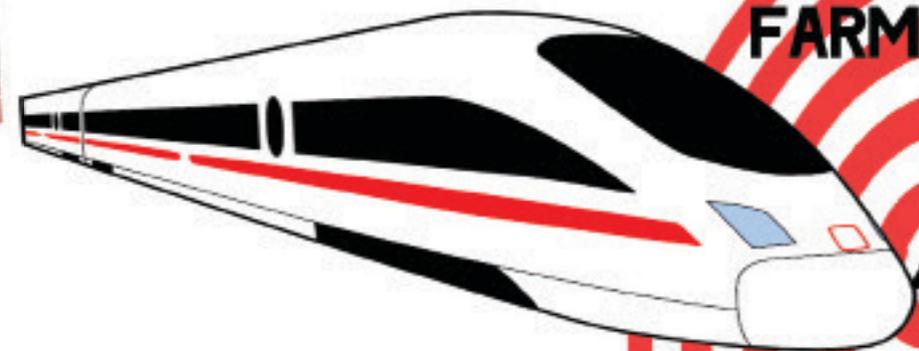


Indonesia may have to scrap Chinese high-speed rail project, because democracy



Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (Bullet Train)

A People's Critique



Malaysia Scraps Multibillion-Dollar High-Speed Rail Project to Singapore

By Anisah Shukry and Kyunghee Park
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A People's Critique



National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)
June 2018

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Preface

This report has been prepared by a coalition of organizations resisting the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (bullet train) project. The objective of this report is to point out why the bullet train project must be rolled back on the grounds of economic viability, environmental impact and constitutional democratic rights. The idea to bring out a people's critique of the project came up in April this year in a meeting of several civil society organizations. These organizations namely Bhumi Adhikar Andolan, Gujarat Khedut Samaj, Kashtakari Sangathana, Maharashtra Rajya Kisan Sabha, National Alliance of People's Movements and Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti have been resisting the bullet train in the different parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra and elsewhere.

This report presents only a basic overview of fronts of resistance. This can be updated and enriched with further inputs from experts, social organizations and experiences of local resistance. We hope that the report would assist and arm the ongoing struggle against the bullet train in India.

We acknowledge the contributions by Soumya Dutta (Beyond Copenhagen Collective), Nishant (IDS & IIT Delhi), Krishnakant (Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti) and Rishit (NAPM Delhi) in preparing of this report. In addition, we would like to acknowledge the support of Ulka Mahajan, Brian Lobo, Rajendra Ravi, Anand Mazgaonkar, Madhuresh Kumar, Amit Kumar and others.

June 2018, New Delhi

Chapter 1

About the project

Information available in public domain

MAHSR (Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail) has been proposed between Mumbai and Ahmedabad with 12 stations - Mumbai, Thane, Virar, Boisar (Maharashtra), Vapi, Bilimora, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad, and Sabarmati (Gujarat). It has the total route length of 508 km and the total project cost is estimated to be ₹1.1 lakh crores. The scheduled completion deadline is August 15, 2023. National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) is implementing the project. NHSRCL is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with equity participation by Ministry of Railways (central government) and the state governments of Gujarat and Maharashtra. The Ministry of Railways has contributed ₹500 crore as the share capital. The government of Gujarat has contributed ₹5 crore. NHSRCL also plans to build an exclusive training institute at Vadodara for the personnel training.

A number of feasibility studies of the MAHSR have been done. Based on a set of studies conducted in 2011, a feasibility report was published in 2015 (available on the NHSRCL website). Another titled 'HSR: Indigenous

People Plan' (also in April 2015) was prepared by TARU Leading Edge, a private consultancy based in Delhi, on behalf of the consortium of funding agencies (JICA i.e. Japan International Cooperation Agency, Oriental Consultants Global and Nippon Koei). In 2012, JICA had published a 'needs survey' of HSR in India.

However, the detailed project report (DPR) and other essential details such as financial viability study are completely missing. Does this mean that the studies conducted in 2011 and the associated feasibility report are the only documents being used to implement the project?

Let's examine what these documents say.

The feasibility report of MAHSR is quite detailed but interestingly four key chapters of this report are missing. The missing chapters (12 to 15) contain details on project cost, implementation plan, financing options, and most importantly economic and financial analysis. These chapters could have shed some light on the calculation of costs and estimated direct/indirect benefits of the project. Only these chapters could help to eliminate citizens' suspicions related to the burden of debt and financial viability of MAHSR. After repeated attempts to retrieve the missing data through RTI, the concerned

authority simply cited some ‘secrecy’ reason that might affect business competition to justify withholding this crucial information from the public.

The report is based on a joint study conducted by JICA and Ministry of Railways, GoI (Government of India). It has a comprehensive discussion on all the aspects of MAHSR project. What is disappointing is that the aim of the study appears to be justifying the project rather than dispassionately assessing the viability and relevance of this project. We will take up the key concerns one by one.

