Centre for Public Policy Research

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTRODUCTION OF SHARE AUTO SERVICES IN KOCHI

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Authors
Nikhil Ali, Research Associate, CPPR
Dr D Dhanuraj , Chairman, CPPR

Supported By
Antony B J, Consultant Projects
Lizbeth Jibi Godwin, Research Associate, CPPR
Nissy Soloman, Hon. Trustee (Research & Programs) CPPR.

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Layout and Design
Anu Maria Francis, Senior Associate, CPPR

Communications and Media Support
April Suzanna Varkey, Senior Associate, Communications & Events
Asif Muhammed, Associate, Associate, Public Relations & Social Media

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Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR)
First Floor, Mandoli House, New Link Road
Elamkulam, Kochi, Kerala, India-682020
www.cppr.in | E-mail: research@cppr.in

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ABBRIEVIATIONS

CIAL	Cochin International Airport
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CUSAT	Cochin University of Science and Technology
G.O	Gazette Order
KMRL	Kochi Metro Rail Limited
LNG	Liquified Natural Gas
LPG	Liquified Petroleum Gas
MVR	Motor Vehicles Rules
RTA	Regional Transport Authority

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Concept of Shared Mobility

Shared service transport systems are transport modes like share autos or shared taxis in which a group of passengers travel in the same vehicle with intermediate stops for boarding and alighting, thus reducing the cost of travel for individual passengers. These IPT services feed commuters to other modes of public transport, such as bus, train, metro rail, etc. Primarily, they are small vehicles accommodating 5-8 [1] passengers that can travel through narrow roads. They are flexible as they can commute to any location; convenient as they pick-up and drop-off passengers on demand and are available throughout the day; cost efficient, as people can commute to different locations, spending less compared to autos and taxis; and finally, they are user friendly as they can provide comfortable seating and other facilities. Popular vehicles used in other cities are maxi cabs (TATA Magic, Mahindra Maxximo) and share autos (Vikram, Arjun, etc.). Chennai, Alwar, Rajkot, Lucknow, and Hyderabad are a few major cities where share cars are very common.

1.2 Significance of Shared Services in Kochi

Shared services are of importance in a city like Kochi with numerous by-roads and places without access to public transportation. The roads inside the city, especially the by-roads, are narrow (varying from 11 m to 26m) and congested, leading to distortions in traffic and slowing the pace of traffic movement. The introduction of conventional public transport systems or building infrastructure will not be feasible on routes with narrow streets, which have very little space for expanding roads.

In such scenarios, shared services (like share auto), which take up very little space and transport more people in a single trip than private vehicles, will be a useful alternative. The shared services shall connect unconnected locations and locations where accessibility is minimal.

1.3 Definition of Autorickshaw and Share Auto

As per Section 2 (c) of the Kerala Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989

“Autorickshaw means a motor vehicle constructed, adapted or used to carry not more than three passengers, excluding the driver for hire or reward, and having less than four wheels.”

There is no definition for shared services or Share Auto in Kerala MVR. As per Section 3 (da) of the Tamil Nadu Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989

"Share autorickshaw" means a motor vehicle constructed, adapted or used to carry five passengers, excluding the driver for hire or reward, and having less than four wheels.

The lack of definition in the Kerala MVR will restrict the serviceability of shared services as contract carriage if seating capacity is under 6. As per the Kerala MVR, a stage carriage service is provided by a vehicle with a seating capacity of 6 and more; hence, a shared service if provided by an autorickshaw collecting individual fare cannot be termed a stage carriage operation. On the other hand, as shared services provide services that are distinct from contract carriage, the definition of shared services is to be incorporated into the Kerala MVR.

[1]According to a study conducted by IUT (Institute of Urban Transport), Shared type of IPT contains a capacity of 4 to 10 seats. (https://smartnet.niua.org/sites/default/files/resources/Intermediate%20Public%20Transport.pdf)

1.4 Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019

As per the 2019 amendment to the Motor Vehicles Act, some significant authority is granted through sub-section 3 of Section 67 to state governments. This provision empowers the state government to modify any permit issued under the Act. Furthermore, it allows for the formulation of schemes designed to facilitate the transportation of goods and passengers. Licences can be issued under these schemes, aligning with the overarching goal of promoting development and efficiency in various aspects of transportation.

