

Roadside Parking

Roadside parking has become a common yet problematic feature of urban and semi-urban life in many parts of the world, especially in densely populated countries like India. While it offers a convenient solution for drivers who need to park temporarily near shops, offices, or homes, the practice creates a wide range of issues that affect traffic flow, public safety, and urban planning. As cities continue to grow, the negative consequences of unregulated or excessive roadside parking are becoming increasingly evident. One of the most significant problems caused by roadside parking is traffic congestion. In many cities, roads are not wide enough to accommodate both moving traffic and parked vehicles. When cars are parked along the sides of already narrow roads, the available space for moving vehicles is drastically reduced. This often leads to bottlenecks, especially during peak hours, slowing down the overall traffic movement and increasing travel time for commuters. Emergency vehicles like ambulances and fire trucks are also hindered by such congestion, sometimes with life-threatening consequences. Roadside parking also contributes to accidents and safety hazards. Parked vehicles can obstruct the view of drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists, increasing the chances of collisions. Children and the elderly, in particular, are vulnerable when they have to navigate around parked vehicles to cross the street. In addition, double parking—where vehicles are parked beside already parked cars—exacerbates the problem, leading to chaotic traffic situations and even road rage incidents. Another major issue is the impact on pedestrian movement. In many areas, vehicles parked on sidewalks force pedestrians to walk on the road, putting them at risk. This is especially problematic for people with disabilities, senior citizens, and parents with strollers who rely on unobstructed sidewalks for safe mobility. Encroachment on footpaths by parked vehicles also discourages walking and reduces the overall walkability of a city.

From an environmental standpoint, roadside parking contributes to increased air pollution and fuel consumption. Idling vehicles caught in traffic jams caused by blocked lanes emit more pollutants into the atmosphere. The constant stop-and-go movement of traffic in congested areas also leads to greater fuel consumption, which not only hurts individual drivers financially but also contributes to a larger carbon footprint.

Moreover, roadside parking often reflects poor urban planning and lack of infrastructure. In many cases, the absence of adequate parking lots and multi-level parking structures forces drivers to use roadsides as makeshift parking spaces. Municipal authorities may also struggle to enforce parking regulations effectively, either due to lack of manpower or unclear policies, leading to a sense of lawlessness on the streets.

Safeguard Bees to Nourish Ecosystems

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Every year World Bee Day is celebrated on 20th of May across the globe to recognise the essential role of bees and other pollinators in sustaining ecosystems and food security. The theme of this year World Bee Day is "Bee Inspired by Nature to Nourish Us All". This day is celebrated to raise the awareness among the masses about the threats to pollinators like bees by the human activities. This day highlights the role of bees in sustaining in agrifood systems. The theme also highlights the role of pollinators in combating climate change, ensuring food security and sustaining ecosystem health. This day was approved by the UN in December, 2017. On this date, the pioneer of modern beekeeping and one of the greatest authority on the subject of bees, Anton Jansa was born in 1734 in Slovenia. This day was firstly celebrated in 20th of May, 2018. The purpose of celebration of this day is to acknowledge the role of bees and other pollinators for the ecosystem. This day is celebrated by organising different awareness programmes, seminars, workshops etc.

It has been observed that there are about 20,000 different species of bees in the world. Bees live in colonies and in each colony there are three types of bees namely queen, worker and drone. Drones are males. Both worker and queen are females but only the queen can reproduce. Workers clean the hive, collect the pollens and nectar and take care of the offsprings. The drones copulate with the queen and queen lays eggs. There are different types of bees in the world such as the honey bees, the bumble bees, the leaf cutter and mason bees, the digger and carpenter bees and mining bees. Honey bees are called as the social bees. They live in big colonies of about 50,000-60,000 workers. There are about 10 types of honey bees in the world. They are helpful for crop pollination and produce honey and food for us. Bumble bees are excellent pollinators and have small colonies ranging about 50-400 workers. Their furry body reduces their efficiency for pollination. Leaf cutter and mason bees are called buzz bees. They are also called as the solitary bees. Generally a single female mason bee constructs a nest alone and provides for the egg cells. Digger and carpenter bees have good quality for the pollination. They make their nests in the soil. Their body is up to 3cm long and hairy. Mining bees are huge in their number consisting of thousands types of bees. They are also solitary in nature and female bees make nests quite close to each other.