Chapter 2 Our Concerns

Transport and Mobility Needs: Transport Planning Perspective

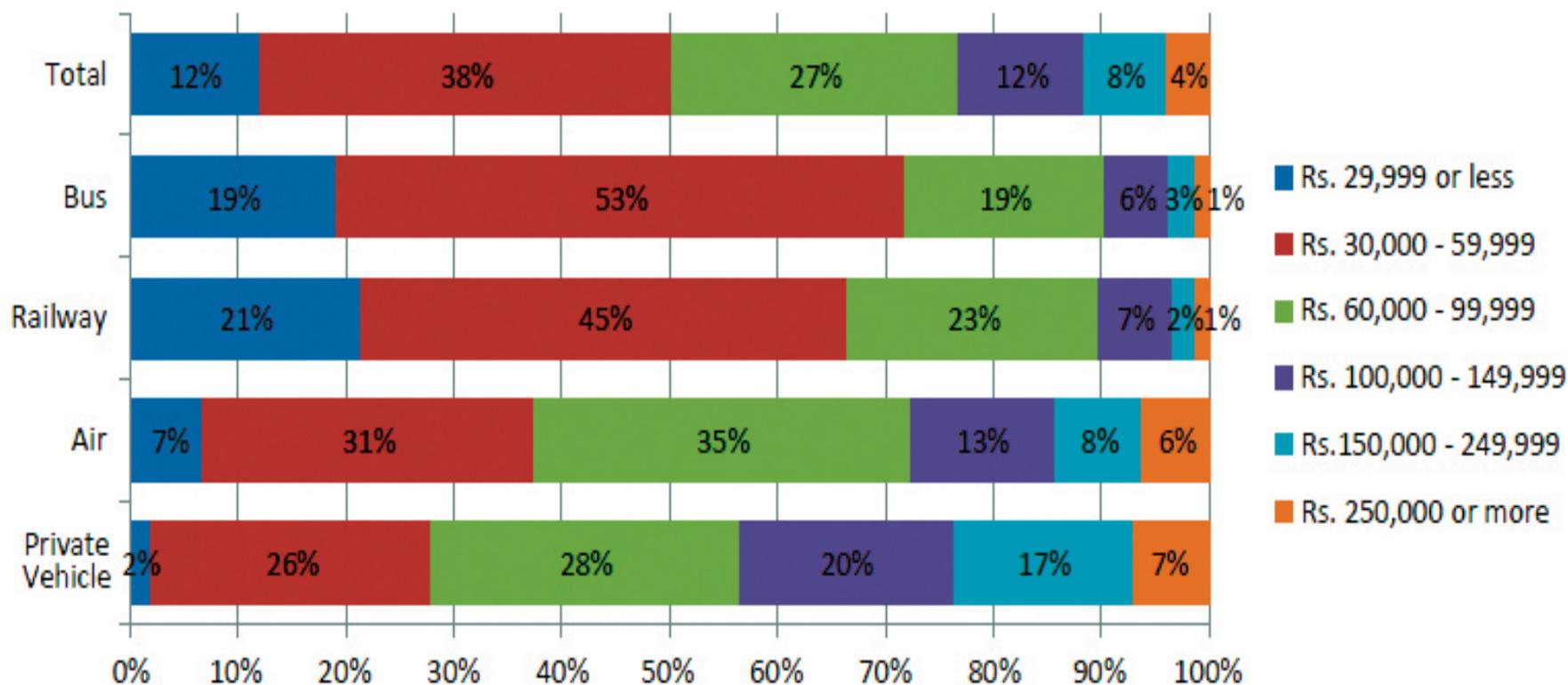
1. Where are the users?

The report claims a daily ridership forecast of 40,000 passengers in the year 2023. This is ridiculously optimistic if one goes by the present day passenger traffic data used by the study itself. Daily air traffic on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad route was 4700, as reported by the study. Combined traffic of all the modes between the pair of other cities where the stations have been planned is also very small as compared to the forecast. Even though the rationale for planning these stations is to increase the ridership, it is difficult to see how that would help achieve the forecast target.

Traffic forecasts in the study are based on the relationship between GDP growth rate and air traffic over the years. This is too simplistic. Growth in domestic air traffic witnessed during past few years has to do as much as with the increase in income levels of a certain class as with the remarkable decrease in the airfares brought by plummeting prices of jet fuel, technological improvements, and competition within the aviation