Specifically, the state government is authorised to focus on crucial areas such as last-mile connectivity, rural transport, reduction of traffic congestion, improvement of urban transport, and ensuring the safety of road users. The scope extends to better utilisation of transportation assets, fostering economic vitality through enhanced competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency. Moreover, the emphasis is placed on increasing the accessibility and mobility of people while simultaneously safeguarding and enhancing the environment. The promotion of energy conservation, improvement of the quality of life, and enhancement of integration and connectivity in the transportation system across different modes are other integral components aligned to which the state government can bring about changes. Additionally, the provision grants flexibility for the state government to address any other matters deemed relevant . This comprehensive approach reflects the intent of the amendment, which is to empower state governments to enact measures that contribute to the holistic development and efficiency of the transportation landscape.

Consequently, this amendment provides the government with the flexibility to introduce shared services in the city, aligning with the broader goals of promoting efficient, sustainable, and integrated transportation systems.

1.5 Shared services as a feeder system to Kochi Metro

Even though Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL) provides feeder bus services to places like Cochin International Airport (CIAL), Kalamassery Medical College, and Info Park, Kochi Metro users rely on conventional autorickshaws and buses for its first and last mile connectivity. There is a lack of integration between different modes of transport in the city, which poses difficulties for commuters in accessing the mass transit systems, thereby impacting the mode share of public transport in the city. To enhance accessibility and connectivity to Kochi metro, KMRL introduced electric autorickshaws (normal service) at metro stations, albeit potentially increasing the overall travel cost.

When considering the commuter's perspective, the role of shared services as a feeder system for public transport is of importance. Commuters utilising public transport expect quality service at a reasonable price. Implementing shared services like Share Auto can effectively lower travel costs and enhance connectivity to public transport in the city. For a significant shift in commuter preference towards mass transit systems (including metro services) to occur, a more integrated system of various modes of transportation needs to be established. The Ernakulam RTA's approach to introducing Share Auto can be seen as a positive step towards this integration.

By welcoming traditional autorickshaws, KMRL and new players, the approach could be stated as an effective step towards integrating multiple modes of transportation in the city. As shared services, such as Share Auto, are a new concept for the city, they present a number of opportunities and challenges that must be addressed.

Share auto service characteristics that the RTA plans to implement:

- Type of service - feeder to metro (plays to and fro in the scheduled route)
- Vehicle type - 3 Wheeler (Autorickshaw)
- Fuel type - Electric
- Seating capacity - 3 (excluding driver)
- Maximum route length - 2.5 km
- Fare - Rs. 10 per passenger
- Expected fare collection while servicing 2.5 km
  = 3*10 (from metro station) + 3*10 (to metro station)
  = Rs 60

The proposed feeder autos of the KMRL can play a crucial role in providing scheduled last-mile connectivity to commuters. Operating on a designated route, these shared services aim to accommodate at least six passengers in a single to-and-fro trip, enhancing efficiency and minimising individual commuting costs.

In contrast, conventional autorickshaws operate on a hired service model, where commuters pay an amount equivalent to the cost of running the autorickshaw from the stand to the destination and back.

Unfortunately, this often results in the autorickshaw returning without any passengers. In such scenarios, the conventional autorickshaw may serve only one passenger in a single trip (to and fro), representing the least efficient utilisation.

The significance of shared services becomes apparent in this context. Despite covering the same distance, a shared auto has the capacity to serve six people in one trip, presenting a more cost-effective and environmentally sustainable alternative. This emphasises the importance of promoting shared transportation solutions to optimise resources, reduce congestion, and enhance the overall commuting experience for passengers.

2. Gaps in the Regulatory Framework

2.1 Existing Permit system

The Regional Transport Office issues permits in adherence to the regulations outlined in the Motor Vehicles Act of 1988 and various government orders issued by Kerala State. Of particular significance is the Gazette order (G.O. (P) No. 189|95|PW & T. dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 12th December, 1995) that imposes limits on contract carriage permits, especially concerning city permits. As per G.O(P)No.41/2018/Tran. Dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 22nd November, 2018, the Government of Kerala directed the Regional Transport Authority to fix the limit for autorikshaws (LPG, CNG, and electric) at 3000, in which 2000 permits will be allotted to electric autos and the rest 1000 will be for other fuels such as LPG, LNG, and CNG. Thus, KMRL's initiative to deploy electric Share Autos in metro stations can be processed seamlessly without encountering any hindrance or regulatory barriers.

