

Moving Towards Shared Mobility: Prospects and Barriers

The aim of the session was to discuss the potential of shared mobility in Indian cities as well as to discuss concerns related to affordability, safety, and security of users. The session also focused on discussions related to regulations and policies that are required to support shared mobility in Indian cities. The role of shared mobility services in complementing public transport modes was also discussed as these services along with walking and cycling serve “feeding” function for mass transit systems.

The session was initiated by a keynote address by Mr. S Sundar, Former Secretary, Ministry of Surface Transport and Distinguished Fellow, TERI. Mr. Sundar elaborated that Indian cities are currently witnessing a trend of growing private ownership of vehicles and declining public transport use. These trends have major implications on India’s energy consumption, energy security, pollution, congestion as well as health and safety of people. He added the only solution to the current situation is to shift towards shared modes of transport. Many factors work in favour of shared mobility in Indian cities like high demand for affordable mobility options, low vehicle ownership per capita, young demography, high penetration of mobile phones etc. He also talked about regulatory issues and lack of financial mechanisms which act as a barrier to growth of new mobility solutions in the Indian context. It is necessary for regulators to adopt a more open approach towards new shared mobility services which can position them as a part of the solution rather than the problem. Also it is important to disincentivize the use of private vehicles and incentivize the use of shared mobility.

Ms Megha Kumar, Area Convener, Centre for sustainable Mobility, TERI set the context of the thematic track through a background presentation on shared mobility. The presentation focused on current scenario of shared mobility in India as well as future prospects and barriers related to shared mobility in the country. Ms Megha started the presentation by stating that India is expected to be a leader in shared mobility by 2030. Out of total miles driven in 2017 in India, 10% were shared and these shared miles are expected to reach 35% by 2030 and further to 40% by 2040. It was discussed in the presentation that total motor vehicles per 1000 population in India has increased from 8 in 1981 to 167 in 2015. This increase in vehicle ownership has resulted in problems like increased GHG emissions, congestion on roads, increased parking demand, increased road accidents and so on. By adopting shared and autonomous future, India can reduce 18000 billion km by 2030 which will further result in 1.5 gigatonnes of CO₂ reduction. She also reflected on major barriers to adoption of shared mobility, such as lack of integrated public transport infrastructure, restrictive practices for city taxi permits and strong aspiration for car ownership among general public.

Panel discussion was chaired by Mr. Shri Prakash, Distinguished Fellow, TERI. Mr. Shri Prakash started the panel discussion by introducing all the panelists on the dais. Ms Chand Tulal Mazumdar, Head of Public Policy for Uber India and South Asia, spoke on the purpose of Uber, which is to minimize the usage of personal cars with the help of technological

advancements and optimum asset utilization. She added that a single mobility option cannot effectively serve the purpose of travel. To move towards a zero emission future, it is important to develop a multi-modal and shared transport infrastructure complemented by non-motorised transport and last mile connectivity solutions. She further elaborated on recent survey findings conducted by Boston Consulting Group in four major Indian cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Kolkata) which revealed that 80 per cent of the respondents would consider aborting their purchase plans of having a new vehicle, should the availability and timeliness of ridesharing services meet their desired level of service. In this way, rider sharing options could potentially lead to reduction in private car ownership across the cities.

Shri Swayandipta Pal Chaudhuri, MD & CEO – Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Ltd., spoke about the urban mobility situation in Goa. He emphasized that the focus of mobility must be moving people over moving vehicles. He mentioned policy regulations are important for effective adoption of shared mobility, specifically in terms of incentivizing zero emission vehicles. For example - The state of Goa has implemented zero road tax policy on purchase of electric vehicles. He also emphasized on creation of non-motorised transport facilities in cities.

Mr. Awadhesh Kumar Jha, Vice President – Charge & Drive & Sustainability, Fortum India, spoke that the future of mobility is CASE (Connected Autonomous Shared and Electric) and the ideal scenario for sustainable urban transportation is combined, shared and electric mobility. He emphasized that in order to promote use of electric vehicles, government needs to provide more tax incentives and subsidies on purchase of such vehicles.

Mr Vishwas Singh, Head- Policy Advocacy, Shuttl, spoke that contrary to the general misconception that shared mobility competes with public transport, it actually complements public transport. He spoke about the principles behind the inception of Shuttl which is providing comfort and convenience to commuters, translated through assured seating.

Mr Amit Bhatt, Director, Integrated Urban Transport, WRI India, emphasized that policy regulations need to be changed in order for us to reduce vehicle ownership and embrace shared mobility as a whole. Stage carriage permits regarding passenger vehicles need to be addressed to support a shared mobility future. It will not only help the operators to ply their vehicles with ease but will also increase the asset utilization of vehicles on road which is a fundamental concept behind share mobility. Talking about infrastructure need for new mobility solutions, he said that street design guidelines will need to be changed to accommodate necessary elements such as parking, speed limits, charging infrastructure etc. Data collection will also play an important role in planning future cities as huge amounts of data is being generated from new mobility solutions.

Ms Amrita Gupta, Director - Research, Advocacy and Communications, Sakha Consulting Wings Private Ltd., said that it is of utmost importance to include safety as a perspective for inclusive travel, especially for women. For this to happen, social infrastructure needs to be improved such as safer roads, hygienic toilets at public places, well-lit streets etc. This will definitely help and encourage women to participate in shared mobility systems.