



Two Wheels, Many Rulebooks: *Reimagining Bike Taxis in India*

Policy Roundtable Proceedings Report
March 2025



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An Initiative by



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Abstract

Bike taxis have rapidly emerged as a key mobility solution in India, addressing first- and last-mile connectivity challenges while offering affordable and flexible transport options, thereby providing an impetus for sustainable mobility in cities. They provide economic opportunities, particularly for gig and platform workers, and have significant potential for industry growth. However, the sector faces a fragmented regulatory landscape, with varying policies across states leading to compliance ambiguities and operational challenges.

To comprehensively assess these issues, the OMI Foundation hosted a series of roundtable discussions with key stakeholders - including industry leaders, policymakers, civil society representatives, and worker groups. The goal of this initiative, *Two Wheels, Many Rulebooks: Reimagining Bike Taxis in India*, is to understand the challenges and opportunities within the bike taxi ecosystem and the broader shared mobility economy, and to develop policy pathways for all states, union territories, and the central government. This report synthesises insights from these discussions, offering a roadmap for regulatory clarity, sustainable business models, and the integration of bike taxis into India's urban transport framework.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context: The Growth of Bike Taxis in India

Bike taxis have emerged as a convenient, affordable, and flexible mobility solution across developing nations particularly in areas underserved by traditional public transport services. They play a crucial role in facilitating point-to-point travel and bridging first- and last-mile connectivity gaps while reducing congestion, enabling faster commutes, and creating new livelihood opportunities. Women, specifically use them for work commutes, errands, and leisure, making them a valuable mobility solution.

Beyond their immediate transport benefits, bike taxis present a significant economic opportunity. OMI Foundation's Power of Two-Wheels report, estimates that bike taxis in India could create over two million livelihood opportunities and generate a revenue potential of USD 4-5 billion¹. Furthermore, the bike taxi market is projected to grow from USD 50.5 million in 2021 to an estimated USD 1.48 billion by 2030, illustrating the rapid scalability of the sector with the right policy framework².

Currently, the regulatory landscape governing bike taxis in India remains fragmented. While some states have adopted structured policies, others remain undecided on their approach. Even among those with regulations, each state's approach differs in how strict, enforceable, and expansive their policies are, leading to ambiguity and inconsistencies.

¹ Raman, A. (2020, March 16). *The Power of Two Wheels: Bike-Taxi - India's New Shared Mobility Frontier*. <https://olawebcdn.com/ola-institute/bike-taxi-report.pdf>

² Allied Market Research. (2022, March). *India Bike Taxi Market Size, Share, Competitive Landscape and Trend Analysis Report*. <https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/india-bike-taxi-market-A15920>

1.2. Objectives, Methodology, and Structure of the Report

This report presents insights from three roundtable discussions on bike taxi regulations hosted by the OMI Foundation in February and March 2025. Conducted under Chatham House Rules, the discussions brought together over 25 participants from industry, civil society, and worker organisations to examine policy inconsistencies, operational barriers, and regulatory challenges. Beyond identifying these issues, the roundtables aimed to foster consensus and collaboration, ensuring that bike taxis contribute to the growth of sustainable mobility in India.

The report aims to:

- Assess the opportunities and challenges of existing regulatory frameworks for bike taxis concerning enhanced shared mobility use, unlocking of livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities, and sustainable mobility planning and urban planning, particularly for aggregators, gig and platform workers, consumers, and the city as a whole.
- Examine the interests, challenges, and opportunities of bike taxi owners and drivers within the shared mobility economy, alongside expert perspectives on consumer rights and entitlements.
- Capture policy recommendations to promote regulatory clarity, ensure ease of doing business, and foster sustainable growth within the sector.
- Align stakeholder perspectives to facilitate the government's broader push for deregulation and Ease of Doing Business (EoDB), particularly in light of the Union Budget 2025's focus on regulatory simplification.

The analysis draws from stakeholder consultations, and identifies opportunities for policy refinement, market expansion, and technology-driven solutions to strengthen the bike taxi ecosystem.

The report is structured as follows.

- Section 2 examines regulatory cohesion, licensing challenges, and bike taxis' role in urban mobility.
- Section 3 focuses on compliance mechanisms, safety standards, grievance redressal, and gender inclusivity.
- Section 4 analyses the transition to electric bike taxis, covering affordability, infrastructure, and state-level policies.
- Section 5 explores financial frameworks, including taxation, insurance, and gig worker protections.
- Section 6 highlights bike taxis' role in first- and last-mile connectivity and public-private collaboration.
- Section 7 presents key takeaways and policy recommendations for a structured and scalable policy-regulatory framework.

By integrating diverse stakeholder perspectives, this report supports evidence-based policy reforms that balance regulatory oversight, worker protections, and consumer interests while enabling the sustainable expansion of bike taxis within India's urban mobility ecosystem.

