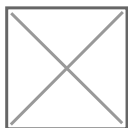




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India: What can it teach us about innovation ?



Submitted by Thomas Birtchnell on Tue, 03/19/2013 - 13:48

Mots clés

Modernité

Développement durable

Inégalités

Développement économique

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Mode de transport

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Bus

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Visuel

India: What can it teach us about innovation ?

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Mobilities in India have a different tempo to the rest of the world. So, for instance, on India's urban roads there are taxis being pulled by people (or rickshaw wallahs) next to bullock carts carrying goods. In turn these can often be found next to a brand new SUV carrying an IT worker. All of these different types of mobility might be queuing together on a road because a couple of holy cows won't move off the road! You see them all together. And this means it's different to the rest of the world. So here's the idea of a different tempo.

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The jugaad, assembled by the rural poor

In my research I have tried focused on one particular example of this Indian innovation. This is what is called a jugaad. That's a vehicle that has been assembled by the rural poor in India from other vehicles such as motorbikes and trucks. These vehicles are often dangerously overloaded with people and goods and they don't have feature of modern vehicles such as windscreens, seats, power steering and so on.

It is possible that the Hindi word jugaad shares an etymology with the word juggernaut, which we have in English. The juggernaut actually was a description of this huge temple carts and still have this annual festivals honouring the god Jagannath. In the colonial time this was seen as out-of-control ritual vehicles represented Indians' lack of concern for personal safety. So as seen as almost the character floor on that they have the lack of personal safety. So the austere innovation was actually seen as something that was negative of in India.

This Jugaads are very visible on the roads, they often break down and contribute to

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some IT hubs. This point means to a unique irony which is in this innovative mobility at the bottom of India's social pyramid. It is hard jugaad as a mobility phenomenon actually obstructs the country's apparent development as a global superpower simply because it has to the shortfalls of India's infrastructure.

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The patched-together 'jugaad' vehicle has become a symbol for India's austerity-driven economic boom. But it may actually be holding the country back, argues Thomas Birtchnell.

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