Pollination is a fundamental process for the survival of our

ecosystem. We all depend on the pollinators. Three out of four crops across the globe produce food for the mankind and these crops depend on the pollinators. There are different types of pollinators in the world such as butterflies, birds and bats. But the popular ones are the bees. Bees are helpful to pollinate the agricultural crops and wildflowers. It is estimated that they pollinate about 90 per cent of flowering plants and 70 per cent of world's main crops. Without bees, pollination would become difficult. They have great importance especially in the agricultural sector as they help in food production and thus generate the monetary funds. They also produce honey thus generate more income and employment in the society. Honey is very important and most beneficial product produced by the bees. Honey has multiuses. Beewax is the second most hive product. It is useful to make candles, wood, leather polishes and ingredients in artists' products and in cosmetics. It is also used as the drug carrier; binding agent and substance in the time releasing mechanism. Thus, bees play a great role in food and medicines production and thus have great economic benefits. The crops pollinated by the honey bees provide food to the mankind. Pollinators are helpful to reproduce the plants. They are helpful not only to produce the food but also they conserve the biodiversity. If the population of pollinators will decline then nutritious crops such as fruits, vegetables and nut crops may be substituted by staple crops such as rice, corn and potatoes, resulting in an imbalanced diet.

Union Territory of J&K has an immense potential for beekeeping. It is considered as one of the most important and suitable places for beekeeping in India. Beekeeping has been an age-old tradition in J&K and is practiced from generation to generation. With commercial beekeeping some new avenues of income and employment can be generated in J&K specially for the rural youths. Unemployed youths of J&K can start entrepreneurship in beekeeping. Pollination centres can be established and beehives can be provided to the unemployed youths on subsidy basis to promote the beekeeping. Beekeeping can prove a promising prospect in J&K. Moreover, beekeeping can boost the horticultural sector in J&K as the fruit crops production can be increased. Unemployment problem in J&K can be solved through commercial beekeeping up to some extent. J&K has the potential to produce the organic honey and farmers can fetch more money by producing the organic honey. Some specified marketing channels are needed to promote the sale of honey. In

present era, bees lives are endangered due to number of reasons such as excessive use of pesticides, habitat loss and anthropogenic reasons. It has been observed that the different species of bees are declining across the globe. It means that they are at risk. Unfortunately lakhs of bees die every year resulting a loss to the human beings. Their population is affected by the number of reasons. Effective remedial measures are needed to increase their population. Climate change is the cause of various environmental issues. The factors such as extreme precipitation, temperature, increased drought, frost etc. effect the bees health. Flowerless or less flowering in gardens also affect their numbering. There is need to make some strenuous efforts to enhance their population. Land use change, invasive insects, excessive use of pesticides and monocropping practices have posed a serious threat on the bees population. Boosting the bees population can boost the crops yield. Sustainable agriculture can reduce the risk to the bees. There is dire need to promote the diversified and eco-friendly agriculture to minimize the risk to the pollinators. Safeguarding bees can safeguard the biodiversity. Present species of bees are in extinction and are in higher risk than the normal rate. There is need to regularly monitor the bees population decline, causes of reduction and impact on the pollination. The taxonomic information on pollinators needs to be addressed. Economic value of pollination by the bees needs to be studied. Conservation and restoration of different species of bees need to be promoted. We need to take care of the bees and other pollinators as it is like fight against the hunger. Capacity building on commercial beekeeping should be intensified among the farmers. In this case KVKs can play significant role in imparting the skills among the farmers. We should have different types of plants which give flowers in different times of the year. We should purchase honey from farmers to promote them. We need to stress on organic farming and avoid use of agro-chemicals so that bees population can be increased. Forest ecosystem should be sustained. We need to generate more and more awareness among the masses on bees protection as decline in their population may affect our lives. We need to create a friendly environment for bees. There is need to diversify crops and reduce pesticide use. We should grow bee-attracting plants.

