

Institutional Integration in Integrated Mobility Systems: A Comparative Case Study of Kochi and Chennai

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Abstract:

Integrated mobility systems ensure the optimal use of limited urban transport resources while improving connectivity, accessibility, affordability, and environmental sustainability. In the context of rapid urbanisation and increasing pressure on existing infrastructure, it has become essential for cities to adopt integrated transport systems (ITS) that can deliver seamless, efficient, and user-centric mobility. Integration in urban transport is typically understood across five key pillars: Institutional, physical, data, communication, and fare integration. However, institutional integration often provides the strategic starting point for achieving these outcomes, as it enables coordinated planning, decision-making, and implementation across multiple stake holders in the mobility ecosystem. The National Urban Transport Policy, 2006 and Metro Rail Policy, 2017 recognise this need and recommends the establishment of Unified Metropolitan Transport Authorities (UMTAs) to guide and operationalise integrated mobility at the city level. These institutions are expected to serve as nodal bodies responsible for coordinating different transport modes, aligning policies, and advancing system-wide integration. The effectiveness of ITS initiatives, therefore, depends significantly on the strength, structure, and functional autonomy of such institutional mechanisms. This paper examines the role of institutional integration as the foundation for integrated mobility systems, focusing on the experience of two metropolitan authorities: the Kochi Metropolitan Transport Authority (KMTA) and the Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA). While both were established with similar mandates, they represent different institutional pathways in terms of structural and operational approaches. By comparing these models, the paper analyses how institutional design and policy intent influences the pace and effectiveness of integration efforts in ITS.

Keywords:

Integrated Mobility Systems, UMTA, Institutional Integration, Urban Mobility.