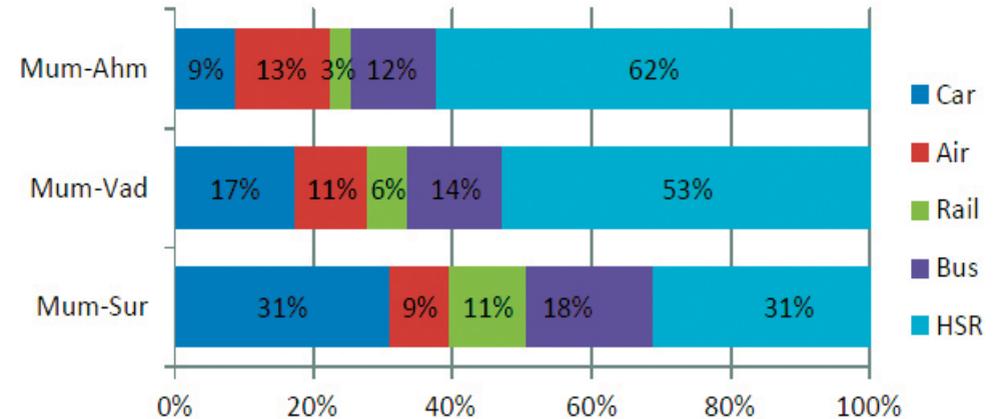
sector. All available evidence suggests that the current boom in domestic air traffic is likely to keep the fares at much lower levels than the proposed fare of ₹3000 for a bullet train ride between Mumbai and Ahmedabad. The feasibility study uses outdated airfare input of ₹4100 while these days the fare ranges from ₹1500-₹4600 with a month-long average of nearly ₹2000. The key question is - to what extent will speed enhancement draw richer income classes away from air travel?

The traffic contributed by other modes of transport is even more difficult to convert. Around 5000 people travel by trains run by Indian railways while another 15,000 people travel by personal automobile between Mumbai and Ahmedabad daily, according to the feasibility study. Usually, a Willingness-To-Pay (WTP) survey is conducted to capture people's travel preferences and needs, and how likely is it that they would pay for different kind of service or an enhancement in the service



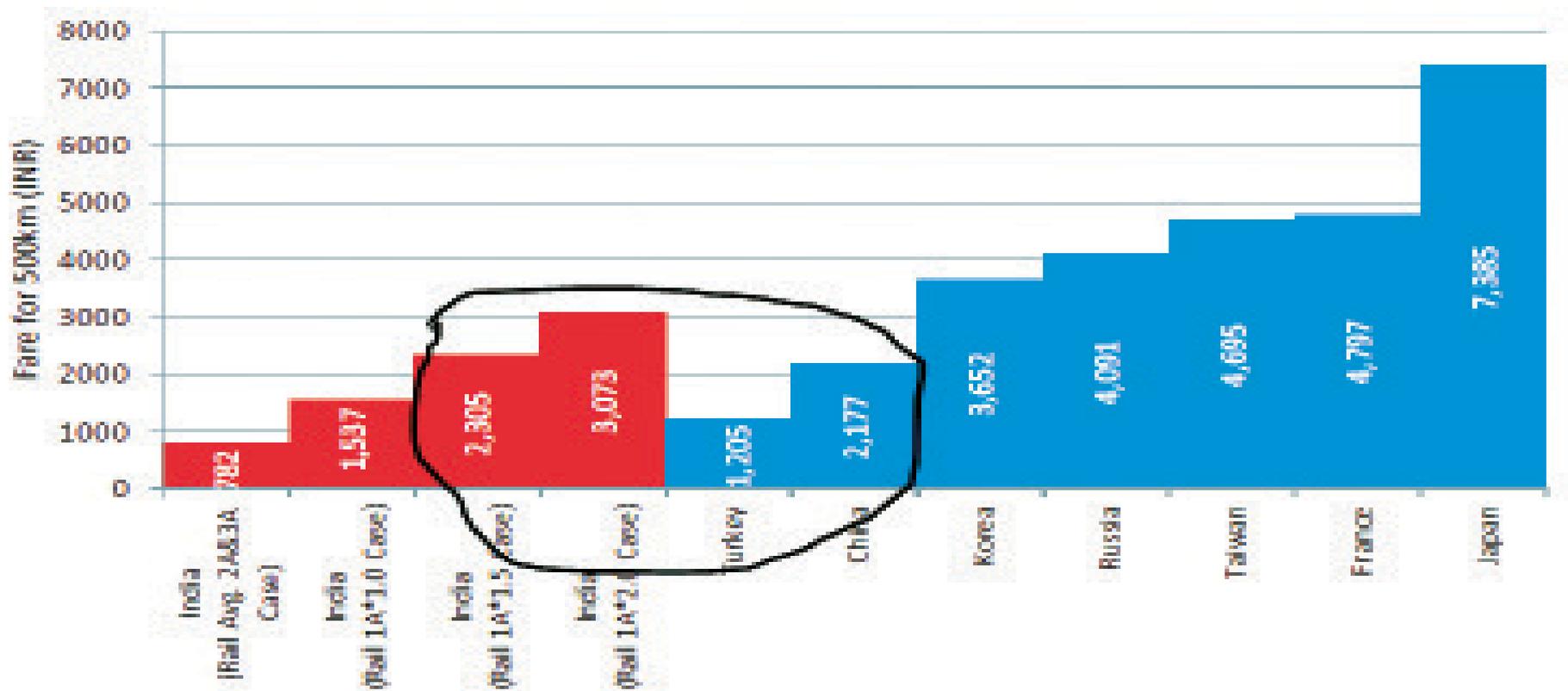
Household Income Level by Transportation Mode in 2014 (Source: JICA study team)