2. Towards a Unified and Flexible Regulatory Framework

2.1. The Need for Regulatory Cohesion Across States

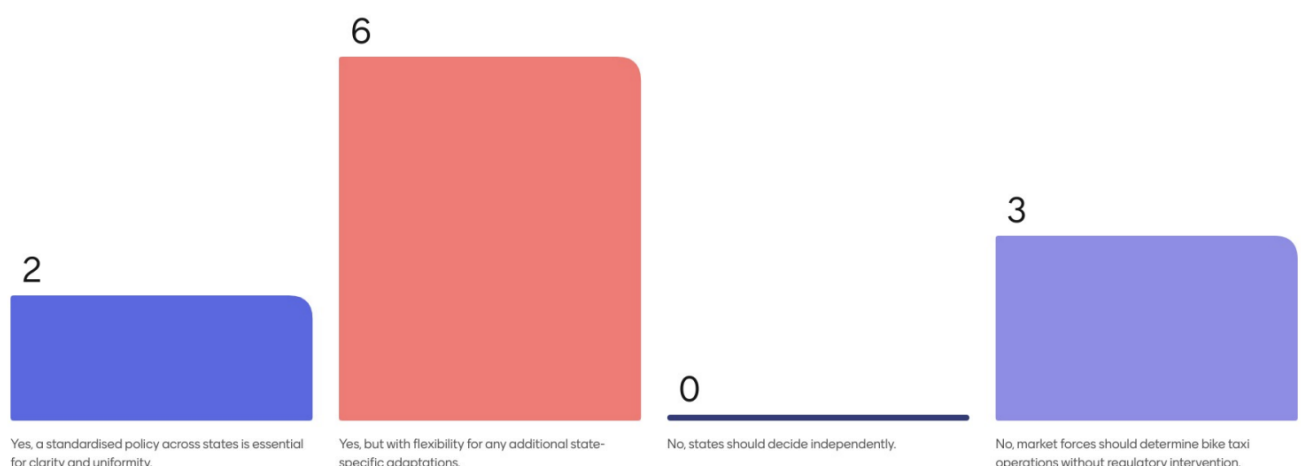
The bike taxi sector in India stands at the cusp of transformative growth, but its full potential remains untapped due to a fragmented regulatory landscape. With significant variations across states, aggregators face operational barriers limiting scalability while riders experience inconsistent availability, safety concerns, and price fluctuations. For drivers, regulatory ambiguity translates to income instability, limited worker protections, and safety risks. Although the central government (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways) has made strides in recognising bike taxis under the Motor Vehicles Act 1988 and introduced the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines 2020, the challenge remains in translating these into consistent state-level regulations. Disparities in policy adoption, outright bans in some states, and varying electrification mandates further complicate operations.

A key opportunity lies in streamlining regulations for vehicles that serve both delivery and passenger mobility functions. Currently, distinct regulations govern these users leading to compliance challenges for drivers. Delhi has taken positive steps to legitimise bike taxis, but differentiating mandates for delivery and passenger services hinder seamless operations. Establishing an integrated framework that allows for interoperability, without rigid distinctions would help in realising the full potential of bike taxis.

Addressing these inconsistencies requires structured institutional dialogue between the Centre and states to facilitate uniform cohesive framework adoption, unlocking the sector's potential to deliver sustainable and accessible urban mobility solutions.

Poll Insights 1 | On the Quest for Standardised Legal Framework

Do we need a standardised legal framework for bike taxis to ensure consistent protections for riders across states?



11 respondents from civil society were posed the question, *do we need a standardised legal framework for bike taxis to ensure consistent protection for riders across states?*

Stakeholders emphasised that while states can be encouraged to incorporate additional provisions based on local needs, a well-defined policy would enhance transparency, improve safety, and ensure service reliability. **They advocated for a standardised legal framework with clear guidelines on licensing, permits, insurance, fare regulations, and the responsibilities of drivers and aggregators.**

2.2. Challenges in Licensing and Commercial Permits

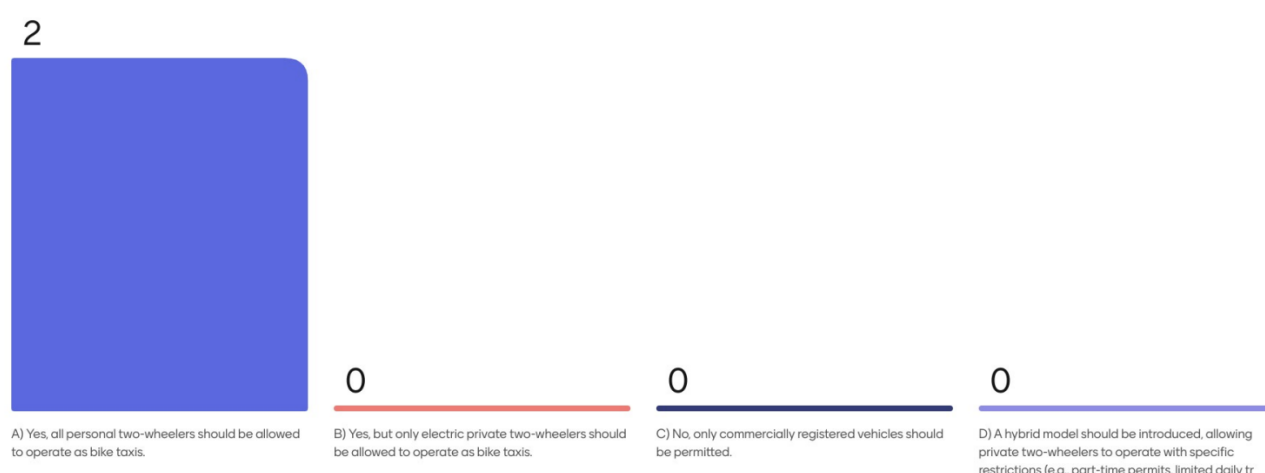
A major regulatory impediment is the cumbersome process of obtaining commercial permits for bike taxis. Current regulations often restrict operations to commercial vehicles, preventing private two-wheelers from functioning as bike taxis. Converting private vehicles to commercial licenses is riddled with unclear procedures and bureaucratic delays.

The traditional yellow-plate requirement is increasingly seen as unsustainable, given the part-time nature of most bike taxi drivers and the dual use of two-wheelers for both e-commerce deliveries and passenger transport, a common practice today. **A flexible, tech-driven permit structure could streamline operations and ensure compliance while supporting the dynamic nature of the gig economy.**

West Bengal has introduced a flexible approach, offering daily or weekly permits while also allowing white-number plates under specific monitoring mechanisms. This model presents a middle ground, demonstrating a scalable regulatory framework that other states could consider for wider adoption.