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Amrit Bharat Stations: Icons of Change, Mirrors of Cultural Identity

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India's transformation today is swift and visible—not just in policy documents or political statements, but in its physical landscape. The changes are apparent in newly built roads, high-speed expressways and world-class airports that rival international standards. These developments reflect a deeper shift in how India connects its cities and empowers its people. Once neglected, the railway sector is now emerging as a crucial part of this progress, shedding its image of overcrowded and outdated stations to become a showcase of culture, efficiency and innovation.

The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is a central component of this transformation. Led by Indian Railways, the initiative aims to modernize over 1,300 railway stations across the country. But this mission goes far beyond architectural upgrades or technological enhancements. It represents a fundamental shift in how India approaches public infrastructure—blending functionality with inclusivity, heritage with modernity and convenience with sustainability. The scheme envisions railway stations not just as transit points but as vibrant, integrated spaces that reflect a city's character and support its community.

At the heart of the scheme is the principle that quality public services contribute directly to the dignity and well-being of every citizen. Where stations once focused only on managing high footfall, they are now being repositioned as important civic spaces—hubs that interconnect culture, economy and daily life. The scheme involves preparing specific master plans for each station, tailored to its location, passenger traffic and local identity. These plans are not rigid; they are designed



to evolve and adapt to emerging technologies, population growth and shifting urban needs. Development proceeds in phases, ensuring minimal disruption to existing operations while allowing space for innovation.

Rather than relying on cosmetic changes like new paint or expanded platforms, the initiative reimagines the entire purpose of a railway station. Stations are now seen as spaces that offer more than transportation—they serve as shopping areas, tourism gateways, business zones and community centers. Every design decision is centered on improving user experience. Passenger entry and exit points are being reorganized to reduce congestion and ensure smooth movement at all times. This is especially valuable for senior

citizens, families with young children and those with mobility challenges.

Inside the stations, modern waiting lounges, better lighting, improved air circulation and ergonomic seating have replaced the once-cramped and dimly lit spaces. Toilet facilities are being modernized to meet high standards of hygiene and comfort. Digital kiosks provide multilingual support and reduce queues at ticket counters, enhancing accessibility for all travelers. To ensure universal design, features like elevators, escalators and clearly marked signage are being added, empowering persons with disabilities and the elderly to navigate the space independently.

The project also emphasizes cleanliness, cultural expression and environmental con-

siousness. Clean stations are seen not just as a hygiene requirement but as a sign of respect and dignity for passengers. Free Wi-Fi at stations allows travelers from even the most remote or underserved areas to stay connected, access information and continue working while in transit. This digital connectivity bridges gaps for rural users and supports modern professionals alike.

In promoting sustainability, the scheme incorporates eco-friendly features such as green pathways and climate-sensitive landscaping. These not only reduce the environmental footprint but also enhance the beauty and comfort of the station environment. Measures like energy-efficient systems, better air flow and the use of ballastless tracks

help reduce noise, pollution and long-term maintenance challenges. Rooftop plazas, where feasible, add community value by creating public gathering spaces and opportunities for commercial activities. One of the most unique aspects of the scheme is the One Station One Product initiative. This program transforms stations into marketplaces where local artisans can showcase and sell regional handicrafts, handlooms, foods and specialty products. In doing so, it strengthens the local economy, revives traditional art forms and forges a deeper connection between travelers and the communities they pass through. This also promotes greater cooperation between local governments and the railway system.