quality etc. WTP method has drawn strong criticism over the years because of lack of reliability, and other serious limitations. People often do not fully understand how a proposed service would serve them, and their response to WTP survey is disconnected with realities. Since people are not well informed about the choices, their responses are usually invalid. Therefore, payment ceiling (highest price that people are “willing” to pay) values are based on fallacious assumptions. WTP method can be a tool to fudge the demand if proper accountability mechanisms are not in place. Yet, it continues to be a standard method for the feasibility studies and appraisals. In any case, the results of the WTP survey have been reported cursorily in the feasibility report. The story is almost unbelievable: an example of how absurd is the data presented in the chart (from the feasibility report). According to this, as many as 86 out of 100 people who travel by air between Mumbai and Ahmedabad have a monthly income of less than ₹13000 per month! It is predicted that from each mode of transport 60% of passengers will switch to the bullet train from the first day of operation. This is equally absurd. This is like planning a luxury hotel of 50 floors assuming that its 40 floors will be packed by the poor and the lower-middle class. Surely, the desperation of a seller (Japanese capitalists) and fetish of a buyer (Indian State) is capable of creating such magic!



*Predicted mode share of various transport modes in 2023
(Source: JICA study team)*

In short, the Willingness-To-Pay survey and the travel demand forecast look completely unreliable. Model predictions of modal shares which have been used to come up with the popular “40000” mark do not correspond to the real world conditions as the data do not make sense. The forecasting method is questionable on technical grounds. The Willingness-To-Pay survey seems to be badly designed and badly conducted. All this warrants a fresh, well-designed, and closely supervised survey. Before proceeding any further, these serious gaps must be addressed. Before making a decision on whether to spend public money on a project of this scale, the government must order a rigorous enquiry and make the feasibility study data public and open-access.



Global Comparison of HRS fare for 500 km route (Source: JICA study team)

2. How will the bullet train earn back?

The claim that Indian bullet train will be the cheapest in the world is definitely a lie. Turkey and China both have cheaper fares on similar distance ranges. Even the feasibility report admits that fares will be higher than HSR fares in Taiwan, Turkey and China in PPP terms. Taiwan HSR had to be shut down because of low ridership; less

than half as predicted ridership. For similar distance range (500 km), a ride on Chinese bullet trains may cost 200-300 Chinese Yuan which translated in PPP terms becomes around ₹1000-₹1500. If lower fares have not been able to pull off HSR experiments in developing economies, the viability of Indian HSR experiment is quite bleak.

Another weakness of NHRCL's claim is the "innovative" fare-box revenue model that they have chosen not to make public (the curious case of missing chapters mentioned earlier). Fare-box revenue is that part of total expenses which is met by the fares paid by the users. Across the globe, the transport services do not recover the expenses through fare-box alone, apart from some cases of air travel. A study by the scholars of IIM-Ahmedabad showed that 100 daily trips at full occupancy would be required with a fare of ₹5000 between Ahmedabad and Mumbai to make the bullet train financially viable. Recovery of the capital cost and the maintenance cost – both of which are quite large - is not possible only through fare-box. It is not clear how these costs will be recovered to keep the project economically viable.

3. Myth of time-saving and the idea of transport

The value of travel-time savings is not a constant. The elasticity of this value may depend on many factors including demographics, income, occupation, cultural context etc. The value of travel-time savings is a complex phenomenon. Recent research in transport planning has shown that people do not find the travel time necessarily unproductive. In a study of Chinese HSR train journeys, researchers found that overnight sleeper trains (conventional trains) are preferred to the low-fare

trains as well as the costlier high-speed trains. It has been argued that HSR will relax the necessity to live in the city and it will allow people to live in distant exurban locations and other cities. The planners of MAHSR think that a high-speed rail network would enable the working class to shift from the dense metropolitan areas (where the jobs are) to the places like Boisar and Nadiad where there is a scope for "developing" land for residential purposes. This strikes a chord with the interests of the real estate companies but it is unlikely to lure the majority of the working class. Will the working class people value 8 hours of daily travel (and an expensive one) while sitting in a chair (or in a car, or standing in an urban rail) more than living near their work location? Bullet train will not run in the night, so why would people not take a cheaper rail ticket in sleeper classes (AC or non-AC) and complete the journey while not disturbing their sleep?

Over the years, it has been realized that speed is not the only parameter of interest in transport planning. Enhancing people's accessibility to destinations is equally important. Therefore, appraisal of transport projects must be in terms of increase in access. People do not live at stations and terminals. People have to travel to these nodes. These parts of a journey can be called access (coming to these nodes from starting point of the journey) and egress (from node to the final destination). Access

and egress at times play a really important role in people's choice of travel mode. A speedier network connecting two nodes can reduce time spent on that segment while the overall time that people end up spending on travel may not reduce, or worse - it may actually shoot up.