Poll Insights 2 | Non-Transport Two-Wheelers As Bike Taxis

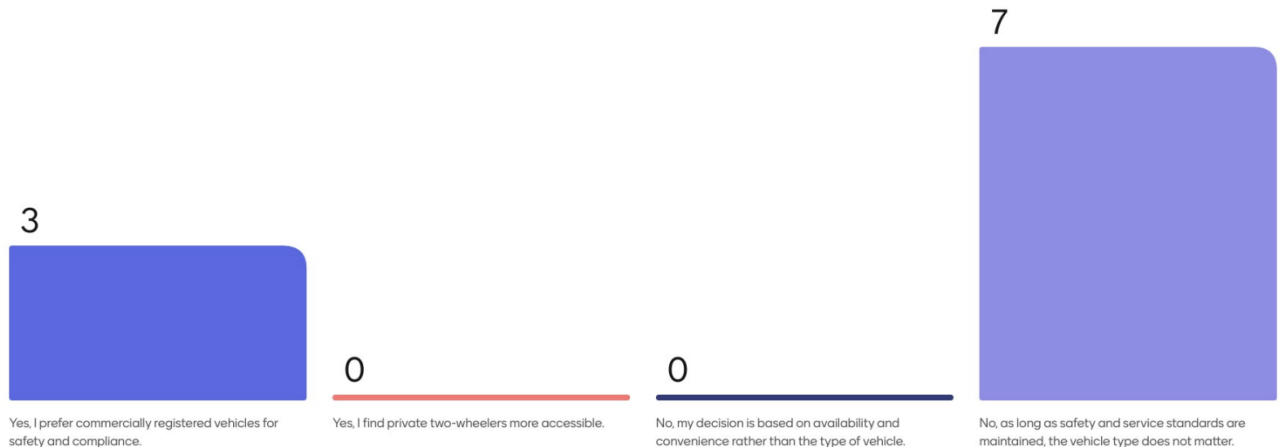
2. Should non-transport vehicles be allowed for aggregation in bike taxi services?



Businesses attending the Industry roundtable were asked, *should non-transport vehicles be allowed to deliver, and for aggregation in bike taxi services?*

Poll Insights 3 | Impact of Non-Transport Two-Wheelers As Bike Taxis on Usage of the Service

Does private 2Ws usage as allowed in Assam, J&K, A&N Islands for bike taxis impact your decision to the service?



The representatives of civil society (10 organisations) were asked, *does private two-wheeler usage as bike taxis, as seen in Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, and Andaman and Nicobar islands, impact your decision of using the bike taxi service?*

While the industry unanimously agrees that personal two-wheelers should be allowed to operate as bike taxis, civil society holds a more conditional stance. Most believe that as long as safety and service standards are maintained, the type of vehicle is irrelevant. However, some remain hesitant, preferring government-validated vehicles for bike taxi services. Meanwhile, drivers often lack clarity on which types of vehicles are permitted in different cities, their legal status, and associated regulations, leaving them uncertain and uninformed.

Overall, the industry supports allowing personal two-wheelers as bike taxis; civil society stresses the importance of maintaining safety and service standards; and drivers remain unclear on regulatory requirements. Greater clarity and uniformity across states are needed, alongside innovative, tech-driven solutions to enhance safety and compliance.

2.3. Addressing Bike Pooling and Ride-Sharing Regulations

The absence of a comprehensive governing framework for bike pooling adds to the sector's challenges. While carpooling has established legal provisions, bike pooling remains a regulatory grey area. Without clear guidelines distinguishing cost-sharing from commercial ride-hailing, bike pooling services face restrictions that limit their expansion.

To unlock its potential, regulations are needed that delineate the boundaries between private ride-sharing and commercial operations. A well-structured framework would not only provide legal clarity but also foster innovation, safety, and accountability.

2.4. Balancing Bike Taxis and Traditional Transport Modes

Bike taxis are often perceived as direct competitors to auto-rickshaws, leading to resistance from traditional transport unions. The operation of bike taxis in Karnataka particularly has been a contentious issue due to ambiguities surrounding their legal status and the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework. Auto-rickshaw unions argue that bike taxis should comply with similar regulatory requirements, including contract carriage permits, tax obligations, and operational guidelines, to create a level playing field across transport modes. Their concerns stem from the perception that bike taxis currently operate without comparable oversight, potentially impacting safety, accountability, and fair competition.

To address these concerns, auto-rickshaw unions have proposed additional requirements for bike taxi operators. These include mandating that drivers be residents of the same state, demonstrate proficiency in the local language, and possess a valid driving license for at least five years. Other recommendations include enforcing a uniform fare structure, requiring adherence to a standardised dress code, restricting operations to registered districts as per RTO regulations, mandating commercial yellow-board number plates, and ensuring passenger insurance coverage.

However, bike taxis serve distinct mobility needs and should be regulated accordingly. Bike taxis primarily cater to solo, cost-conscious passengers for short-distance travel and are often part-time, with a high churn rate - many gig workers engage with ride-hailing platforms for only 6 to 8 months before moving on. Additionally, bike taxis face weather-related constraints, becoming less viable during extreme conditions.

In contrast, auto-rickshaws function as a more traditional, full-time transport mode, operating year-round with greater service continuity. **While concerns about regulatory parity are valid, it is crucial to recognise the fundamental differences between the two modes. Overly rigid regulatory requirements designed for auto-rickshaws may not align with the flexible, technology-driven nature of bike taxi services. Rather than treating bike taxis as direct competitors to auto-rickshaws, it is crucial to recognise their differences and ensure that regulations reflect these distinctions. A balanced approach would enable bike taxis to maintain their unique service model while fostering a regulatory environment that creates a level-playing field, and allows both modes to coexist and thrive within India's urban mobility ecosystem.**

2.5. Promoting Tech-Driven Regulatory and Operational Solutions

To address the challenges in the bike taxi sector, tech-driven regulatory and operational solutions are essential. **Implementing API-based verification systems for driver onboarding, developing centralised platforms for grievance redressal, and utilising data analytics to monitor compliance can enhance efficiency and transparency.**

3. Strengthening Compliance Mechanisms for Safe and Scalable Operations

3.1. Defining Identification and Safety Measures

Effective compliance requires clear identification and safety measures. Transport authorities advocate for physical markers on bike taxis or drivers, to distinguish them from regular two-wheelers. **To balance safety and practicality, temporary identification measures, such as distinct jackets, helmets, or washable paintings, could be implemented.** This approach addresses safety concerns without imposing the excessive burden of permanent commercial registration and conversion, recognising the flexible, part-time nature of many bike taxi drivers.

