

Harmonising Bike Taxi Regulation in India
An Evidence-Based Assessment and suggested pathways for reform

Tuesday, July 14, 2026 | 09:30-14:00 IST | Seminar Hall 1, 2 & 3, India International Centre, New Delhi

Background

India's urban mobility landscape is undergoing a rapid and significant transformation, driven by urbanisation, rising congestion, and persistent first- and last-mile connectivity gaps. In this context, bike taxis have emerged as an important, technology-enabled mobility solution, particularly in dense urban and peri-urban areas. Their affordability, flexibility, and ability to navigate congested roads make them well-suited to short-distance travel, complementing public transport systems and improving accessibility for price-sensitive users.

The commercial use of two-wheelers for passenger and goods transport has long been recognised in India, predating the emergence of digital platforms. However, the rise of platform-based aggregation and gig work has significantly scaled these operations, improving efficiency, expanding market access, and creating flexible livelihood opportunities for a growing workforce. For many, the bike taxi ecosystem now represents a critical source of income, either as a primary or supplementary occupation.

From a legal standpoint, motorcycles are recognised as *contract carriages* under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (MVA), and further operational clarity has been provided through the 2025 MVA Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. However, regulatory complexity lies in the non-uniform applicability of the said guidelines, which are only advisory in nature, with States having the discretion to formulate respective rules governing aggregators. While the 2025 MVA Guidelines permit motorcycles to operate as transport vehicles subject to state-level approval, inconsistent regulatory approaches across States have led to fragmented implementation.

This complexity is further compounded by resistance from incumbent transport operators, such as auto-rickshaws and motor cab services, who often express concerns over potential loss or redistribution of earnings. The combined effect is legal ambiguity, compliance challenges for platforms, and income uncertainty for riders, alongside uneven safety and enforcement standards. Given the growing importance of bike taxis with regard to mobility and job creation, there is a clear need for a coherent and harmonised regulatory framework across States that balances stakeholder interests and enables responsible sectoral growth.

About the Report

This report provides a comprehensive assessment of the evolving bike taxi ecosystem in India, situating it within the broader context of urban mobility, platform economies, and regulatory governance. It examines the statutory and policy framework governing bike taxis, including the MVA and the 2025 MVA Guidelines, while analysing how these are interpreted and operationalised at the State level. The study undertakes a comparative review of select six States- Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, identified to reflect regional diversity as well as varying regulatory approaches, ranging from enabling frameworks and conditional permissions, to restrictions and prohibitions.

Building on this comparative analysis, the report identifies key policy gaps arising from regulatory fragmentation, including issues related to scope of applicability of regulations, compliance burdens, safety standards, and platform accountability. It assesses the implications of these inconsistencies for key stakeholders, including platforms, drivers (mobility gig workers), and customers, while highlighting the economic and social significance of bike taxis in improving mobility and generating livelihoods. Drawing on secondary evidence, stakeholder consultations, and global best practices, the report further makes recommendations for policy reform oriented towards resolving issues highlighted above in a manner that is legally tenable and conducive for relevant stakeholders in the mobility ecosystem. These recommendations are sought to enable a stable regulatory environment for bike taxis thereby ensuring an affordable, accessible mode for last mile connectivity, increased opportunities for gig worker livelihood and economic growth for States.

Proposed Agenda for Report Launch Event

Time (IST)	Programme
09:30-10:00	Registration & High Tea
10:00-10:10	Opening Remarks & Context Setting Madhvendra S Panwar - Assistant Director, CUTS International
10:10-10:20	Welcome Address Varidhi Singh - Director, CUTS International
10:20-10:30	Presentation of Report Findings Tasmita Sengupta - Senior Research Associate, CUTS International
10:30-10:40	Official Launch of the Report - Gopal Krishna Agarwal - National Spokesperson (Economic Affairs), Bharatiya Janata Party - Nikhil R Gokarn - Chairman, National Road Safety Board - Varidhi Singh of CUTS International & Shiksha Shrivastava of PLR Chamber
10:40-10:50	Keynote Address - Gopal Krishna Agarwal - National Spokesperson (Economic Affairs), Bharatiya Janata Party
10:50-11:00	Special Address - Nitin R Gokarn - Chairman, National Road Safety Board
11:00-12:15	<u>Panel Discussion I</u> <i>Harmonising Regulation Across States: Bridging Policy Gaps and Legal Ambiguities</i> Moderator: Amol Kulkarni - Director, CUTS International Panellists: - Chhavi Banswal - Director, Public Policy, Stratink Consulting - Nikhil Rathi - Senior Account Director of Public Policy, Chase Advisors - Paroma Bhat - Head, Public Policy & Government Relations, Uber India and South Asia - Pravesh Biyani - Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Mobility, IIIT Delhi - Shantanu Sharma - Senior Manager (Law, Policy and Regulations), Rapido
12:15-12:30	Refreshment Break
12:30-13:45	<u>Panel Discussion II</u> <i>Bike Taxis in India's Mobility Ecosystem: Innovation, Livelihoods and Consumer Welfare</i> Moderator: Anil Sasi - National Business Editor, Indian Express Panellists: - Virendra S Rathore, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Transport, Govt of Rajasthan, - Shiksha Shrivastava - Associate, PLR Chamber - Shreya Yadav -Associate Manager, Legal Public Policy and Corporate Affairs, Rapido - Sourav Dhar - Programme Lead, Mobility, Council on Energy, Environment and Water
13:45-14:00	Concluding Remarks Vijay Singh - Assistant Director, CUTS International
14:00 onwards	Lunch & Networking