The current permit system designates autorickshaws as contract carriage vehicles, indicating their classification as hired vehicles. However, the existing permit system does not accommodate shared services within the city. Notably, the absence of guidelines for shared services in the city creates a gap in the regulatory framework. As the concept of shared services is different from conventional contract carriage services, there is a need to introduce special conditions in the existing permits granting the service provider permission to provide shared services in urban spaces.

2.2 Conditions of the existing permits

Ordinary Permit (Ernakulam district) - Contract Carriage Permit (FORM P.Co.)

Maximum Passenger capacity	3
Route/Area for which permit is valid	All fit roads in Ernakulam District, subject to the condition that the vehicle not park or pick up passengers from within the city
Period of validity	(5 years)
This permit does not entitle the holder to use the vehicle herein described a stage carriage or public carrier	
Permitted to park at approved stands of _____ (corresponding municipality)	

City Permit - Contract Carriage Permit (FORM P.Co.)

Maximum Passenger capacity	3
Route/Area for which permit is valid	All fit roads in Ernakulam District
Period of validity	(5 years)
This permit does not entitle the holder to use the vehicle herein described a stage carriage or public carrier	
Permitted to park at approved stands of Cochin Corporation	

In both the city permit and the ordinary permit, it is explicitly stated that the permit holder is not authorised to use the vehicle to provide stage carriage service. Despite the fact that Share Autos often functions similarly to stage carriages in various cities, the ongoing discussions regarding the introduction of Share Autos by KMRL follow a distinct model. These Share Autos (designed to operate on fixed routes and charge a standardised rate of Rs. 10 per passenger) deviate from the conventional stage carriage concept.

It is crucial to note that the fixed fare of Rs. 10 remains constant throughout the journey, as the route length is capped at 2.5 km. This predetermined fare structure, coupled with the fixed route, aligns with a predefined agreement. Consequently, the Share Auto services planned for execution can be classified as contract carriages rather than stage carriages. However, it would be challenging to do the same in the future if the scope of shared transport was to be expanded to longer route lengths with stage-by-stage fares.

3. Challenges in Introducing Share Autos

The challenges in introducing Share Autos as feeder services include challenges related to the permit system, financial and operational challenges, and challenges related to routes/areas of service.

3.1 Challenges Related to Permits

The challenges associated with permits are notably pronounced in the absence of a dedicated permit[2] system for shared services. The lack of a structured framework for such services poses difficulties in effectively regulating the providers. An efficient way to address this issue is to incorporate provisions for shared services within the permits granted to the respective vehicles. This not only facilitates a streamlined regulatory process but also ensures that shared services operate within well-defined parameters. Interestingly, even in states where a distinct permit system for Share Autos is in place, difficulties persist in preventing them from functioning as conventional contract carriages. This highlights the complexities of permit-related challenges and emphasises the need for comprehensive regulatory measures to effectively navigate them.

3.2 Financial and Operational Challenges

Financial challenges are evident in the context of shared services, particularly concerning the choice of vehicles with limited seating capacity. In the city, autorickshaws with only three seats are considered for shared services, limiting them to a maximum of three passengers at a time.

This configuration leads to a lower income potential compared to shared services in other cities, where vehicles with 5 to 8 seats are deployed. The proposed 3 seater electric autorickshaws (by KMRL) are compact and are not recommended for shared services, as their compact structure causes the comfort of the passengers to be compromised when fully occupied. The use of larger vehicles not only accommodates more passengers per trip but also results in higher overall income.

Examining the fare structure further highlights the financial constraints associated with 3-seater autorickshaws. The normal contract carriage autorickshaw fare is set at Rs 30 for a distance of 1.5 km. In the case of 3-seater Share Autos, the fare remains Rs 30, but this is shared among three passengers. Thus, in comparison, both conventional autorickshaws and proposed share autos generate the same revenue in a single trip, which in turn will not attract more service providers into the shared service sector. Additionally, the pricing model necessitates multiple boardings and deboarding to make the shared service financially viable, adding complexity to the profitability equation.

Consider a 5-seater Share Auto; it can charge Rs 50 for a trip accommodating five passengers. This larger capacity enables these vehicles to generate more income per trip compared to their 3-seater counterparts, further illustrating the financial advantages of having vehicles with greater seating capacity in the shared services sector.