3.2. Enhancing Vehicle Fitness and Roadworthiness Standards

While the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines (MVAG) mandate periodic fitness certification for bike taxis, a critical issue remains: the Vahan portal does not support periodic fitness checks for non-commercial vehicles. This discrepancy creates a regulatory gap, hindering the practical implementation of the MVAG's fitness requirements and potentially compromising road safety. **To address this, updating the Vahan portal to include provisions for periodic fitness certifications of non-commercial vehicles used as bike taxis would help ensure compliance.**

3.3. Addressing Training Gaps for Two-Wheeler Operators

Implementing driver training programmes also presents difficulties, as most cities lack structured training for two- and three-wheeler operators that could be outsourced. Many drivers also question the necessity of additional training when they already hold a valid license, leading to resistance and potential supply shortages. **Tech-enabled scalable solutions could be considered to address this issue: Refresher courses on soft skills and best practices on road safety could be offered by the aggregators directly or in collaboration with skilling agencies and civil society organisations via the bike taxi app.**

3.4. Streamlining Police Verification and Licensing Processes

Lengthy police verification processes create onboarding delays, restricting the supply of drivers. **A government-backed API-based verification system can streamline this process, ensuring compliance while reducing bureaucratic hurdles.** Furthermore, as many drivers operate in cities different from their registered residences, traditional verification through residential addresses have not been practical in such cases. **A centralised verification process through a single authority would be beneficial, streamlining this requirement without involving multiple police stations.**

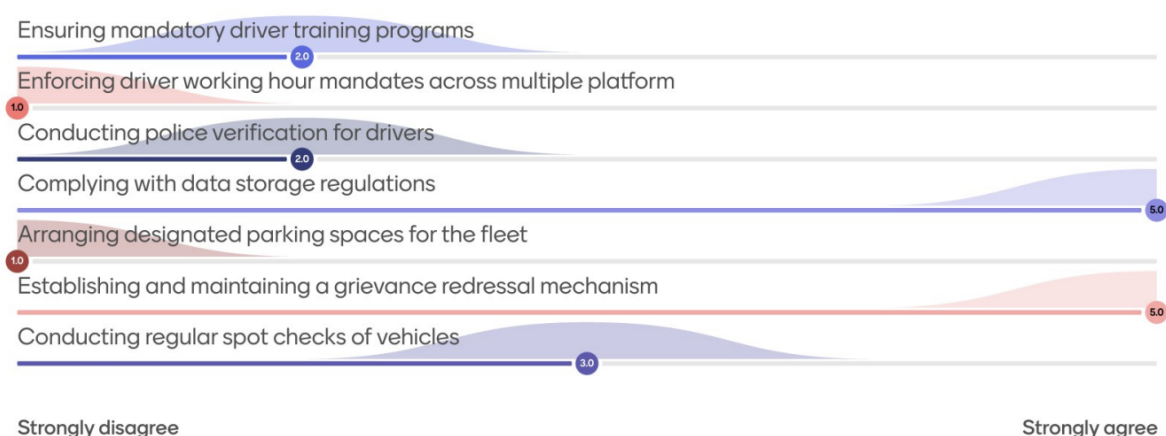
3.5. Strengthening Grievance Redressal for Platform Workers

There is a perception that grievance redressal mechanisms on ride-hailing platforms often prioritise commuter concerns, overlooking worker grievances. Platform aggregators should

strengthen grievance redressal for their workers. A tech-enabled mechanism that can bring in government or regulatory oversight may also be prioritised across India. For instance, a neutral, state-led grievance redressal system could be considered. An online forum with an API-based escalation system would ensure fair and transparent resolution mechanisms. A central dashboard tracking complaint trends would provide policymakers with insights to improve platform work conditions.

Poll Insights 4 | Varying Degrees of Challenges in Complying With Regulations

How difficult is it to comply with the following requirements? (1 = Not Difficult at All, to 5 = Extremely Difficult)

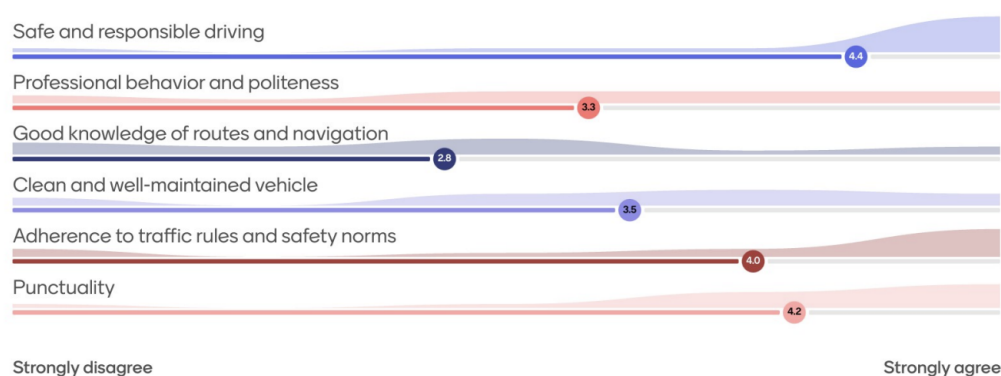


The representatives of the industry (bike taxi aggregators and service providers) were asked, *how difficult is it to comply with the regulatory requirements of respective states and union territories (UTs)?*

Stakeholders expressed **significant challenges in implementing grievance redressal mechanisms.**

Poll Insights 5 | Importance of Driver and Driving Quality

How important are the following driver qualities when using bike taxis? (1 = Not Important and 5 = Very Important)

