

Cyclewaale *Portraits of Cyclists of India*

The importance of cycling as a safe, non-polluting, healthy mode of transport that requires less space and very little in terms of public investments is growing the world over.

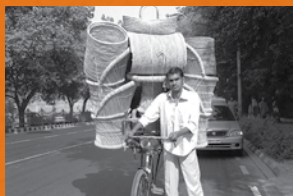
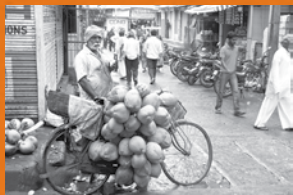
India's National Urban Transport Policy itself places emphasis on the need for promoting cycling in cities:-

"The Central Government would give priority to the construction of cycle tracks and pedestrian paths in all cities, under the National Urban Renewal Mission (NURM), to enhance safety and thereby enhance use of non-motorized modes."

But what is forgotten is that in spite of unfavourable conditions there are millions who use and depend on a cycle today. A vast informal (and formal) economy is supported by them.

They are often invisible to us as we zip by in our motorized vehicles.

Here is a glimpse of some of the men and women, the unsung heroes, the cyclewaale!



SUM Net seeks to improve the overall quality of life for all by securing deeply democratic processes of decision-making to ensure that urban transportation systems are universally accessible, socially just, safe and secure, economically viable, and environmentally sound.

Cyclewaale Calendar has been developed by Parisar for SUM Net India.

Credits

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Construction Worker, Senior Citizen, Postman, Domestic Worker, Milkman: Shweta Vernekar, Parisar, Pune

Dabbawala: Sudhir Badami, Mumbai

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Hasiru Usiru, Bangalore

Coconut Seller

Name: Mr. Sesha
Age: About 58 years
Vending coconuts since 1964, Mr. Sesha pushes his cycle for about 5 to 6 kms every day.

January 2012

S	1	15	29
M	2	16	30
T	3	17	31
W	4	18	
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S	8	22	
M	9	23	
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W	11	25	
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F	13	27	
S	14	28	

“The bicycle is a curious vehicle. Its passenger is its engine”

John Howard

Vegetable and fruit vendors in many cities set out early in the morning with their bicycles and carts to whole-sale markets to pick up the merchandise for the day and then travel to their vending areas. On their bicycles they can reach their customers in narrow lanes. This eco-friendly method of retail saves money for both the vendor and the customer.

SUM Net India



IDS, Delhi

Sewage Cleaner

Name: Jagdish

Age: 47 years

Jagdish has been cleaning blocked sewers in Delhi since the last 22 years. He sets out to find work every morning, with his equipment strapped to his cycle, cycling around 35 to 40 kms everyday.

Sewer maintenance work is carried out by informal sector workers in Delhi and many other Indian cities. It is easier to carry the required equipment on bicycles as compared to other vehicles. Accidents, including fatal ones, are frequent in deep sewer maintenance. The Supreme Court has directed State Governments to ensure safety measures for this work, but action is yet inadequate.

February 2012

S		12	26
M		13	27
T		14	28
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“The bicycle is the most civilized conveyance known to man. Other forms of transport grow daily more nightmarish. Only the bicycle remains pure in heart”

Iris Murdoch

SUM Net India



March 2012

S		11	25
M		12	26
T		13	27
W		14	28
T	1	15	29
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Dabbawala

Name: Tukaram Dhadi

Age: 34 years

Has been working in the profession and cycling for about 16 years, covering about 90 to 100 km a day. Since his area of work does not involve rail travel, he moves entirely by bicycle, overcoming the city's dangerous traffic and taking to footpaths for some safety, wherever possible. Even after a hard day, Tukaram, belonging to the Warkari community, is always found with a smile.

“When I see an adult on a bicycle, I do not despair for the future of the human race”

H.G. Wells

The Dabbawalas of Mumbai, since 1890, operate only through railways, hand carts and cycles. With more than 5,000 dabbawalas, catering to more than 2 lakh consumers daily, they make a great case for the efficiency and economy of bicycles even today.

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April 2012

S	1	15	29
M	2	16	30
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F	13	27	
S	14	28	



School Student

Name: Seeta Dagadu Naykavade

Age: 14 years

Seeta, studying in 9th standard at Shivaji Vidya Mandir School in Aundh Gaon, starts from home at 10:30 am and walks 3 kms with her mother Phulabai who is a domestic worker, till her first work place at Aundh. Her cycle is always parked at this house, as her own neighbourhood is not safe enough for the cycle to be parked. She cycles to school from this house, about 2 kms away and back again on all weekdays.

“Life is like riding a bicycle - in order to keep your balance, you must keep moving”

Albert Einstein

Cycles enable millions of children to travel to school; however, a survey in Pune shows that safety concerns are among the prime reasons why parents are increasingly reluctant to let children cycle to school.

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Street Vendor

Name: Shyam Lal

Age: 32 years

Shyam Lal has been selling cane stools and baskets in Delhi for 14 years now. He cycles around 40 kms each day with his load of cane products. The cycle is not only his source of livelihood, but also a convenient and cost effective mode of transport.

