

Fare Revision Committee

Present:

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| 1. Justice M.Ramachandran | - | Chairman |
| 2. T.Elangovan | - | Member |
| 3. N.Niyathy | - | Member |
| 4. K.Padmakumar,IPS
Transport Commissioner | } | - Member Secretary |

Report No.27 dated 22-10-2018 (Revision of fares of Autorickshaws and Taxi Cars)

Government of Kerala, by Order No.360/2018/Trams.dated10-08-2018, authorised and directed the Motor Transport Fare Revision Committee to examine the subject of revision of existing fares of autorickshaws and taxi cars plying in the State and submit a report. This was in the light of the representations submitted by the stake holders to the Government and consequent to the decision taken in a joint meeting held on 02-07-2018 presided over by the Honourable Minister for Transport, in the presence of Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Department.

2. The Transport Commissioner (Member Secretary) had informed the Chairman of the Committee about the above direction, by letters dated 20-08-2018 and 10-09-2018. Shortly thereafter, steps were initiated to come up with a report. As a first step, data and other details were to be collected. The Committee was of the opinion

that for preparing a comprehensive report, after collecting basic data, an opportunity is to be given to all concerned, who were interested in the subject to express their view points.

3. Therefore, at the behest of the Committee, request had been addressed by the State Transport Authority to the National Transportation Planning and Research Centre, an institution under Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment, Thiruvananthapuram, to make available a special study report appraising them of the specific objective. What was required was an updating of the price indices for Auto Taxi Operations (PIATO) in Kerala compiling the current price of major operating components of auto and taxi operations. A report promptly had been made available for guidance of this Committee. The study has revealed that an overall variation of 17.13 percent for autorickshaws and 17.62 percent for taxis in the cost of operation could be assessed during the period commencing from September, 2014 to August, 2018.

4. It may be relevant to note here that the PIATO study was undertaken by NATPAC initially in 2006, which was based on inputs gathered from a survey of the operating cost and fuel cost of taxis and autorickshaws in different terrain conditions in our State. The collected information covered areas such as average daily performance, passenger load,

and revenue expenditure taken from sample vehicles identified in different parts of the State. They vouchsafe that the new cost table approach followed in recent years enabled them to compute cost of operation of vehicles under optimum utilization of capacity. The price index has been duly compared vis-a-vis autorickshaw and taxi services with intention to have a long range use, and to be relied on for future use as well. The study had covered fixed and variable costs and other essential contributing factors, viz., expenditure on fuel, lubrication, spare parts, engine systems, wear and tear, exhaust and electrical systems and whole movable parts, without exception. Evidently, the expenditure to be incurred for changing of spare parts, working capital employed, salary and wages, insurance, tax and general over heads in the fixed costs scientifically had been gone into. Depreciation also is taken care of. Increase in general cost of living was also one of the major factors, which was relevant. It is evident that the total cost of operation of autorickshaws and taxis have been added up to arrive at an utmost possible reliable statistics. The percentage variation of price index for autorickshaws between September, 2014 and August, 2018 is worked out at 17.13; and appears to be almost similar to the four wheelers. The Committee could find that the study by the said

expert body was thorough, authentic and a reliable source for preparation of the report.

5. Thereafter, steps were initiated for convening and arranging for public hearing to get an overall picture; so as to give all concerned a sense of participation in the matter of decision making. The Committee proposed to hold public hearings at Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and northern districts of Kozhikode and Kannur. But, because of paucity of time, it had been decided not to have a sitting at Kannur. The Committee felt that a sitting at Kozhikode might be adequate because of the proximity of the two cities, and especially since it was noted that the same set of Unions representing the taxi operators and drivers were functioning at the two places.

6. Apart from giving opportunity for public hearing, giving wide publicity, the participants were also permitted to come up with written representations for highlighting their respective stands. Written representations so received had stressed the need for a revision, revised norms, and also had touched the grievances of the working class, which is stated to be running to lakhs, and the necessity to be compensated commensurate with their skill, effort, risk and a need for helping them to lead a decent family life. It was generally highlighted that in view of the additional operational costs and changed scenario, a revision of the fare

structure was necessary for the health and sustainability of the services. It may however be mentioned that private individuals and public spirited persons also had appeared before the Committee, but there was no stiff opposition about the need for a revision of fares. The complaint was more about the necessity of better behaviour from the side of operators, and especially the drivers who were ambassadors of the industry.

7. After examining the materials that had come up for consideration, the Committee is finalising this report for placing before the Government. Study report received from NATPAC and representations received directly, at the time of public hearing, are also being handed over along with this report.

8. The notification issued under G.O.(P) No.77/12/Tran.dated 30.11.2012 is governing the issue of the levy of hire charges of autorickshaws and taxi cars. During 2013, there was a demand that the rates required to be revised taking note of the increased operational costs and other factors and the Government, during that time, had constituted a Committee and requested the Committee to look into the matter and submit a report. In due course, a report had been submitted before the Government recommending for a revision of fares. Government had accepted the report and had, by notification G.O.(P) No.74/2014/Tran.,

published in Kerala Gazette dated 17-10-2014, which is governing the industry as of now.

