unless a suitable mechanism for controlling the vehicles coming from all corners of the country can be developed, all endeavors for solving transportation problem, whatever expensive or unique those might be, would fail.

In Micro-level solution, the urban authorities may go for recreating the “Wards”. Now Ward, the mini-administrative area of the city cannot be physically identified. In the new system of demarcation, the authority would take the chunk of urban areas enclosed by wide roads on all sides and none of such roads would be longer than 2 kilometers. Each of the wards will be numbered and given a name. Then the population of each ward will be enumerated. On the basis of this number the authorities would find out the required number of essential services like (i) Medical and healthcare centre, (ii) Financial institutions, (iii) One stop bill payment booth, (iv) Children’s school, (v) Vegetable fish meat market, (vi) Medicine shop, (vii) Community centre, (viii) Postal or Courier and parcel service points, (ix) Repair shop for household gadgets etc. After finalizing the number the authority would invite information from the existing establishments. Then the urban authority would give recognition to the requisite number of such establishments on the basis of their facilities and locations. The recognized establishments would be allowed to continue activities at reduced tax, where as others would have to pay taxes at enhanced rate. This rule would help to establish the required number of facilities, and at the same time, eliminate the excess ones from each ward. As soon as the inhabitants would find their essential facilities within 2 kilometers (which is within walking limit of Bangladesh) they would use fewer vehicles for availing these purposes. Inside each Ward, user-friendly vehicles like cycle, trolley etc. should be encouraged and entry of bus, truck etc. should be restricted and controlled.

03. Physical developments: (a) FOOTPATH : The urban authorities should place immense importance on footpath. Those should be constructed with specifications to satisfy the following : (i) Peoples’ easy walking, (ii) Kids’ normal travel and also in perambulator, (iii) Movement of

handicapped persons wheel chair and (iv) People's movement with loaded trolleys. In all possible cases those should be covered with soft or hard roof.

(b) FOOT OVER BRIDGE : The travel time in the urban area can be shortened by speedy vehicles. Such movements however, cause road accidents. It is interesting that even though Dhaka city is at present experiencing tremendous traffic jam resulting in slow movement, there is meager road accident. It has been observed that during long holidays when the traffic in the city decreases and the cars move at speed there happen accidents. Since our endeavor is to shorten travel time, we have to ensure quicker velocity of vehicles. In order to ensure that the urban authorities would have to construct foot-over bridge at regular intervals. In all possible cases these should be covered to protect people during inclement weather.

04. Transport management: In a democratic country the government cannot discourage people from using cars. However, it is crystal clear that the narrow and inadequate roads of Dhaka city in no way can sustain the cars already owned by the present population, not to say anything about their future number, taking into account the increase of population allowable under the provisions made by the urban authorities. In such a situation the solution is to ensure such type of alternate arrangement that even the owners would prefer to use those. As part of this program superior quality school buses need be introduced at subsidized rate for the children. Staff buses with only two-times-per-day use is in no way economic for Bangladesh and it should be discouraged by imposing heavy tax. Quite often it is said that introduction of luxury buses would be able to discourage use of cars. This is partly correct. As a matter of fact such buses in no way would be able to attract the car owners, unless there is efficient and comfortable system of (i) Ticketing, (ii) Waiting, (iii) Boarding and (iv) Time-maintaining provisions. Vesting all these in the hands of the profit-hungry transport businessmen can never ensure the expected goal. The government would have to treat it as a service sector and manage things, where the vehicles may be owned by private owners but management will be done by the government.

CONCLUSION : As of now the story of the Bangladesh government's failure to solve the transportation problem of Dhaka city is a story discussed even by the kids. Every time a new government rises to power it promises to solve it and declares some programs. At times they impose restrictions, mostly on the movement of vehicles used by the poor, spends considerably on physical developments that might help the rich class. In the long run, however, it is seen that in place of solving, those have further complicated the problem. Also, the inquiry team formed by the contemporary government reveals corruption and kick-back cases of the previous government.

Now, Bangladesh is being ruled by the government formed by Bangladesh Awami League and its allies. They have won landslide victory in the election held in 2009. As usual, this government also has revealed some corruptions of the previous government in this sector. Following the suit of their predecessors they have expressed promises and declared programs for solution. With their previous experiences the common people of the country and specially the suffering population of Dhaka city know, their promises and programs are going to meet the previous fate. It really is destined to be so, because never before any government felt for in-depth analysis of this extremely complicated problem.

We have endeavored to raise the issues related with this extremely complicated problem. The limited page of the paper does not allow detail discussion. We have endeavored to mention the vital and decisive points, without the consideration of which such a complicated problem cannot be solved. If seen superficially some of the points may seem to be of secondary or tertiary importance. A second thought however would reveal that those are quite important. Ignoring these in fact resulted in the failures of the previous programs.

It may be seen that the proposals we have placed above is not at all expensive in comparison with what the government at times suggest. One may easily imagine the enormous cost of flyovers, expressways, mono-rails, metro etc. These solutions would in no way reduce the travel time and expenditure of the people. In our proposal there is no proposal for such physical development. Even though some of our proposal may seem costly for the time being, those might prove economic in the long run. Thus shifting of the ministries from Dhaka city to a distant divisional city might seem “costly” now. But after the shifting has taken place the government may discover that running this ministry in that location is much cheaper than doing the same in Dhaka. Arrangements for lessening the need for journey by arranging or re-arranging the necessities near to the place of living, encouraging people to walk on easier footpaths etc. would lessen people’s dependence on cars and buses. And that would save huge foreign currency of this poor the country that is now spent in import of cars, buses, spare parts and fuels.

In materializing our proposal what the government needs is not money, but courage and honesty. They would need democratic and mission-like mentality to break apart the colonial traditions. Let us hope the present government would be able to show that.

The various ways and means of solving transportation problem by using less number of vehicles is something that the physical planners of Bangladesh would have to “invent” by themselves. They would not get any assistance in this endeavor from the developed countries, because such measures go highly against their car-related business.

Bangladesh is a poor country with excess of population and no dearth of problems. For such a country failure in any costly program may prove fatal. We hope, in view of their numerous failures in the past, we believe and request that this time the concerned authorities would strive for finest and intelligent solutions.

This paper is available from the link : <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1476115>. (SSRN, New York, USA)