[2]As per the notification issued by MoRTH (S.O. 2812(E) Dated 30/08/2016), the provision of services by electric autorickshaws is no longer subject to a permit requirement, which was previously stipulated in sub-section 1 of Section 66 of the Motor Vehicles Act.

The discrepancy in income between 3-seater and larger capacity vehicles (if allowed to function in later stages) will pose a notable financial hurdle for those engaged in shared services with smaller vehicles in the city.

Restricting vehicles with a passenger seating capacity of more than 3 will have an adverse impact on the idea of introducing shared services into the city. When vehicles with more seating capacity are allowed, more passengers will board the vehicle in a single trip, resulting in more profit for the operator. This will result in more operators entering the market, thus making the system more efficient and reliable for the public.

3.3 Challenges related to routes/area of service

Challenges related to routes and the area of service in shared autos are prominent, particularly when considering the variation in demand during peak and off-peak hours. The routes and areas selected for Share Autos primarily cater to spaces with a reasonable demand during peak hours. However, it is not feasible to offer Share Auto services on these shorter routes (up to a maximum distance of 2.5 km) during off-peak hours due to a lack of ridership.

Given the limited length of the route, service providers often seek ways to boost revenue, leading them to request permits to operate the same vehicle as conventional contract carriage autorickshaws during off-peak hours. This dual permit approach, allowing vehicles to function both as Share Autos and conventional contract carriage autorickshaws, introduces complexity for the regulatory body. The governance of such a dual-service system becomes more difficult because it must balance the needs of service providers to increase revenue with the larger goal of maintaining effective and streamlined regulatory oversight.

4. Integrating existing autorickshaw providers

To establish an integrated service, it is imperative to incorporate more service providers into the proposed network system. However, the introduction of Share Autos as a concept is relatively new to service providers. The prescribed capping for both route length and fare is notably shorter compared to other Indian cities where Share Autos operate, leading to potential reluctance among existing service providers to participate in the Share Auto service. Educating service providers about the features and advantages of the Share Auto system through awareness programmes is required to meet this challenge. Additionally, increasing the profitability of providing Share Auto services could be a key motivator for service providers to embrace this new model.

In the ensuing section, different models of servicing are explored. They are broadly categorised as follows

- Share Auto services provided only by KMRL
- Share Auto services provided by KMRL and other individual providers
  - Individual providers providing only Share Auto services
  - Individual providers providing both Share Auto services (at peak hours) and normal services (at off-peak hours)

5. Different Operating Models

5.1 Share Auto service provided only by KMRL

The implementation of a Share Auto service that is exclusively managed by KMRL offers the potential for efficiency and simplicity. Within this framework, KMRL is granted the independence to develop a customised set of regulations and policies to govern the service. This approach allows for a streamlined and standardised operation, ensuring a quality level that aligns with the expectations of commuters. By having exclusive control over the service, KMRL can implement and enforce guidelines that prioritise efficiency, safety, and customer satisfaction.

The simplicity of a single governing body overseeing Share Auto operations simplifies regulatory processes and minimises potential conflicts arising from diverse service providers. This centralised approach offers the advantage of uniformity, making it easier for commuters to understand and adhere to the established norms. Additionally, KMRL's direct involvement ensures prompt responses to challenges, quick adaptation to changing circumstances, and the ability to implement improvements based on real-time feedback.

Analysing the model from different perspectives.

Institutional Perspective	Commuter's Perspective	Existing Service provider's Perspective
- Operational Control: KMRL gains complete operational control, allowing for efficient management, adherence to quality standards, and the ability to implement systematic improvements.	- Reliability: Commuters benefit from a standardised and regulated service, ensuring reliability, safety, and consistency in the quality of transportation.	- Ridership Loss: The existing service providers will lose ridership on the proposed route when it is classified as a Share Auto route
- Branding and Image: A KMRL-managed service can enhance the overall image and brand reputation, showcasing the commitment to providing reliable and well-regulated transportation solutions	- Easy to identify: When the service is only provided by KMRL, commuters will be able to easily identify Share Autos because they will have a separate colour code and parking lot.	- Restricted market entry: Autonomy of KMRL, no other service providers can enter the Share Auto service in this model, making it difficult for interested providers to enter.