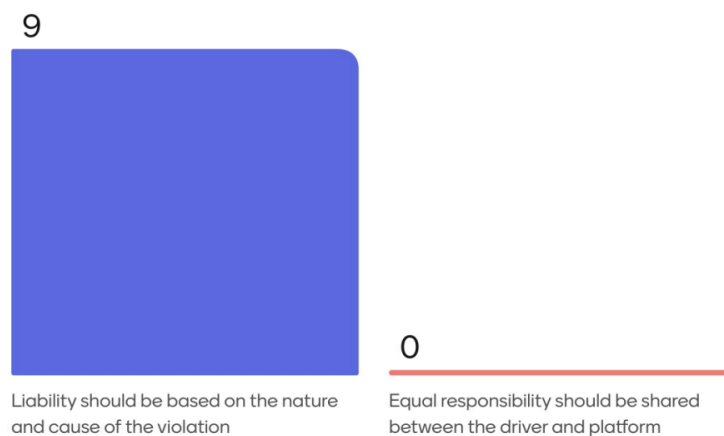


12 stakeholders from civil society organisations were asked, *how important are the following driver qualities when using bike taxis?*

Stakeholders emphasised the **importance of safe and responsible driving**, making regulatory and operational improvements essential for the growth and sustainability of bike taxis.

Poll Insights 6 | Significance of Shared Responsibility

How should responsibility for safety violations be determined?



Representatives of 9 civil society organisations who participated in the roundtable were asked, *how should the responsibility of safety violations be determined?*

Stakeholders highlight that liability should be determined based on the nature and cause of the violation. Implementing a shared accountability framework across platforms is essential to streamline responsibility and effectively mitigate safety risks.

3.6. Ensuring Platform Accountability and Fair Practices

Platform companies should uphold transparency and fairness in their operations, ensuring that drivers have clarity on key aspects such as earning structures, ride allocation algorithms, and account policies. Unclear or arbitrary commission deductions, opaque algorithm-driven decisions, and sudden account suspensions without proper justification undermine trust and job security for drivers. Platforms should establish clear and accessible earnings frameworks that provide visibility into fare calculations, deductions, and payout processes, fostering a more equitable and supportive work environment.

3.7. Enabling Women's Participation in Bike Taxi and Gig Economy

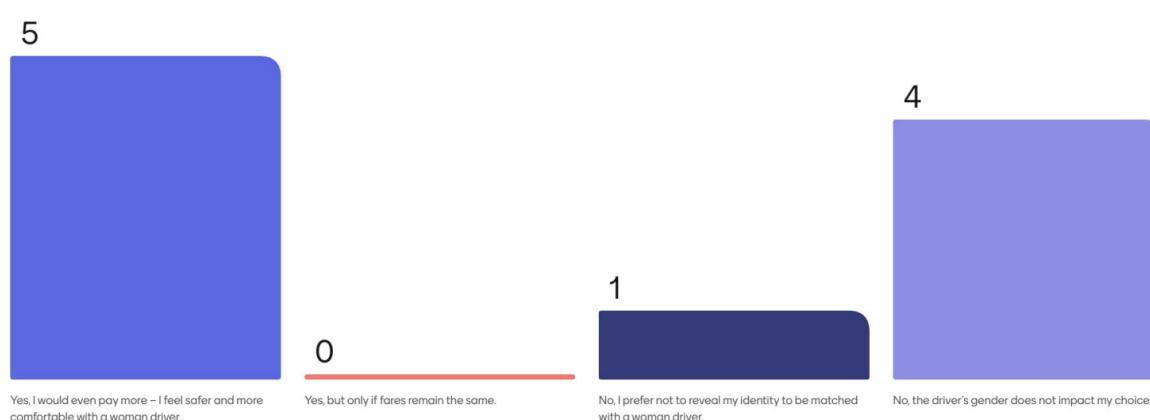
Women platform workers face multiple barriers, including vehicle ownership constraints, inadequacy of essential public service infrastructure such as toilets and rest areas, and safety concerns. **Targeted financial incentives for vehicle ownership and improved digital literacy programmes can empower more women to enter the sector. Platforms should enable women drivers to opt for women riders to enhance safety and create a secure work environment. Inclusive policies, such as Jammu and Kashmir's exemptions on fare**

regulations for women and transgender drivers further promote equitable opportunities and participation.

From a rider safety perspective, the absence of a unified driver accountability system creates risks, as drivers banned on one platform can operate on another. **A shared accountability framework across platforms would help mitigate such safety issues while ensuring driver privacy and gender inclusivity.**

Poll Insights 7 | Demand for Women-Driven Bike Taxis

Would a women-driven bike taxi fleet positively influence your usage?



10 civil society organisations were asked, *would a woman-driven bike taxi positively influence your usage?*

Some stakeholders indicated a willingness to pay a premium for women-driven bike taxis, emphasising greater safety and comfort. Others noted that driver gender did not influence their choice, while some raised privacy concerns about revealing their gender to be matched with a woman driver.

3.8 Addressing Driver Fatigue, and Overall Safety of Workers

Managing driver fatigue is essential for road safety and fair labour practices. While individual platforms can impose working hour limits, the absence of a unified tracking system across multiple platforms makes enforcement challenging. Given the competitive nature of the gig economy, drivers often switch between platforms to maximise earnings, making standardised work-hour limits difficult to implement.

Current gig work incentives prioritise speed over safety, encouraging risky driving behaviour. Since earnings are ride-based, some drivers may rush trips to complete more rides. Regulatory interventions should shift incentives toward service quality rather than trip volume, ensuring that platform algorithms account for real-world conditions such as traffic and delays in estimated arrival and drop-off times.

A centralised system for tracking driver work hours across platforms remains unlikely due to data privacy concerns and competitive interests. In the absence of such coordination, platforms should take responsibility by aligning their policies with labour laws, setting reasonable working hour limits - such as a 12-hour daily cap - and integrating fatigue alerts and safety prompts into their apps. Encouraging voluntary compliance through driver education on safe working hours can serve as an interim solution.

