

A QUALITY COMPARISON OF PUBLIC
TRANSPORT IN TWELVE ASIAN CITIES

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The cities considered are 6 in India (Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Ahamadabad & Trivandrum), 2 in Sri Lanka (Colombo & Kandy) and 4 others (Dhaka, Bangkok, Manila, Hong Kong).

The paper first enumerates the mix of public transport modes available. These range through heavy suburban trains, metro railway and segregated light rail, conventional tramway, buses of different sizes and ownership, river craft and rickshaws. In most of the cities the standard bus is dominant for most functions, ceding to rail for suburb/city hauls only in the big 3 Indian cities. For intra-downtown movement the bus is dominant in all.

Quality is subjectively examined by reference primarily to accessibility both at point of entry and exit to the system, and at interchange between modes & vehicles; but also, to how routing helps make a complete journey easy. Systems of information to the public are also considered, starting with destination indicators on vehicles. Comparative reference to the best performance in European cities is also made.

These aspects of quality are then discussed in terms of the attitude of governments, licensing authorities, Police & operators, and of passengers. Attitudes are then related to policies which facilitate or hinder the provision of high quality public transport.

It is concluded that enormous increase in the quality of services could be obtained at very little cost by developing suitable management and administrative attitudes helped by intercity visits.