

Pathway Toward Mobility-as-a-Service in Kathmandu: Prospects and Issues of a New Paradigm in Public Transport

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Abstract

In the last 50 years, private vehicles have played a key role in the mobility sector, and their use has dramatically grown in cities around the world based on a promise of freedom, status, and autonomy, overshadowing the perception of public transportation alternatives.

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) operates on the concept that public and private transport services can be integrated to provide everyday travelers with one-stop access to all services required through a common interface (Landgren, M., et al. 2016).

As a result of unaccounted private vehicle ownership in the Kathmandu valley, the traffic mobility system is leading to a chaotic situation with an undesirable level of congestion and other problems that make public transportation choices appear unreliable and inconvenient. Many service providers in Kathmandu had attempted to commence mobility services with the integrated system of operation, but none lasted long because of a lack of technical and governing administrative principles. A move to a MaaS setting brings changes to the status quo and challenges for a future institutional regime, with much reform occurring in the public transportation mobility service. MaaS is seen as an ecosystem that can, through appropriate incentive-based regulation, offer a way forward for the government and other interested parties to achieve a wide range of sustainability objectives such as reducing transport emissions and traffic congestion by reducing the private car traffic and by enabling citizens to satisfy their mobility needs without them having to own private vehicle, as well as opening new choices for non-car owners.

Through basic infrastructural setup and proper policy intervention, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) can be introduced in the Kathmandu valley as a sustainable option to operate mobility services that can address the pressing issues and resolve the unadaptable consequences. MaaS is presented as a vision to integrate temporally efficient modes across a range of spatial efficiencies, deployed according to geographic context and in doing so enhancing the operation of the transport network. (Smith, G., et al. 2020)