May 2012

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“Bicycling is a big part of the future. It has to be. There’s something wrong with a society that drives a car to workout in a gym”

Bill Nye

There are more than 3.1 million street traders countrywide, many cycle-dependent. The informal economy is a major provider of employment, goods and services for lower-income groups and contributes a significant share of GDP. Better cycling infrastructure can help improve work conditions for these workers.

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June 2012



Parisar, Pune

Postman

Name: Prahlad Yashwant Mandhare

Age: 42 years

A postman for the past 16 years, Mr Mandhare cycles for around 30 kms everyday to deliver letters in Shivajinagar area of Pune.

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S	9	23

“Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of a bike ride”

John F. Kennedy

In 2007, there were 46,159 postmen in India, delivering letters on their cycles everyday. The image of a postman, with his khaki uniform and the cycle still remains popular among people.

SUM Net India

July 2012



CEE, Pune

Raddiwala

Name: Lahu Baban Shegare

Age: 38 years

Lahu Shegare collects old newspapers everyday from 8 am to 12 noon, carrying around 50 kgs of newspapers in one trip. His present cycle is a prize for his hard work. The raddi shop owner he is associated with announced a competition - the one who brings in more raddi gets a cycle as gift. This was 18 years ago, and Lahu is using the same cycle since then.

“Those who wish to control their own lives and move beyond existence as mere clients and consumers - those people ride a bike”

Wolfgang Sachs

Itinerant waste buyers, or raddiwalas, are a key link in the vast system of recycling of urban wastes. They usually own bicycles to purchase and transport the recyclable materials. A study shows that itinerant waste buyers in Bangalore recover 4 to 5 lakh tonnes of materials every year.

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Parisar, Pune

Construction Worker

Name: Revanna

Age: Around 50 years

Ever since he migrated from Karnataka to Maharashtra, Revanna cycles to work. In Pune, he cycles from Kothrud to Corporation everyday, a distance of about 8 kms. His son Anil insists on riding with him as he doesn't like to travel by bus with his mother.

“People do not ‘drive’ cars, they steer them. People do not ‘ride’ bicycles, they drive them”

A. N. Mouse

As per the estimate of the National Sample Survey (1987-88), there were about 8.5 million building and other construction workers in India. Even considering that 1% cycle to work, it would mean that 85,000 construction workers cycle in the country. Needless to say, since 1987, the number of workers must have increased manifold.



Parisar, Pune

Milkman

Name: Chintamanrao Sutar

Age: 65 years

Chintamanrao Sutar comes cycling from Paud Gaon to Deccan and the core city area of Pune, a distance of about 48 kms, everyday for the last 40 years.

September 2012

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S	8	22	

“I thought of that while riding my bike”

Albert Einstein, on the Theory of Relativity

The milkman in the city has traditionally used the bicycle to carry milk cans and deliver fresh milk to the customers' door step. The white revolution has changed the milk industry but the door step delivery of plastic pouches of milk is still largely done using the bicycle.



Parisar, Pune

Housemaid

Name: Laxmi Gujlor

Age: 32 years

Laxmi has been using a cycle to go to work for the past 10 years. She makes multiple trips to and from her house throughout the day, and ends up cycling around 16 kms everyday. Though she stays close by to her place of work, she says it would be impossible to do the number of trips she does without a bicycle. It adds to her income and also gives her the flexibility of returning home in between two jobs.

There are at least 100 million domestic workers in India, 50 times the number of people working in the software industry. These workers largely cycle or walk or take a bus to work, forming a large chunk of cyclists in any city.

October 2012

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S	7	21	
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S	13	27	

“The bicycle is the most efficient machine ever created: Converting calories into gas, a bicycle gets the equivalent of three thousand miles per gallon”

Bill Strickland



Senior Citizen

Name: Madhav Vaman Mahajan

Age: 78 years

Madhav Mahajan retired from Bank of Maharashtra 18 years ago. He used to cycle to work everyday and has continued his cycling to run small errands near his house. He never thought of switching to a two wheeler or a four wheeler because he thinks that it is cycling that has kept him healthy, active and independent all these years, despite his age.

According to the WHO, tens of millions of people are injured or disabled every year. Children, pedestrians, cyclists and the elderly are among the most vulnerable of road users. Simple low cost street design measures can help make our streets safer for all.

November 2012

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F	9	23	
S	10	24	

**“Cycle tracks will
abound in Utopia”**

H.G. Wells

SUM Net India



Software engineer

Name: Venkatesh

Venkatesh cycles 16 kms back and forth from work for the last three years. He drops his son Naman to school whenever possible. Cycling has changed his life in many ways - it has made him aware of his environment, make friends along the way and most importantly, helped him lose as much as 10 kilos after he started cycling.

Bangalore is catching up with the idea of cycling to work. Organisations like Bangalore Bikers Club (BBC), Go Green Go Cycling and Ride a Cycle Foundation (RACF), are coming up with innovative ideas to bring cycling enthusiasts together and rope in those at the periphery.

December 2012

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“100 bicycles can be manufactured for the energy and materials it takes to build a medium sized car”

Worldwatch Institute

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