That is why high-speed rail (bullet-type) is not competitive against personal automobile or conventional railway for distances less than 150 km [1]. The average speed of an HSR with stoppage at every 20 miles will be similar to that of a conventional express train if operated properly. HSR with speed more than 250 kmph is advantageous only in the distance range of 500-1000 km. Bullet train can be the most probable choice among available alternatives only for the end-to-end trips i.e. between Mumbai and Ahmedabad. For travel between other pairs of MAHSR stations, existing suburban railway and urban/inter-city bus services have an enormous scope of improvement with comparably minuscule investment. While evaluating the competitiveness of HSR against conventional railways, this fact must also be taken into consideration. Efforts should be made that trains like Gatimaan Express, the newly inaugurated "semi-high speed" train on Delhi-Jhansi route which is achieving an average speed of 90 kmph, are operated on other routes

[1] <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2015.09.012>

where these are needed.

4. What is inspiring the MAHSR: Recent history of transport 'mega'-projects.

Some commentators have cited the example of Rajdhani trains and Delhi Metro as previous experiments, which also had raised similar suspicions among a group of scholars and civil society members. There are several problems with this argument.

First, much of the ridership on Rajdhani trains is possibly due to bad condition of superfast and express trains in terms of punctuality and operational regularity, not in terms of travel time. Between a punctual superfast train and a Rajdhani on the same route, it is quite hard to predict if the demand will be higher for the Rajdhani.

Second, Rajdhani trains run on the same track which is used by the other trains. Therefore, land, forests, and people are not affected in any particular way. HSR route will be an exclusive Right-Of-Way (ROW) which will put the forests in danger, displace people, and take away the farmlands and other livelihood options of the affected population.

Third, the comparison of HSR with the Delhi Metro is not quite right because the metro (an urban mode of

transport) provides connectivity between suburban locations and city while HSR is best viewed as medium-distance regional transport. Yet, the same questions are applicable to the Delhi Metro. Is it not true that the disputable “success” of Delhi Metro has much to do with the total neglect of bus transport in Delhi-NCR? Is the Indian government thinking of branding MAHSR as “success” along the lines of Delhi Metro by keeping the wider Indian Railways network in a state of neglect?

It is true, as the Japanese experience suggests, that Shinkansen technology is absolutely safe. These trains have not witnessed any fatal accidents in their history of almost 50 years. Inductive reasoning suggests that Indian HSR (being built with the same technology) should not face any fatal crashes. Nonetheless, it is agreeable that the technology is quite safe. But this leads us to another important question - should the government go for an option which ensures the safety of a few, or should the government rather prioritize the investment in research and policies with the aim to upgrade the safety of conventional rail system which is being used by tens of million people daily?

The question of whether to plan an HSR or not is central to a more fundamental debate: what should the idea of transportation be? More specifically, how does the

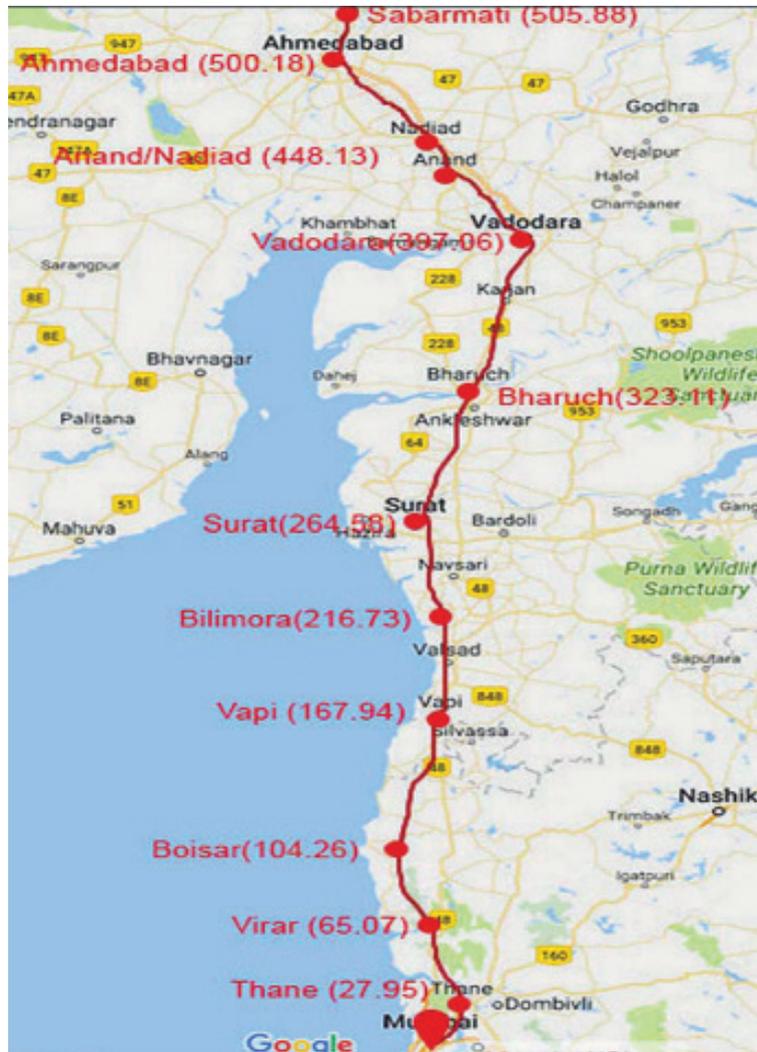
HSR correspond to the sustainable regional and urban transport in the Indian context?