Institutional Perspective	Commuter's Perspective	Existing Service provider's Perspective
- Revenue Model: While revenue may be generated, KMRL needs to ensure that the service is financially sustainable. Ridership growth for metro services is the primary goal; thus, a high profit margin is not required.	- Integrated Services: Seamless integration with the existing metro system (in different aspects like connectivity, passenger information systems, or an app based payment system), encouraging more commuters to opt for the service.	- Untested service: In the future, shared mobility services will be essential to city life. Existing service providers should know about these services, but in this model, they are not welcome to explore. This lack of exposure to emerging trends may potentially hinder their ability to adapt to future changes in the transportation industry
- Catering to Demand: When the service becomes more popular, there is a possibility that there will not be enough autos available during peak hours.	- Waiting time: Since no other service providers are offering Share Auto, during peak hours commuters would have to wait for KMRL's vehicle.	

5.2 Share Auto provided by KMRL and other individual providers

In this model, KMRL and individual providers both offer Share Auto services, presenting a well-rounded strategy to meet the demand for shared transportation. The joint efforts of KMRL and individual providers aim to provide comprehensive and efficient service to commuters. Two distinct operational approaches within this model are envisaged:

5.2.1 Individual service providers providing only Share Auto services

In this scenario, vehicles dedicated to providing shared services operate consistently throughout the day. This ensures the continuous availability of shared transportation, catering to the diverse commuting needs of the population. The advantage lies in the sustained accessibility of shared services, promoting reliability for users across various timeframes.

5.2.2 Individual service providers provide Shared Service in Peak Hours and Normal Service in Off-Peak Hours

Alternatively, vehicles could be designated to offer shared services during peak hours when demand is high, seamlessly transitioning to normal services during off-peak hours. This flexible approach optimises resource utilisation by adapting to the fluctuating demand patterns throughout the day. Commuters can enjoy the benefits of shared services during busy periods while still having access to normal options during less congested hours.

Key Advantages of this Scenario

Demand Responsiveness: The dual approach ensures that shared services are responsive to changing demand patterns, promoting efficiency and meeting commuter needs.

Optimised Resource Utilization: By strategically blending shared and normal services, the model aims for optimal utilisation of resources, minimising downtime and maximising efficiency.
While this scenario offers flexibility and adaptability, successful implementation will require effective coordination between RTA, KMRL and individual providers, clear communication channels, and a shared commitment to providing reliable and convenient shared transportation services.

Image Courtesy : Kerala Kaumudy

5.2.2 Individual service providers provide Shared Service in Peak Hours and Normal Service in Off-Peak Hours

Comparison of the two scenarios

Vehicles plying as Share Auto only	Vehicles plying as both share and normal service
- Shared service through out the day - A special permit can be issued - Easy to regulate and proper service could be ensured with - Vehicle colour code and Special uniforms for easy recognition of the service providers - Vehicles with more seating capacity can be introduced - Sufficient Ridership only on peak hours; in off-peak hours, the vehicle might be idle - A proper demand study is required on the designated routes before granting a permit to identify the number of Share Autos required.	- Shared service provided only on peak hours - Permits to be updated with special conditions - Continuos monitoring required to ensure that shared service is provided in peak hours - Special flip boards and uniforms to recognise the shared service - Chances of dispute when vehicles with more seating introduced in future - Proper utilisation of vehicle in both peak hours and non peak hours - Peak hours and off-peak hours are to be identified from the field investigation and are to be notified to avoid miscommunication.

Analysing the scenario "Vehicles plying as Share Auto only" from different perspectives

Institutional Perspective	Commuter's Perspective	Existing Service provider's Perspective
- Operational Control: As vehicles are providing only the shared service, the RTA can regulate the service by introducing a separate permit for the shared services - Demand estimation: The number of permits to be granted for the shared service is to be estimated for each route. - Colour code and uniform: The vehicles that provide shared service may have a distinct colour code and uniforms for the driver of the vehicle.	- Reliability: Commuters can access the service at any time of the day, whether it is peak or off-peak, because KMRL and individual operators both operate it. - Easy to identify: When these vehicles provide only shared services, commuters will be able to easily identify them by the colour code. - Fare: Since shared service vehicles do not provide regular service, there is no chance of disputes over the fare or the nature of the operator's service, making the service transparent.	- Quality of Service: Since individual operators only offer shared services, it is simple for them to offer a high-quality service that is comparable to what KMRL offers. - Ridership: Peak hours will have higher demand than off-peak hours. If the regulating body plans routes & hours well, the operator can earn more with fewer hours. - Parking area: The parking of these vehicles can be in the same area where conventional autos are parked,but they are to be parked together facing the route in which they ply in

