

Kochi: City's Footpaths, Broken & Battered

City's footpaths, broken & battered

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Heavy waterlogging on the roads due to rains have made walking in the city almost an impossible task. Concrete slabs covering the drains are often found broken or missing, adding to the misery of the pedestrians. When it rains heavily residents often prefer to wade through the stagnant water and avoid walking on footpaths, which are constructed over the drains.

"At some points the slabs covering the drains are completely damaged or broken. If you are not familiar with the location, there is every chance you may fall into an open drain. It is worse during night hours. Even those living in the neighbourhood can be seen avoiding footpaths, choosing to wade through waters," said Reghu K, a grocery shop owner on Veeksham Road.

Though the need to develop pedestrian infrastructure in the city has been taken up before, the authorities have not yet taken an initiative to come up with a comprehensive plan. As part of the development

NOT FRIENDLY FOR WALKERS

➤ A study by ESAF for Kochi corporation points out that 86% of pedestrians must get down from footpaths and walk along the road due to various obstacles

➤ The obstacles include damaged slabs, cables motor vehicles, construction materials and trees and other stationary objects placed on walkways

➤ It found that 74% of the footpaths in the city is in a rundown state and 50% of the people surveyed said damaged footpaths have an

adverse impact on their daily commute

➤ According to CPPR only 6% of the road networks in the city have footpaths and the number of women who opt to walk is higher compared to men

➤ "The tiles of the footpaths are found broken at many places. The local body, district administration and police should step in to work out a system to provide better pedestrian infrastructure," said a KMRL official



works being implemented in the city, Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL) has undertaken the task to construct footpaths and pedestrian crossings after considering the needs of elderly and disabled citizens.

"The tiles of the newly-laid footpaths are found broken at many places. It happens when the workers remove the slabs to clear the drains. Sometimes the tiles and slabs break when vehicles enter the footpaths. KMRL does not have the

power to control such activities. The local body, district administration and police should step in to work out a system to provide better pedestrian infrastructure," said a KMRL official.

Kochi-based thinktank Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR) pointed out that only 6% of the road network in Kochi has footpaths.

According to one of the studies conducted by the centre, the number of women who opted to walk was

much higher than the number of men.

However, officials of the city corporation said that when waterlogging becomes a major concern they will be forced to clear the drains.

"Our workers are not trained to remove tiles and slabs in a scientific manner. As they carry out the work in a hurry there are chances that the tiles and slabs get damaged. There is no system to fix such issues," said an official.