

ECOLOGIC

Share your ride to slash carbon emissions

Carpooling is the only answer to the empty seats in vehicles. It opens up a big opportunity for moving people efficiently

PAVITRA
SRIPRAKASH

@pavisriprakash

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Carpool — the word brings back memories of school, of moms packed in cars full of kids all screaming to get to school in time! But that's pretty much where the memory ends as well, at least for most of us till now. It is well known that cars contribute up to 15% of man-made carbon dioxide emission, but how many of us pause to think of an alternative before we pick up the keys and are ready to go? Carpooling or car-sharing encourages folks to share car rides.

Having more people using one vehicle reduces per capita travel costs besides being environmentally friendly and sustainable. There are many advantages to car-sharing such as reduced carbon emissions and traffic congestion on the roads.

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Share autos have moved in swifly to fill the need for effective transportation

of petrol. Also, this practice can minimise the need for parking spaces, which is often the biggest

factor dictating the density of a development!

There have been many ideas to

try and promote carpooling. The green building movement has given the incentive of a preferred

parking space for those vehicles which are part of a carpool — however this move doesn't really seem to have much traction as there is no 'real' advantage to car parking close to the elevator in a parking level! The convenience of being on your own schedule rates much higher than having a preferential parking space. The other major idea which has been practised in many developed countries is the carpool lane. The lane allows cars with more than two people in them to cruise and is a lifesaver on days when traffic is bumper to bumper. Then of course there is the experiment on 'odd even' traffic days in our very own NCR.

Ride-sharing taps into an underutilised resource: the empty seats in cars. These represent a huge amount of waste in any transportation system, but potentially a huge opportunity for moving people if this was made accessible at the right time and place. We should have seen this wave of sharing transport coming as our local share autos went from small

autos to larger *chotahaathis*.

Previously considered unfashionable, there has been a significant shift in recent years in attitudes toward vehicle sharing, especially among millennials. Even in carpool averse USA, 42% of generation Y says they are willing to carpool if it is readily available and convenient. So here comes in technology!

Companies like Carma, Lyft, Ola and Uber have brought carpooling into the easy, accessible, convenient 'sharing economy' — which is a loose term that refers to a peer-to-peer business model. There is a lot of evidence to show that the sharing economy has solidly taken root around the world, and with good reason.

The next time you are considering a ride, look out for a way of sharing it — you will save the planet, some cash and perhaps make some friends!

(The writer is an architect, urban designer, dancer and chief designer at Shilpa Architects)