Analysing the scenario "Vehicles plying as both Share Auto and Normal service" from different perspective

Institutional Perspective	Commuter's Perspective	Existing Service provider's Perspective
- Operational Control: As vehicles are providing both services, the RTA should monitor the shared service continuously so that the service is delivered to the commuters - Identification of peak hours: The RTA must identify the peak times along the proposed route and add them to the vehicle's permit so that the operator is required to provide the service. - Chance of dispute: The vehicles that provide both services, there are chances of disputes among the users and operators	-- Reliability: Metro commuters can access the service at any time of the day, whether it is peak or off-peak, because KMRL provides service all day long. - Identification of the service: As individual operators provide both services, commuters would face difficulty identifying Share Autos; flip boards shall be used in Share Autos for easy identification. - Fare: Since shared service vehicles do not provide regular service on the route, there are no fare disputes during peak hours but are possible during off-peak hours.	- Quality of Service: The quality of service provided by the individual operator might be compromised as they provide both shared service and normal service. - Ridership: By providing both services, an individual operator can collect revenue equal to or more than he collected before by providing the normal service alone. - Issue: When an operator receives a call for both normal service and shared service, which service should the operator opt for? Operators would prefer normal services over shared services in such cases.

6. Pilot service by KMRL

The KMRL's plan to conduct a pilot service to assess the viability of Share Autos is commendable; this will provide the RTA with the necessary data to determine the fare and route length for a financially stable shared mobility system to emerge in the city. CUSAT would be an appropriate location for the pilot service, as KMRL has received requests from CUSAT students and staff to introduce a shared service to the campus, thereby providing proper, cost-effective last mile connectivity to metro users.

6.1 CUSAT

The Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), situated 1.5 km from National Highway 47 in South Kalamassery, spans approximately 180 acres. The campus encompasses a diverse array of facilities, including various departments and schools, the administrative office, auxiliary institutions, hostels, guest houses, visiting faculty complexes, computer centres, a central library, staff quarters, playgrounds, and additional amenities.

Being one of the prominent universities in Kochi, CUSAT draws in more than 4000 individuals daily for educational and work-related activities.

Despite its significance, CUSAT faces a challenge in connecting seamlessly with the Kochi Metro due to the absence of a cost-efficient last-mile connectivity solution. Consequently, the utilisation of the metro system by the university's population remains relatively low. Recognising this gap, the introduction of the Share Auto concept emerges as a viable solution. By offering proper last-mile connectivity from the metro station and bridging the first-mile gap from the university, Share Auto services can significantly enhance accessibility and encourage more efficient utilisation of the metro system by the CUSAT community. This initiative holds the potential to address the transportation needs of the university population and contribute to the overall enhancement of the local mass transit system.

Route: From Cochin University Metro Station to School of Engineering

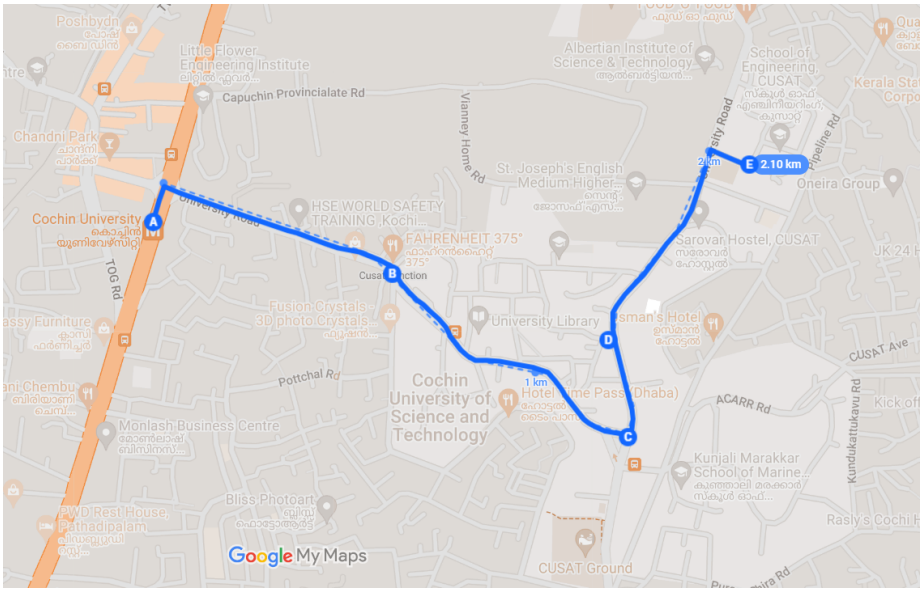


Figure : Cochin University Share Auto route proposed by KMRL

The proposed route covers 2.1 km and provides proper connectivity to the departments inside the campus.