As the scheme continues to roll out, stations are being equipped with executive lounges, meeting areas and real-time digital updates to cater to tourists, pilgrims and business travelers alike. The design philosophy is deeply rooted in human-centered thinking—ensuring that every traveler feels welcome, supported and represented in the space. It marks a shift from a utilitarian design model to one that emphasizes user comfort, civic pride and long-term resilience. India's railway stations are becoming spaces where journeys begin not just physically, but emotionally and socially. They serve as mirrors of the nation's diverse culture and as gateways to opportunity and unity. The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is not simply upgrading infrastructure—it is redefining the role of railway stations in Indian life. It places care, identity and dignity at the center of the travel experience, ensuring that every citizen has access to public spaces that inspire pride and provide ease. This vision, by fully integrating urban design and sustainable development, ensures that these stations will remain relevant, functional and meaningful for generations to come.

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NCC: Shaping Soldiers of Peace, Purpose and Patriotism

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India is blessed with the youngest population in the world, and what we do with our youth today will define the nation's destiny tomorrow. While talent is abundant, so are the challenges—drugs, digital distractions, and growing alienation. In this whirlwind, one institution continues to anchor, empower, and elevate our youth: the National Cadet Corps (NCC). It doesn't preach—it transforms. It doesn't divide—it unites. It doesn't promise overnight glory—it builds lifelong strength.

The story of NCC began in the aftermath of independence, India emerging from colonial rule and facing multiple external and internal challenges, needed a generation of youth that was physically strong, mentally alert, and emotionally devoted to national service. It was in this context that the NCC was formally established on July 16, 1948, under the National Cadet Corps Act, passed by the Indian Parliament. NCC was created to build disciplined, resilient, and socially responsible citizens. In an age of distractions and shrinking attention spans, the importance of character-building and civic responsibility cannot be overstated. Often overlooked in educational discourse, the NCC quietly



shapes over 20 lakh young Indians through drills, adventure camps, social service, disaster relief, environmental drives, and rescue missions. The impact is profound—cadets develop resilience, teamwork, leadership, and a deep commitment to the nation—qualities no textbook can teach. Having closely observed youth development, I can say NCC training is a crucible of transformation.

It is far more than uniforms and drills. It nurtures holistic growth—leadership, teamwork, and civic sense—through a blend of physical training, adventure activities, and community engagement. From scaling mountains to organizing blood donation camps, cadets learn the power of service, the strength of endurance, and the pride of contributing to something greater than themselves.

NCC isn't just about marching or wearing a uniform; it instills life skills—discipline, leadership, physical fitness, teamwork, and a profound sense of civic duty. From the Himalayas to cleanliness drives in villages, cadets undergo experiences no classroom can replicate. Our country needs youth with courage, discipline, and a spirit of service—not just degrees. NCC is that transformative platform. As Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw said, "It is not the gun, but the man behind the gun who wins the battle. NCC ensures that man is ready-in mind, body, and spirit."

In an era dominated by digital distractions and fleeting trends, character-building often takes a backseat. Yet, NCC emerges as a transformative force, shaping disciplined, resilient, and socially responsible citizens. Educators witness firsthand how NCC molds young minds and hearts, instilling enduring values. It is time we recognize and champion its integration into every educational institution nationwide. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a former NCC cadet himself, aptly said, "NCC is not about uniform or uniformity; it is about unity." He has also highlighted the role of NCC in combating drug abuse among youth: "Drugs should not reach the school

or college where there is NCC or NSS. Be drug-free and help others break free too." Where addiction offers an escape, NCC offers a way forward—a path of purpose, prides, and discipline. Beyond character-building, NCC certificates open doors to prestigious careers in the armed forces, police, and civil services. Cadets gain an edge in education and employment opportunities. Yet, despite its immense value, many schools and colleges underutilize NCC due to time constraints, limited resources, and lack of awareness. This must change. NCC should be embraced as an essential part of education. Governments and institutions must: Encourage NCC units in all schools and colleges. Provide academic credits for participation. Train more Associate NCC Officers. Promote inclusivity for rural and marginalized youth. Let every student embark on this journey of growth and nation-building. The future of India depends on it. As educators, parents, policymakers, and community leaders, let us rally behind this mission. By making NCC accessible to every student, we empower individuals and strengthen the very fabric of our nation. Our future deserves nothing less.