The government of India had set up a high-level committee named National Transport Development Policy Committee (NTDPC) with the objective of developing a long-term national transport policy. In its report submitted in the year 2012, the committee had recommended that priority should be semi-high speed rail (160-200 kmph), not HSR:

“Thus, given the substantial funding required from government to implement HSR projects, a programme for raising speed to 160-200 kmph on selected existing routes should be undertaken till the time the HSR projects are found commercially justified or operationally required to cater to the country’s growth and mobility needs.”

Why is the HSR project being taken up despite it is not aligned with the national transport policy? Why has the NTDPC report failed to find recognition in the decision-making of this government? On what basis does this government disagree with the recommendations of the NTDPC? Has this government or NITI Ayog come up with any other policy document equivalent or superior to the NTDPC report? If not, shouldn’t a democratically elected

government rethink the bullet train project? The least that a government can do is to be transparent and accountable to its people in all its decisions. Unfortunately, that's what is missing in case of bullet train project.



Official Route Map of MAHSR

Chapter 3

Economic sense of a white elephant.

Who is being helped - Indian middle class or the global elites?

Again, the information available in public domain is that JICA is financing the project by lending 88 thousand crore rupees at an interest rate of 0.1%. Payback period is 50 years with a moratorium of 15 years. The claim is that loan is free and Japan is behaving like a close friend. It is true that no other agency such as World Bank is lending at such low rates of interest. But this is not benevolence. It is part of Japan's economic policy and it serves Japan's interests much more than the interests of India. Japan, like other developed economies, is undergoing stagflation. Their capital is in search of new markets. Advancement in technology can be put to a productive use only if it is sold to the countries like India. In this particular sector of high-speed rail, Japan is facing fierce competition after France and China have entered the market. That explains the "favourable" interest rates that they have offered.

The major concern is not about the interest rate but the relative strength of currencies - Japanese Yen and Indian Rupee. As a much higher inflation economy than Japan, Indian Rupee is continuously getting depreciated

against the Japanese Yen. One Yen was worth ₹0.35 in September 2007, but 10 years later, in September 2017, every yen is worth 64% more, at ₹0.58. So, any Japanese Yen-loan taken in 2007 has become 1.64 times by 2017, in just 10 years! It is possible that in the 50-year loan repayment period, the ₹88000 crores loan would become 3 times more of the original loan amount. This will put a huge extra burden on the Indian economy. Moreover, the fetish is not likely to stop with MAHSR. More lines will be planned and more loans will be taken. The burden of debt being brought by MAHSR is just the tip of the iceberg. This particular government may not stay but the citizens of India will be tied to the debt forever.

Though it is a PPP project, it is not very clear what the exact model of financing MAHSR will be. However, it must not be forgotten how badly some of the most ambitious PPP projects of transport sector have failed in the recent past. For example, Delhi Metro's Airport Express line was awarded to Reliance-led consortium in 2008 which could become operational only in February 2011. The line was shut down in July 2012 in the midst of consistently low ridership and safety concerns. Blames were exchanged between Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and DAMEPL, the Reliance-led consortium. The matter went to arbitration after DMRC rejected the termination notice served by DAMEPL. The rosy picture

woven around the idea of PPP should not misguide the transport policy anymore.

Claims were made that this will boost the 'Make in India' initiative. It was being said that technology transfer will happen. Indian manufacturing will get a boost. All such claims have started appearing as they always were - lies, damn lies. Reportedly, the Japanese firms are reluctant to source locally and have already raised concerns about the quality of work in SAIL and Jindal Steel. Therefore, this project will primarily benefit the Japanese firms like Nippon Steel. The government is telling us that this project will boost the economy. Nowadays, it has become a trend to justify anything in the name of economic growth without sufficient evidence to back the claims up. Scientific research has shown that many smaller projects than a single mega-project contribute positively to economic development and employment creation. In the case of regional transport, such mega-projects operating at high energy levels lead to spatial polarization and concentration of benefits in few centres rather than building inter-regional connectivity.

It is also important to consider opportunity cost and not just the budgeted cost. It is a question of priorities. The same amount of public money could finance the annual health budget and annual education budget for 3.5 years

and 1.5 years respectively. What is more necessary for the citizen of India - safety in conventional railways and network upgrade, or expensive means of consuming speed?

This is another example of an over-capacity system. India already has plenty of overcapacity systems including installed electricity capacity. India has an installed capacity of over 340,000 MW which at even 70% PLF can generate about 240,000 MW. This is far more than the present peak demand projection of around 175,000 MW. So, are such electricity intensive technologies being pushed to also consume more electricity thus justifying the wasteful excess investments in that sector?