Better distribution of regulatory responsibilities across relevant agencies would improve enforcement and ensure practical on-ground implementation.

4. Enabling a Sustainable and Inclusive Transition to E-Bike Taxis

4.1. Challenges in Meeting Electrification Mandates

The financial burden of transitioning to electric vehicles has posed significant challenges for bike taxi operators, with many struggling to sustain operations. In Delhi, for instance, the shift to a 100% EV requirement has been difficult for the industry, as high upfront costs and limited financial support have made electrification less accessible, leading to a notable decline in bike taxi services.

The adoption is further hindered by an inadequate supply of commercial EV and insufficient charging infrastructure.

While retrofitting could serve as a viable alternative, there is minimal policy or financial support. Some platforms have attempted to adopt fleet-based rental models as a workaround, but it poses scalability challenges.

An incentive based approach, supported by phased and targeted interventions, infrastructure development, and improved financing options, is essential for ensuring a smooth and sustainable shift to electric bike taxis.

Poll Insights 8 | Mandating Electric Bike Taxis

1. Should all bike taxis be mandated to use electric two-wheelers?



Five industry representatives were asked, *should all bike taxis be mandated to use electric two-wheelers?*

Stakeholders emphasised that the choice of electric two-wheelers for bike taxis should be left to operators and drivers.

4.2. Addressing the Affordability Barrier for Platform Workers

The high upfront cost of EVs is a major deterrent for platform workers. With subsidies being phased out in some states, financial incentives for EV adoption have diminished. Further, state-provided EV subsidies often fail to reach drivers due to complex processes and/or lack of awareness. **Stronger collaboration among aggregators, drivers, transport departments, vehicle manufacturers, and financiers, among others, can bridge the gap to simplify disbursement and improve access.**

Poll Insights 9 | Demand for Electric Bike Taxis

Would an electric bike taxi positively influence your usage?



10 civil society participants were asked, *would an electric bike taxi positively influence your usage of the service?*

Stakeholders highlighted that electric bike taxis can positively influence usage, but only if fares remain unchanged.

4.3. Charging Infrastructure and Operational Viability

Range limitations and the limited availability of charging stations pose significant operational challenges for electric bike taxis. Passenger load impacts battery performance, necessitating frequent recharging. **Targeted investments in robust charging infrastructure are crucial for ensuring the operational viability of electric bike taxis. One potential solution is the introduction of fast-charging technology that allows bikes to charge within 20 minutes, making EV adoption practical for bike taxi operators.**

4.4. The Role of Government: Financial and Non-financial Support

Government incentives, such as subsidies, rebates, and low-interest loans, are essential for encouraging EV adoption. **State-backed initiatives, such as EV-only zones, reserved stands and booking counters for EV taxis, can further facilitate smoother adoption of electric bike taxis. Financial incentives and improved financing options are essential to making electric bike taxis a viable and sustainable alternative.**

Regulatory inconsistencies in neighbouring states, particularly in the Delhi-NCR, also add to operational challenges. Disparate EV policies across state borders disrupt compliance efforts and create uncertainty for long-term investment in electric fleets. **Standardising policies across regions and ensuring infrastructure readiness will be key to fostering a seamless and scalable transition to electric bike taxis. Further, facilitating tri-state operations in regions like the National Capital Region would be a welcome development.**

4.5. Ensuring Equitable EV Policies Across States

To avoid a fragmented approach, equitable EV policies are needed across states. **Harmonised standards for charging infrastructure, consistent subsidy programmes, and clear regulatory frameworks can ensure a level playing field for EV bike taxis, promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.**

5. Creating a Clear and Equitable Financial Framework for the Bike Taxi Ecosystem

5.1. Addressing Ambiguities in Taxation and GST Policies

Platforms that operate on a subscription-based model, where drivers pay a fixed fee for access to the platform rather than a commission per ride, face ambiguity under existing Goods and Services Tax (GST) regulations. Clarification on whether the 20% platform share from fares should be inclusive of tax is essential for regulatory compliance and cost calculation transparency for drivers. **A clear tax framework, tailored to the sector's unique business model, is needed to create financial stability. Additionally, measures should be taken to ensure a level-paying field for all, thereby achieving parity among workers and aggregators across different business models.**

5.2. Expanding Commercial Insurance and Social Security Coverage

The lack of commercial insurance options tailored to gig-platform workers exacerbates financial vulnerability. Existing policies often reject claims for personal two-wheelers used for commercial purposes. **Developing specialised insurance frameworks is essential to ensure financial security and coverage for gig workers.**

Additionally, the process of claiming insurance is often cumbersome, with complex terms, a lack of clear contact persons, and limited access to cashless claim options. **Aggregators, insurance providers - government/ public, and private - and civil society organisations**

should come together to enhance awareness of and access to social security schemes to workers and their families.

5.3. Ensuring Sustainable Earnings for Drivers and Fare Flexibility

During the roundtable, affordability and fair pricing were rated as the top factor in ensuring commuter satisfaction.

Indeed, affordability and fair pricing are important. However, current fare regulations stem from outdated models that fail to account for the complexities of digital ride-hailing and the diverse stakeholders involved.

