

Active Mobility

Prelims – General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change - that do not require subject specialization.

Mains – GS-III (Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment)

Why in news?

Active mobility in India has gained attention due to increasing traffic congestion, pollution, health concerns and rising pedestrian deaths.

- **Active mobility** – Refers to modes of transportation that use human power instead of a motorised form of mobility.
- Active modes of transport include walking, cycling, skateboarding, and other non-motorised modes that are used for travel and not recreational activities.

In 2020, Karnataka recorded the highest number of pedestrian deaths in the country at 13% and in 2024, Karnataka saw a decrease in pedestrian deaths, with 233 fatalities reported in Bengaluru.

Measures taken by the states across India

- **Karnataka Active Mobility Bill, 2022** – It aims to promote urban mobility through the protection of the rights of pedestrians and cyclists.
- The inherent goal of this bill is to provide a legal structure protecting and promoting active mobility, and ensuring equal access to public space.
- **Delhi** – Is expanding cycling tracks and pedestrian-friendly streets under its Delhi EV policy.
- **Others** – **Pune** has implemented a Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and developed over 300 km of cycling lanes.
- **Chennai** is redesigning roads under the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) to improve pedestrian safety.
- **Kochi** has introduced a Public Bicycle Sharing (PBS) system to enhance last-mile connectivity.

Status of other countries

- With more than 35,000 km of dedicated cycling lanes, The Netherlands is a global leader in promoting active mobility through cycling.
- The European Union's Mobility and Transport department prioritises promoting

walking and cycling as a means of transport to enable more sustainable mobility.

- Germany's Berlin Mobility Act mandates wider sidewalks and dedicated cycling lanes, reduced speed limits for motorised vehicles within city limits, and prioritises pedestrians/cyclists in urban planning.

Vision Zero, an initiative of Vision Zero Network that aims to reduce the number of incidents between pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles.

Benefits of Active mobility

- **Economic benefits** - It include reduced household expenditure on fuel and transportation and lower healthcare costs due to enhanced public health.
- It also boosts local businesses since pedestrian-friendly infrastructure attracts higher foot traffic.
- **Environment** - Walking and cycling are sustainable modes of transport as compared to motorised vehicles due to their *marginal carbon emissions*.
- They enhance energy security and significantly reduce India's 12% carbon emissions from road transportation.
- Cities with well-developed infrastructure for active transport report cleaner air and reduced traffic congestion.
- **Health** - Active modes of transport are known to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, improve cardiovascular health, promote mental well-being, and enhance public health among citizens.

Challenges

- Active mobility remains severely underutilised because urban infrastructure actively discourages it.
- The lack of adequate pedestrian and cyclist-friendly infrastructure hinders active mobility as a primary mode of transport.
- Extreme weather conditions and long distances of travel discourage people from adopting active modes of transport.
- Since in many regions, cars and bikes are associated with a higher social status, social perceptions act as significant barriers.
- High traffic congestion, along with weak enforcement of traffic regulations, makes walking and cycling unsafe.

Reference

[The Hindu | Active Mobility](#)