Chapter 4

Environmental Dangers

According to the feasibility report, the route of MAHSR project dissects multiple reserved forests and mangroves. Their estimate suggests that 80,000 trees will have to be cut down. Apart from the loss of forest along with its biodiversity and water retention contributions, this will also remove the existing carbon sequestration of these many trees; a clear climate-negative action.

Major environmental concerns are listed below:

1. Huge amounts of steel, cement (in far larger amounts per km length than surface rail or road) etc. will be consumed by the project. Both steel and cement manufacturing consume massive amounts of coal. Manufacturing, transporting, and usage of these substances cause emission of great quantities of CO₂ and other pollutants. These “embedded emissions” are never counted in any assessments which are, nevertheless, a significant threat to the global environment.
2. Megaprojects of these kinds employ massive amounts of energy-intensive machinery and energy-intensive construction practices which mostly consume heavy diesel oil. Thus the construction phase also adds to

the pollution and climate-threatening CO₂ emissions. The feasibility report does not present a comparative analysis of 'total' emission caused by HSR and other modes.

3. Though the HSR will run on electricity, 68% of India's electricity comes from burning the dirtiest, most polluting fossil fuel - coal. Coal burning emits dozens of harmful pollutants including heavy metals which cause cancer, radioactive Uranium & Thorium, neurotoxin Mercury, SO₂ and NO₂ which cause acid rain, and breath-choking CO apart from climate threatening CO₂. The resultant air pollution causes over 18 lakh premature deaths annually in India and many million more diseases. It has demonstrated severe health impacts. How can the project be called 'clean' despite clear negative impacts on health and environment?
4. As per plain physics (aerodynamics), the per passenger-km energy consumption of "bullet trains" will be about 3-4 times that of present Rajdhani/ Durgam express trains. This is so because the energy consumption depends on the cube of the speed, while the travel time reduces only proportionally to speed. Thus doubling the speed consumes 4 times the per passenger-km energy. This directly translates into



Credit: Bhumi Putra

On 9 August 2017, over 1 lakh people from agricultural, pastoral, fishworkers and tribal communities gathered in Talasari (Palgarh, Maharashtra) on the occasion of August Kranti Day to resist against multiple projects (Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Bullet Train, Expressway, Nuclear Power Plants and Dams) planned on their pristine lands.

far more pollution and CO₂ emissions, as almost 75% of our electricity comes from C-emission linked sources. About 81% of our energy comes from dirty fossil fuels, coal mostly, that too with high ash content. So basically, the bullet train will run mostly on dirty coal, or on power generated by submerging river valleys under megaprojects on hydropower, or

by creating more nuclear waste. The claim of lowering carbon emission is only true in comparison with air travel, which will contribute a small part of the bullet train ridership. For the rest of the passengers, per passenger-kilometre CO₂ emission will be almost three times as much as a Rajdhani or Shatabdi express trains, from around 15-18 grams per passenger km to around 40 or more.

5. A major stumbling block against increasing system's speed is signalling which can be improved by developing a faster-responding and simpler system for conventional higher speed rail operations like Rajdhani, Duronto, Shatabdi etc. Quite a lot of travel time reduction can be achieved with this for marginally higher journey times at far lower costs, energy consumption and emissions.
6. The proposed route of HSR will pass through areas which possibly have shallow aquifers. The construction of (digging for) the foundations for supporting pillars is likely to puncture some of these aquifers leading to the loss of groundwater. Large-scale contamination of these aquifers and consequently, the groundwater sources, is also highly likely. This will have a severe impact on the lives of people critically dependent on this source for their daily needs.

7. The HSR corridor is largely a rural area with agriculture, horticulture, forest etc. During the years of construction, huge amounts of fine dust and grime will adversely affect agriculture and horticulture, contaminate nearby water bodies, damage forest cover etc. Also, the health of surrounding population is under high risk because of likely increase in the levels of air pollution.
8. The farmlands which will be destroyed by this project have had been safeguards against the health impacts of ambient air pollution. Farming practices have largely remained labour-driven and have not contributed to the crisis of climate change. The destruction of friendly farmlands to build a machine that is an enemy of nature is idiotic and ridiculous.

Chapter 5

Social Impacts

Information available in the feasibility report:

1. Resettlement in Palghar, Vadodara, Kheda and Ahmedabad is likely to be particularly large.
2. Residential colony to be resettled in Kathor.
3. One-third households with living duration of more than 50 years; three-fourth are more than 10 years old.
4. Wherever the route is close to the conventional line, PAHs are likely to be poor and as in case of Ahmedabad, Muslims (60 PAHs[2] or 35% of the endangered while 14% share in urban population) too. 40% are vulnerable population – children (0-10) and elderly (65+); 26% according to their definition of vulnerable.
5. 50% of persons have not completed elementary education.
6. 45% have their job location in less than 1 km.
7. Farmers of Palghar (122) and Kheda (175) are the worst affected.