Poll Insights 10 | Attributes of Commuter Delight

How important are the following service attributes in ensuring commuter delight? (1 - Not important, 5 - Very important)



Representatives of 11 civil society organisations were asked, *how important are the following service attributes in ensuring commuter delight?: Affordability and fair pricing; Reliable availability of rides; Professional and well-trained driver; Good vehicle quality, and Safe and comfortable rides.*

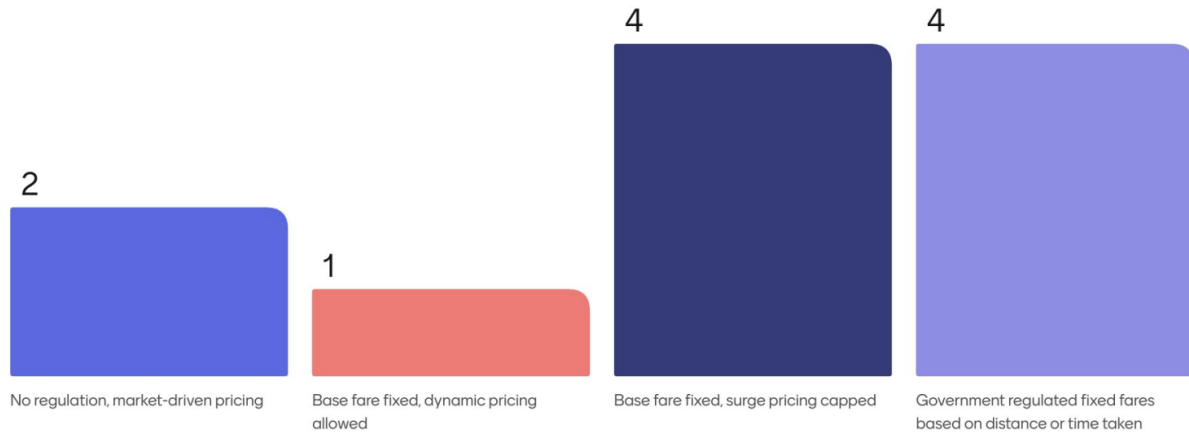
Market-driven pricing, similar to airline fare regulations, can drive industry growth. While dynamic pricing allows platforms to adjust fares based on demand, excessive surges can disproportionately impact lower-income users. **A balanced approach - setting both upper and lower caps or ranges - can ensure affordability while preserving market flexibility. Greater transparency in pricing models would further enhance trust and promote market equity.**

Ride cancellations also remain contentious. While the MVAG 2020 guidelines mandate cancellation charges for both customers and drivers, penalising drivers may disrupt supply and undermine the flexibility of gig work. Cancellations are often influenced by subjective factors. **Rather than relying solely on penalties, platforms should analyse cancellation patterns and implement targeted interventions or incentives to improve ride reliability. A**

balanced framework is needed - one that neither reduces driver earnings nor imposes undue costs on consumers - ensuring fairness while maintaining platform efficiency.

Poll Insights 11 | Fixing Bike Taxi Fares

What is the best way to balance fare flexibility and affordability?



11 civil society participants of the roundtable were asked, *what is the best way to balance fare flexibility and affordability?*

Stakeholders had varied perspectives on fare regulation for commuter satisfaction. While some preferred a market-driven approach with no regulation, others supported government-regulated fixed fares based on distance or time taken. A significant portion favoured hybrid models with a fixed base fare and capped surge pricing.

Poll Insights 12 | Response to Cancellation Policies

Are cancellation fees on riders and drivers effective in ensuring reliability?



While many agreed that such fees help reduce last-minute cancellations, some emphasised the need for reasonable pricing. Others opposed cancellation fees, arguing they add an unnecessary burden or suggesting that alternative incentives would be more effective.

6. Market Growth and Integration with Urban Mobility

6.1. Bike Taxis as First- and Last-Mile Connectivity Solution

Bike taxis play a crucial role in enhancing first- and last-mile connectivity, linking passengers to public transport nodes. **Integrating bike taxis into urban transport planning is essential for facilitating their acceptance and expansion. Recognising them as an essential component of India's multimodal mobility ecosystem is critical.**

Leading practices, such as the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), have proactively designed their infrastructure to prioritise multimodal hubs from inception rather than as an afterthought. Ensuring that last-mile connectivity remains a foundational element in urban transport policies, whether through pilot projects, tendering processes, or Expression of Interest (EoI) models is essential. By embedding last-mile connectivity as a core principle in transport planning frameworks, bike taxis can be positioned as a critical component of the mobility ecosystem.

In cities with well-developed feeder systems, such as Chennai, bike taxis can supplement existing services by providing flexible, last-mile connectivity. **Regulatory frameworks should facilitate their seamless integration, enhancing connectivity and accessibility within the existing mobility ecosystem.**

6.2. Strengthening Public-Private Collaborations for Mobility

A collaborative approach among policymakers, worker organisations, civil society, and platform companies (i.e. mobility aggregators) is essential for a fair and sustainable bike taxi ecosystem. Many drivers remain unaware of existing regulations, leading to compliance gaps and uncertainty. Strengthening communication between platforms and drivers through transparent information-sharing mechanisms can bridge this gap, ensuring workers are informed about regulatory changes, rights, and industry developments.

Bike taxis present a unique opportunity to drive economic growth, entrepreneurship, and sustainable urban mobility. **Establishing a multi-stakeholder working group - comprising government officials, industry representatives, platform operators, and urban mobility experts - can help develop solutions that enable the sector to scale while balancing the needs of all stakeholders.**

A structured regulatory framework will be key to unlocking the full potential of bike taxis. By ensuring a supportive business environment, fair operating conditions, and seamless integration with urban transport, policies can help bike taxis thrive as an accessible, flexible, and sustainable mobility solution that benefits workers, entrepreneurs, cities, and the broader economy.

7. Conclusion: Policy Roadmap for the Future of Bike Taxis in India

The bike taxi sector in India stands at a critical juncture, with immense potential to enhance urban mobility, create livelihood opportunities, and contribute to sustainability goals. However, realising this potential requires a cohesive regulatory framework, industry collaboration, and tech-driven innovations that balance the interests of all stakeholders - drivers or individual entrepreneurs, consumers, aggregators and service providers (including fleet operators), and policymakers.

7.1. Key Takeaways: Policy Roadmap for Sustainable Growth

The roundtable discussions highlighted five critical areas that must be addressed to ensure bike taxis can scale as a sustainable and inclusive mobility solution:

1. Regulatory Cohesion & Flexibility Across States

- a. Key Challenge: Fragmented state regulations create operational uncertainty for bike taxi platforms and drivers.
- b. Policy Pathway: Standardise licensing, permits, and operational guidelines while allowing for state-specific customisations based on local needs.

