



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Political Science

ACCOUNT OF E RIKSHAW REGULARIZATION POLICY IN NEW DELHI

KEY WORDS: LMC, Policy, Polycentrism, Traffic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Battery rickshaws are small public transport vehicles that typically transport passengers to and from metro stations for a small fare. In 2010, there were a few dozen in New Delhi; by 2014, estimates put their numbers at around 100,000. Despite their proliferation, the process of constructing an appropriate regulatory framework has been lengthy, antagonistic and dysfunctional, prompting the use of the term "crisis" 1. This paper briefly discusses the negative perceptions of battery rickshaws in New Delhi, which focus on the idea of informality. Moreover, it gives an account of the history of the "crisis". Thereafter, the last section identifies two factors which, it argues, are significant causes of this "crisis":

- a) the polycentric nature of urban policy making
- b) the lack of data upon which to base decisions.

The research would support other forms of research where detailed proposals are to be framed for creating a comfortable city with increased options for last mile connectivity in a city.

The research would lead to the acknowledgement of the key principles for regularization of light motor vehicles in urban settings that can be perceived as helpful to e-rickshaw drivers, local public, government, urban and transport planners.

I. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Legal tag to the controversial e-rickshaws brought relief to two lakh drivers across Capital.

There is a need to understand the significance of the profession of e-rickshaw drivers in the urban setup, and the reason behind the large influx of the rickshaws, various factors such as job security and independence, change in the social status and living conditions of the drivers play an important role. The mode of transport has some clear merits and some demerits to it, and an attempt would be made to deconstruct these aspects.

II. RELEVANCE

In just over four years, the number of battery-powered electric rickshaws in New Delhi has grown from a few dozen to anywhere up to 100 sits behind, typically on route to a metro station or bus stop. These low-speed vehicles find their role in the urban transport system by providing "last mile connectivity": running as shared vehicles on fixed routes between residential areas and public transport access points, primarily metro stations. They typically charge a low flat fare rate (i.e. INR 10 per person per trip), which makes them widely affordable. They tend to operate on smaller, less busy roads, away from busy arterial routes on which their speed and fragility make them vulnerable to larger vehicles. This paper seeks to use the policy reaction to the rise of the battery rickshaws in New Delhi as a lens through which one can view the policy making environment in urban India. This case study is of interest as it starts from a relatively blank slate: there is a recently formed set of regulation governing these vehicles in New Delhi as the technology is new. The paper will describe the negative perceptions of battery rickshaws. It then gives a brief history of battery rickshaws in New Delhi, a story marked by indecision, delay, claim, and counterclaim. It will then analyse the causes of this "crisis", which it takes to be the polycentric nature of urban governance and a lack of empirical data.

III. AIM

To assess the functioning of e-rickshaw when brought within the ambit of law and regulated by the government to ensure a more efficient transport structure in the city.

IV. OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an understanding of the concept of "last mile connectivity" (LMC) in the transit network.
2. To acknowledge the key principles to suggest changes in the rules for the regularization of the rickshaws in the state of Delhi.
3. To develop an understanding of the registration process of e-rickshaws.
4. To identify the different stakeholders (drivers, rental drivers, local passengers etc) and assess the rickshaw pullers strategies and choices in savings as well as to address the challenges faced by them.

5. To analyse role of the battery-operated rickshaws in the urban income generation and the employment creation.
6. To predict if the presence of a regulatory framework and manufacturing policies for the rickshaws would result in enhancing the safety structure for the rickshaws and for the commuters.
7. To formulate and strengthen policies and practices to promote implementation of the Lok Sabha's bill to regularize e-rickshaw.

Task	Sub-Task	Reference
1. Develop an understanding of the concept of "last mile connectivity" (LMC) in the transit network.	1.a. Studying the different factors that influence the modal choice such as quality of public transport system etc. b. Understanding the concept of demand mobility, comfort, status, speed, and convenience in context of urban transport system. c. Conducting a study that incorporates, for the metro-commuters, an analysis of time, distance, cost, and convenience aspects of the overall journey.	1. Secondary Data- Research papers, interviews of commuters, feeder service providers Primary Data- Visiting a metro station and conducting surveys
2. To acknowledge the key principles to suggest changes in the rules for the regularization of the rickshaws.	2. By examining the socio-economic as well as the technical characteristics of e-rickshaws.	2. Primary Data- Survey by selection of different locations in different areas of Delhi to collect data samples, preparing.
3. To develop an understanding of the registration process of e-rickshaws.	3. Visiting the transport authority of Delhi.	3. Primary Data- Interviewing officials
4. To identify the different stakeholders (drivers, rental drivers, local passengers etc.) and assess the rickshaw pullers' strategies and choices in savings as well as to address the challenges faced by them.	4. Identify the basic needs and issues faced by the drivers every day -Calculating the degree of extra expenditure on the repair work of the e-rickshaw on daily basis	4. Primary Data- Interviewing e rickshaw drivers
5. To analyze role of the battery-operated rickshaws in the urban income generation and the employment creation.	5. Doing a Comparative Cost Analysis of the different types of rickshaws in Delhi.	5. Primary Data- Interviewing auto drivers, rickshaw pullers and e-rickshaw driver and finding out their Initial Cost, Daily Earnings and Rent
6. To predict if the presence of a regulatory framework and manufacturing policies for the rickshaws would result in enhancing the safety structure for the rickshaws and for the commuters.	6. Measuring the impact of proposal	6. Secondary data- Studying the Amendment bill document Research- Extrapolating the points in the bill and co relating it with the primary surveys conducted.