6.2 Other suggested routes

In addition to the CUSAT route, several other routes within the city exhibit potential for consideration in shared service proposals. The identification of these routes is grounded in commuter traffic patterns within specific regions and a consideration of commuter preferences regarding transportation modes in those areas.

Other routes are

1. Vyttila Hub - Kaniampuzha - Eroor - SN Junction
2. Vadekkekota - Thripunithura town - SN Junction
3. Kadavanthra - Manorama Junction - Thevara Junction
4. Maharajas - General Hospital - Marine Drive - MG Road
5. JLN Stadium - Stadium road - KSRTC Bus Station
6. JLN Stadium - Stadium road - Thammanam Junction
7. CUSAT - Pipeline Road
8. Aluva - Pump Junction - Railway station (circular)
9. South Railway station - Jos Junction - Medical Trust
10. South Railway station - Ravipuram - Cochin Shipyard
11. Kadavanthara - Gandhi Nagar
12. Kadavanthara - Giri Nagar

7. Recommendations

7.1 Precisely defined guidelines for Share Autos

- It is imperative to establish a precise framework of guidelines and protocols in order to guarantee appropriate oversight of the service. This will facilitate conflict-free participation of both commuters and service providers in the shared service.

- The Kerala Motor Vehicle Rules should constitute a definition pertaining to Share Auto, a definition similar to the Tamil Nadu MVR. As the concept of Share Auto is entirely different from the conventional autorickshaw service, this is necessary.

- Propose the development of a dedicated list of conditions in the permit (for non electric 3-wheeler vehicles) exclusively for Share Autos. This targeted approach will facilitate focused monitoring and involvement from the RTA, streamlining regulatory processes.

    - Requests from current contract carriage autorickshaw service providers to provide Share Auto services shall be processed with least regulatory hurdles. Subsequent to the application, within a period of 15 days, the operator shall be granted permission to provide shared services along the specified route.

    - It allows the RTA to increase the scope of the current discussion and, in the future, introduce Share Auto services into narrow streets where conventional public transport may be lacking, thereby enhancing accessibility.

7.2 Quota-based Increase in Autorickshaws:

- As RTA is planning to increase the overall number of autorickshaws in the city, focus should be on a designated quota (within the overall city permit capping) reserved for Share Autos.

- Conduct a thorough routewise demand study to determine the appropriate distribution of Share Autos based on demand patterns. This strategic allocation ensures that demand is met while offering service providers the opportunity to generate substantial revenue.

7.3 Authorization of Five-Seater Autorickshaws:

- Allow autorickshaws with a seating capacity of five to enter the Share Auto market. This modification enables the accommodation of more passengers on a single trip, leading to increased revenue for operators.

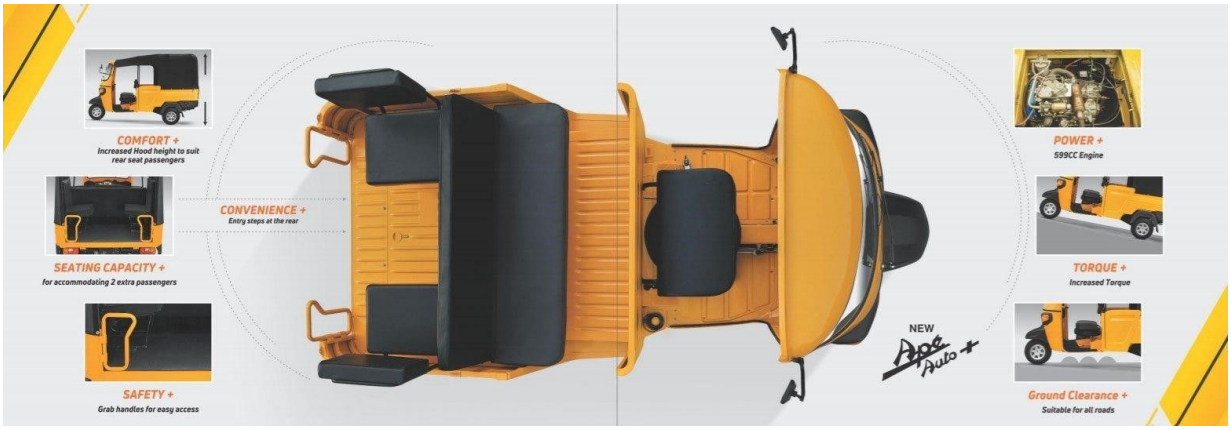
- The expanded capacity is particularly beneficial for shared services, attracting more service providers to participate in the shared transportation system.

