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Honoring Our Legacy Shaping Our Future





Reimagining the Future of Public Transport



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Could you briefly introduce yourself and share your three-decade journey in public transport and mobility?

My professional journey spans more than three decades across India, Kuwait and the UAE, covering public transport operations, fleet maintenance, quality management, technology, sustainable mobility and transport governance. I began close to the fundamentals of bus operations and maintenance, where I learned an enduring lesson: public transport ultimately succeeds or fails through the passenger experience—safety, reliability, affordability, accessibility and dignity.

I began my career working to keep buses moving. Three decades later, my focus is on helping entire mobility systems move better—safer, smarter, more sustainable and more responsive to society.



Over the years, my responsibilities expanded from operational improvement to research, international advisory assignments, technology-led transformation and board-level governance. This journey—from the workshop floor to the passenger interface and the policy table—has reinforced one universal lesson: **technology alone cannot transform mobility; institutions, people, skills, processes and accountability must evolve together.**

What are the key changes India needs to build safer, smarter, and more sustainable public transport systems?

India needs to move beyond measuring public transport progress primarily by fleet size or infrastructure created. **The real benchmark should be service outcomes—safety, reliability, punctuality, accessibility, affordability, passenger experience and multimodal connectivity.**

Fleet modernisation must therefore be accompanied by stronger maintenance systems, data-driven planning, universal accessibility, professional workforce development and measurable service-quality standards. Electrification and the transition to cleaner energy

are essential, but decarbonising the vehicle alone does not create a sustainable transport system. The entire ecosystem—energy, depots, charging infrastructure, operations, maintenance, workforce capability, financial sustainability, climate resilience and passenger services—must evolve together.

Sustainable mobility is ultimately a system transformation, not merely a technology transition.

How can technology and stronger governance transform the future of public transportation in India?

Technology can make public transport more predictable, efficient, integrated and accountable. Real-time vehicle tracking, predictive maintenance, integrated ticketing, AI-supported planning, connected-vehicle diagnostics and passenger-information systems can fundamentally improve operations and passenger experience.

However, **digitalisation without governance can simply create more data without better decisions.** Technology must be supported by clear institutional responsibility, interoperable systems and data architecture, transparent performance indicators, cybersecu-



rity, data governance and professional management. Transport organisations should progressively move from reactive decision-making towards predictive and preventive management, while ensuring that technology remains a means rather than an end.

Good governance converts technology from a collection of devices into measurable public value.

What have your research and observations on bus-fire incidents revealed about gaps in public transport safety?

My ongoing evidence-led study of media-reported bus-fire incidents in India has reinforced the need to treat fire safety as a system-level risk rather than merely an isolated mechanical failure. My analysis identified 606 media-reported incidents involving 759 buses between January 2021 and June 2026, with 306 fatalities and 1,143 injuries. The cases reviewed highlight safety concerns requiring deeper attention across electrical systems, engine and thermal conditions, collision-related fires, maintenance practices, emergency exits, fire detection and suppression, passenger evacuation and incident investigation.

One important systemic gap is the need for more comprehensive and standardised reporting so incidents can be consistently classified, investigated and converted into preventive learning. This calls for stronger risk-based safety management, preventive maintenance, emergency preparedness, crew training, post-incident investigation and structured safety data and knowledge-sharing systems.

The broader lesson is universal: transport safety improves when incidents are not merely recorded, but systematically investigated, lessons are shared and preventive action follows. Every serious incident should become a lesson that helps prevent the next one.

What is your vision for the next generation of public transport in India, and what should stakeholders prioritize today?

My vision is of public transport that is **safe by design, clean by technology, intelligent through data, inclusive by purpose and accountable through governance.**

The next generation should integrate clean and resilient fleets and infrastructure, intelligent tran-



transport systems, seamless multimodal ticketing, real-time passenger information, predictive maintenance, universal accessibility and strong first- and last-mile connectivity. Public transport should be viewed not merely as a transport service, but as **essential social and economic infrastructure—connecting people to employment, education, healthcare and opportunity.**

Governments, operators, manu-

facturers, technology providers, academia and communities must move beyond institutional silos and build mobility around people rather than vehicles. India's scale and diversity provide a unique opportunity to demonstrate how affordable, inclusive and technology-enabled public transport can be delivered at population scale—with lessons relevant to rapidly urbanising economies worldwide.

For me, the future of public transport is not simply about moving more vehicles—it is about moving more people, more safely, sustainably and intelligently, while earning their trust every day.

Explore the Portfolio

For a comprehensive overview of Dr. V. Amudhan's professional journey, expertise, achievements, projects, and contributions to public transport and sustainable mobility, visit the portfolio:

Portfolio: amudhan-portfolio-blond.vercel.app