TABLE 1 METHODOLOGY, SOURCE: AUTHOR

**V. Scope:**

1. To understand the significance of economical and convenient journey and the idea of catching a vehicle from where the trip ends to the point of accessing a public transport.
2. To do a conditional mapping of the selected areas to show the impact of the service of e-rickshaws.
3. Study the role of transport authorities and agencies to understand the framework structured for the functioning of e-rickshaw.
4. To scrutinize and underline the gap between policy and practice.
5. To examine whether the introduction of the battery rickshaws has resulted in a successful transition from the cycle rickshaws or not.

**VI. Limitation**

1. The research doesn't include broad spectrum of general literature on e-rickshaw.
2. The study would not cover the live case study of all the areas of Delhi running e-rickshaw.

**INTRODUCTION**

**I. Hypothesis**

The contention is that the policy making process can, itself, often be accurately termed informal.

**II. Rationale**

The number of battery-operated e-rickshaws in Delhi has risen exponentially in the recent years and is now an integral part of the transport eco-system in the state. This mode of transport can contribute to the revenue generation of the government, urban planning and help improve the transport structure of the state. Therefore, it is a significant case to be studied in detail and there is a need to structure a system which would be cohesive in nature, contribute to ensure long term security among the local passengers and e-rickshaw drivers and support the public transport system.

**SHORT HISTORY OF E RIKSHAWS**

**I. Administrative History**

The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, (hereinafter referred to as „the MVA ) stipulates that any electric vehicle with a power output of more than 250W or a top speed exceeding 25 kmph is a motor vehicle and thus falls under the ambit of the local Transport Department. According to a study done by TERI University for the Delhi Government, almost all the city's battery rickshaw fleet fall into this category, with power outputs of 650-1000W.16 However, the local Transport Department was not able to register them as the battery rickshaw had not been assigned a classification, which is a prerequisite for imposing regulation; in short, the authorities did not know what to register them as.

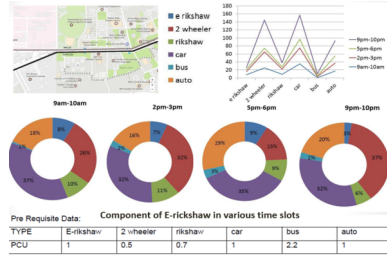
To qualify for a classification, any given vehicle model would have to pass a series of performance tests. Failure means the vehicle is not fit for public roads. The battery rickshaws already on the roads in New Delhi had not been subject to these tests, which they would be unlikely to pass due to their low build quality.

**POLICY**

**I. Polycentrism**

The battery rickshaw case study illustrates the polycentric nature of urban transport policy making. It involves several actors none of whom have the effective monopoly power over policy. Responsibilities are not clearly delineated, and jurisdictions appear to overlap.

The Centre can amend the MVA to allow battery rickshaws to ply as non-motorized vehicles and subject them to relatively light regulation. This policy is justified by the view that battery rickshaws provide affordable transport and create employment for the urban poor. Formalization and expansion of the sector will reduce poverty, an outcome which, for many voters, is the source of the government's legitimacy. Being perceived as the provider of livelihoods to a large and growing number of drivers (and their families) is also politically beneficial at both national and local levels.



**Figure 1**  
Traffic Analysis of Maulana Ali Jauhar (Jamia Road), Source: Author

**II. Deendayal e-rickshaw scheme**

Addressing a rally of electric rickshaw pullers in New Delhi the minister announced some important policy decisions including removing the rickshaws which run with power below .65 watts from the preview of the Motor Vehicles Act. He said the drivers of these rickshaws should be their owners and they should be able to register their vehicles with the Municipal corporation with a fee of Rs.100/- and get an Identity Card. Shri Gadkari had proposed to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister that the scheme may be called "Deendayal e-Riksha". Loans for these vehicles may be given at an interest rate of 3% per annum. The minister said the objective of the scheme was to remove the practice of man pulling a man and luggage through manual rikshaw. The minister said that four people may be allowed to travel in these rikshaws along with two pieces of luggage of 25 kgs each.

**INFLUENCE OF POLITICS IN THE FORMULATION OF THE POLICY**

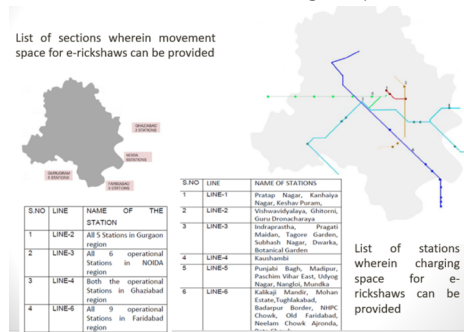
a) It emerged that until 2011, the Minister was the chairman of the Purti Group, which, among other concerns, included Purti Green Technologies Private Limited, one of the seven Indian companies certified to manufacture battery rickshaws by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in 2012. At the time of the announcement of the scheme, the Minister's brother-in-law was the chairman.

The emergence of these organisations and their close ties to the Centre also allowed other political groups, notably the AAP, to attempt to hijack the Centre's claim that its legitimacy with regards to policy making in this field is based on poverty alleviation.

**DISCUSSION**

Battery rickshaw drivers and driver unions fall on the "political" side of the dichotomy. Their demands are usually based on communal welfare and security. They make these claims "not within a framework of stable constitutionally defined rights and laws, but rather through temporary contextual and unstable agitations and complex local and national urban politics.

Overall, no single actor has monopoly power, despite the existence of established hierarchies (i.e. local and central government). This results in a situation in which no single ruling on the case is decisive – each is open to question, appeal, and simple non-compliance by other actors. Furthermore, the rulings themselves frequently stem from claims which are not based on enough empirical data.



**Figure 2**  
Mapping of proposed space for Charging Points, Source: Author

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