7.4 Clear Conditions in the Permits:

- Emphasise the inclusion of explicit conditions in permits related to the Share Auto service if vehicles are allowed to provide both the Share Auto service and normal service.

- Clearly defining the terms and guidelines within permits facilitates straightforward regulation of the service. This measure ensures that both service providers and regulatory bodies have a comprehensive understanding of expectations, promoting effective and transparent governance.

Figure: Image of a five seater autorickshaw



8. Guidelines for Introducing Shareauto in Kochi

- The operator and regulator shall discuss and decide on the maximum number of passengers that a particular type of vehicle can carry at a time. The safety and security of passengers is of the utmost importance in this discussion.

- The permit should specify the route where the vehicle is allowed to offer shared services. For easy identification purposes, this should also be displayed on the vehicle.

- As and when the current regular auto operators apply for the share auto permits, the incumbent shall be granted a permit that substitutes the current condition,

> **"This permit does not entitle the holder to use the vehicle herein described a stage carriage or public carrier"**
>
> with
>
> **"This permit entitles the holder to use the vehicle for shared services and allows the holder to collect individual fares from passengers."**

- For enhanced business efficiency and commuter convenience, vehicles used for shared services should feature distinctive fitments or stickers, explicitly stating "Share Auto," to easily differentiate them from standard on-hire autorickshaws.

- The fare shall be discussed with the share auto operators in the larger context of public transport improvements and seamless connectivity. And the fare table for the shared service should be displayed on the vehicles.

- RTO shall conduct training once every six months on safety and security aspects, as well as the emerging challenges in the sector.

- The transfer from a regular hired service to a shared service should be a straightforward process for current autorickshaw operators upon application.

- Promote the organisation of the shared auto fleet in order to hold them accountable for the effectiveness and quality of the services.

- There could be a mechanism with the RTO office to deal and engage with the share auto sector, as well as for data collection and analysis to strengthen and improve operations from time to time.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, CPPR recommends the adoption of a working model where both KMRL and individual operators exclusively provide Share Auto services. To facilitate this, clearly defined guidelines for Share Auto operations should be developed, which will aid in the creation of a conflict-free environment. The Regional Transport Authority (RTA) is encouraged to allocate a specific quota for Share Autos in the upcoming call for new permits (city permits). Conducting a demand study for shared services along the route will help determine the number of Share Auto permits to be issued, ensuring a sustainable income for service providers.

The implementation of a separate set of conditions in the existing permit system is recommended, allowing autorickshaws to provide shared service even on longer routes, particularly in areas where traditional bus services may be impractical due to narrow roads or low demand. This specialised permit system empowers the RTA to strategically expand the Share Auto concept throughout the city, addressing gaps in public transportation. This approach aligns with the increasing recognition of the significance of intermediate public transport (IPT) systems in urban spaces. By legalising and promoting the shared mobility concept, Kochi has the potential to become a pioneering model for other cities in Kerala, showcasing the transformative impact of embracing innovative and adaptable transportation solutions to meet the evolving needs of urban communities.

By legalising and promoting the shared mobility concept, Kochi has the potential to become a pioneering model for other cities in Kerala, To initiate this process, the RTO should publicly announce the permitted locations in Kochi where Share Autos can operate, along with designated routes and charges. This should be communicated through local media channels. After a trial period of three months, a thorough review can be conducted to identify areas for improvement and refine the system accordingly.

Centre for Public Policy Research
First Floor, 'Mandoli House',
New Link Road (Opp. Metro Pillar 821),
Elamkulam, Kochi - 682020,
Kerala, India
www.cppr.in

Call us: 0484 3533966
Mob :091 97457 09174