2. Technology-Driven Compliance & Safety

- a. Key Challenge: Limited regulatory oversight and lack of real-time compliance tracking.
- b. Policy Pathway: Leverage API-based verification, AI-driven safety alerts, and centralised data-sharing mechanisms to improve compliance while adhering to data privacy.

3. Financial Sustainability & Worker Protections

- a. Key Challenge: Unclear taxation policies, limited awareness and lack of ready access to insurance, and lack of transparency in worker earnings.
- b. Policy Pathway: Develop clear tax structures, enable commercial insurance for gig and platform workers, and ensure fair pricing models that balance driver compensation and service affordability for consumers.

4. A Just & Inclusive EV Transition

- a. Key Challenge: High upfront EV costs, limited charging infrastructure, and abrupt electrification mandates.
- b. Policy Pathway: Implement phased EV adoption policies, financial incentives, and targeted infrastructure investments to ensure a smoother transition.

5. Market Integration & Urban Mobility Planning

- a. Key Challenge: Bike taxis are not fully integrated into formal urban transport networks.
- b. Policy Pathway: Recognise bike taxis as first- and last-mile connectivity providers, enabling public-private partnerships and multimodal integration.

6. Institutionalising Government-Industry-Civil Society Collaboration

- a. Key Challenge: Lack of structured coordination between industry stakeholders and policymakers leads to implementation hurdles.

- b. Policy Pathway: Establish a national-level task force coupled with state-led working groups to align policy reforms with industry growth, fostering jobs and entrepreneurship, and urban mobility priorities.

7.2. The Future of Bike Taxis in India

With the right policy reforms, public-private collaborations, and technological innovation, bike taxis can play a transformative role in enhancing mobility, reducing congestion, and supporting green transport initiatives, thereby contributing to India's sustainability goals. A forward-looking policy approach - grounded in flexibility, innovation, and collaboration - will ensure that bike taxis continue to evolve as a reliable, accessible, and sustainable mobility solution for Indian cities, and in the process, unlocking millions of livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Participants of the OMI Foundation Roundtable Series, *Two Wheels, Many Rulebooks: Reimagining Bike Taxis in India*

1. Anjana A. Karumathil, Associate Professor of Practice, IIM Kozhikode
2. Anudeepika Jain, Public Policy Lead, UberMoto
3. Faiz Jamal, Associate Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)
4. Mamuni Das, Director - Infrastructure, CII
5. Mayank Dubey, Assistant Professor, SPA Bhopal
6. Mohini Singh, Assistant Program Manager, Safetipin
7. Nirmal Panda, Head of Public Policy and Government Affairs India, inDrive
8. Palak Thakur, Senior Researcher, ICCT
9. Paulose N. Kuriakose, Assistant Professor, SPA Bhopal
10. Raghavan Viswanathan, Partner - Deal Advisory, KPMG
11. Saudamini Zutshi, Business Development and Partnerships Manager, Purpose
12. Shantanu Sharma, Legal, Policy & Corporate Affairs, Mobility Platform
13. Sumit Das, CEO, Baayu-Bikozee
14. Other participants, including:
 - a. One government-run worker awareness, welfare, and training agency
 - b. Four trade union leaders
 - c. Five workers from various associations
 - d. One civil society representative
 - e. One platform business representative

Credits

About OMI Foundation



OMI Foundation Trust is a new-age policy research and social innovation think tank operating at the intersection of mobility innovation, governance, and public good. Mobility is a cornerstone of inclusive growth providing the necessary medium and opportunities for every citizen to unlock their true potential. OMI Foundation endeavours to play a small but impactful role in ushering meaningful change as cities move towards sustainable, resilient, and equitable mobility systems, which meet the needs of not just today or tomorrow, but the day after.

OMI Foundation houses four interconnected centres that conduct cutting-edge evidence-based policy research on all things mobility:

- 1) **The Centre for Clean Mobility** catalyses the adoption of electric vehicles, future fuels, and renewable energy within the mobility ecosystem as a key climate strategy of cities.
- 2) **The Centre for Future Mobility** supports the leapfrog of cities to a sustainable future anchored in the paradigms of active, shared, connected, clean, and AI-powered mobility.
- 3) **The Centre for Inclusive Mobility** promotes safe, accessible, reliable, and affordable mobility for all. It paves the road for the future of work and platform economy to fulfil the modern promise of labour.
- 4) **The Centre for Technology Transitions** is dedicated to transforming India's innovation ecosystem through a systems approach. It aims to position India as a global leader in ethical, inclusive, and sustainable technological innovation.

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Finally, we express our appreciation in advance to the government stakeholders who will be receiving and considering the recommendations emerging from this initiative.

Author



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Madhumitha is an emerging sustainable mobility leader. Holding an MA in Development Studies and a BA in Sociology, she applies a multidisciplinary approach to urban mobility, advocating for inclusive policies. At OMI Foundation, she leads initiatives promoting sustainable, accessible, and adaptable transport solutions, envisioning cities driven by active, shared, connected, electric/ green, and AI-powered mobility.

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With Fellowships from the Salzburg Global Seminar, The Nippon Foundation, and the International Road Federation, Anish advocates for technology-driven, sustainable transport solutions that enhance efficiency and inclusivity. With a Master's in Public Policy and a background in Mathematics, he bridges analytical rigour with practical policy-making, leveraging data-driven insights to address complex urban mobility challenges.



Aishwarya Raman, *Executive Director, OMI Foundation*

Aishwarya leads policy research on energy, mobility, livelihoods, and technology transitions. An Oxford-trained sociologist, she began her mobility sector journey as an entrepreneur and academic over a decade ago. A member of key policy committees at state, national, and global levels, she has received fellowships for AI-led transformations, including Salzburg Global and The Nippon Foundation fellowships. Under her leadership, OMI Foundation has developed pioneering policy tools, earning the organisation national and international recognition.

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