*Credit: Bhumi Adhikwar Andolan
Adivasis and Farmers Protest at Azad Maidan, Mumbai on
17 May 2018 against the Bullet Train project.*

The overall number of PHPs needs to be actually verified. Especially, the tent and shanties are likely to be gross underestimations. More details on Table 5.3 (A5-112) in the vol. 6 of the feasibility report.

The spatial developments around the stations will have bearing on the resources and demography. Indirect and impacts spread over a longer period or arising after a time-lag are not accounted for.

[2] PAH - Project affected households; PAP - Project Affected persons

Chapter 6

Procedural Flaws and Legal Issues

Stakeholders' meetings in Palghar, Bharuch, Vadodara:

NHSRCL claims that SIA (Social Impact Assessment) and EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) are not mandated by the law. But it is not made clear which law is being followed in this project - State laws or central laws? Gujarat and Maharashtra have different laws for land acquisition.

Representatives of State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) and environment ministry have remained absent in the stakeholders' meetings. Does the government think it is only a land issue and not an environmental issue?

It has not been made clear which Act is being followed to conduct the public meetings - JICA guidelines or Indian law?

Public purpose declaration; requisition; procedural flaw - not on record in Bharuch.

Land acquisition process started officially. At some places, Gram Sabha was not invited. What the NHSRCL is calling the "first round of consultation" involved talking to some

random people in few of the affected villages.



Photo Courtesy: Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti

Previously Published: <http://napm-india.org/pressrelease/we-dont-want-the-bullet-train-farmers-speak-out-loud-and-clear/>

Farmers who are going to lose their land for the much publicised Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project staged a walk-out from the Public Consultation around Environmental and Social Impacts of the project organised by National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited and Deputy Collector of Bharuch chairing the process in Ambedkar Hall on 10 May 2018. This was the second time in one-week that farmers had unanimously rejected the project at a Public Consultation. On 2 May 2018, farmers and adivasis of Palgarh, Maharashtra protested for more

than 3 hours at the venue of the Public Consultation in Collector's Office, Palgarh. The Collector had to cancel the Public Consultation. The farmers in Bharuch were irked as twice consecutively the government-administration has tried to organise this public consultation on a very short notice. The last time it tried to organise public consultations in Baroda and Bharuch on the same day and notified the general public about it only a day or two in advance so as to ensure minimum participation by communities who are supposed to be consulted. Just like Palgarh, farmers of Gujarat want the Bharuch Public Consultation to be declared 'cancelled' as every farmer or landowner walked out of the meeting amidst the heavy presence of police and all tactics to intimidate people from speaking out at this event.

Chapter 7

Cases of HSR failure: Global Examples



The resistance movements opposing the high-speed rail have succeeded in forcing their governments to break the agreement and trash the project. Chinese faced major difficulties while implementing their plans in Brazil, Mexico and the rest of Latin America. None of those projects has been able to take off. Due to powerful protest against the California HSR, where again the Chinese hold the contract, the project has moved at snail's pace.

Wednesday, May 30, 2018



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By [Anisah Shukry](#), and [Kyunghee Park](#)

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In that [interview](#), Mahathir said the decision to scrap the rail link was to “avoid being declared bankrupt.” Construction would have cost Malaysia 110 billion ringgit (\$28 billion), Mahathir told FT.

Chapter 8

Way Ahead

This project is a clear case of collusion between capitalist interests and the state power. To secure this collusion, the bullet train is turning out to be a solution for which problems are being invented. Most of the commentators advocating in the favour of bullet train have not been able to link it with the persisting problems of urban and regional mobility. Instead, they have conveniently opted to showcase the possibilities that can emerge out of this project.

The bullet train project shows that national policies are being governed by capital's need to find novel markets at the cost of people's needs remaining unmet. This is in line with the metro, rather than bus transit, being the de facto priority in the urban development policy. All these expensive projects are being sold to the people in the name of national pride and progress. Rather than bringing inclusion, these "public-funded" projects are designed to increase the exclusion and inequality of opportunities in the society. The government thinks that the shine of bullet train will hide the failure of the government actions in every sector. The government thinks that India will become a member of the "gang of powerful countries" by

spending public money on dangerous vanity projects like bullet train, industrial corridor, tall statues, riverfronts etc. The government thinks that India should expose the obscene wealth and hide the perpetual poverty.

This document has shown why the bullet train project must be resisted by the people of India, not just those whose lands, homes, or livelihoods are being affected. Ridership estimates are usually optimistic to make the project look viable. In this case, the ridership estimates seem over the top and totally unrealistic. The quality of Willingness-To-Pay surveys and other data collection exercises is suspicious. This means that the citizens will have to pay a much larger fraction of project cost as a part of the repayment. So the estimates must be questioned and a fresh audit/scrutiny of the project must be demanded. Facilitation of people's democratic participation in planning has been abandoned. Morocco, where the king is the head of the state, has entered into a similar contract with France. Do we, the people of India, have to bear the burden of a stubborn king's dream as if we were living in a monarchy?

NOTES