9. The Government has the power under Section 67 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to issue directions to the State Transport Appellate Authority and Regional Transport Authorities regarding the fixation of fares and freight for stage carriage. Section 67 reads as follows:

"67. Power to State Government to control road transport- (1) A State Government, having regard to—

- (a) the advantages offered to the public, trade and industry by the development of motor transport,
- (b) the desirability of co-ordinating road and transport,
- (c) the desirability of preventing the deterioration of the road system, and
- (d) the desirability of preventing uneconomic competition among holders of permits.

may, from time to time, by notification in the Official Gazette, issue directions both to the State Transport Authority and Regional Transport Authority—

- (i) regarding the fixing of fares and freights (including the maximum and minimum in respect thereof) for stage carriages, contract carriages and goods carriages."

10. Kerala Government had been always taking care to ensure that there was no arbitrariness or a unilateral attempt on the part of Government, since

a decision of revision of fares would have substantial impact on general public, and as far as possible, the issue was to be tackled on a just and scientific manner without precipitating any distrust.

11. Taking note of this position, the Government had formulated a Committee, referred to earlier, known as "Fare Revision Committee" by G.O.(MS) No.61/2010/Trans., under the Chairmanship of Justice M.Ramachandran (Retd.) and had been nominating members from time to time, who had exposure and expertise, to look into these issues. The Transport Commissioner, ex-officio was to function as the Member Secretary. From time to time, as requested by the Government, reports on various matters are being submitted to the Government. The present authorization had come to be issued in view of the above circumstances, when demands for a revision had come from the Trade Unions, with some amount of pressure.

12. In respect of autorickshaws, accepting the report submitted by the Committee, the Government had, on the last occasion, notified on 17-10-2014 that the minimum hire charges will be Rs.20/- for a distance up to 1.5 kilometer. Beyond the minimum, the rate will be Rs.10/- per kilometer and Re.1/- for every hundred meter or part thereof. In respect of the category of vehicles known as Quadricycles, it was slightly different and minimum charge had been

fixed as Rs.21/- for a distance up to 1.5 kilometer; in respect of Motor Cabs having a cubic capacity below 1500cc (including tourist motor cabs and ordinary motor cabs) with a seating capacity of not more than 7 persons including driver, the hire charges had been fixed at Rs.12/- per kilometer for both petrol and diesel vehicles subject to a minimum of Rs.150/- for a distance up to 5 kilometers. In respect of motor cabs having a cubic capacity of 1500cc and above, vehicles of any class with seating capacity of not more than seven, the rate had been fixed at Rs.15/- per kilometer subject to a minimum of Rs.150/- for a distance up to 5 kilometers. It had also been notified that in the case of autorickshaws and quadricycles, an additional charge, at the rate 50% of the rates prescribed could be levied for journeys performed between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Taking note of the requirements of adequately providing for compensation, where no return trips were available, additional charge at the rate of 50% of the charges shown in the meter in respect of the minimum charge were authorized to be levied when onward journey alone is performed except in Corporation areas of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kochi, Thrissur and Kozhikode and in the major towns of Kannur, Palakkad and Kottayam, where the meter charge alone can be levied. For detention charges, also known as waiting charges, the vehicles such as

autorickshaws were permitted to levy Rs.10/- for every 15 minutes or part thereof, subject to a maximum of Rs.250/- per day. With regard to motor cabs, this was Rs.50/- per hour subject to a maximum of Rs.500/- per day. The State Transport Authority or the Regional Transport Authority is to issue authenticated printed cards to permit holders showing progression of charges beyond the standard charges leviable, which were to be displayed in the contract carriages for information of the passengers about the prevailing rates.

13. The principal demand of the trade unions, as also the operators of the vehicles was for revision of minimum charges, per kilometer rate as also the quantum of waiting charges. There was also a demand that since there was certain amount of ambiguity, as for example, in the prescription of return charges, as the term 'Corporation area' was a very loose term and the expansion of the area of various Corporations brought problems and this had to be duly noted by the Government when bringing forth the revised notification. It was also suggested that when once rates were prescribed, and especially for the taxi cars, no under cutting were to be permitted and there should be strict control in the operation of unauthorized taxis. A request was also made to the Committee to bring to the attention of the Government the prime necessity of parking of vehicles and meeting the primary

needs so as to have a decent working atmosphere. There was demand for providing subsidized fuels, reduced levy of taxes and fee, which normally were not to come for examination of this Committee.

14. We had also occasion for hearing the operators of new generation vehicles, such as UBER, OLA etc., and their grievance was that when their services are universally accepted and encouraged by the general public as efficient, safe and economical, the obstruction and objections about their services and even subsidized services came from a misunderstanding and steps are required to encourage operation of such new vehicles, in public interest. It is not as if there is no space for new players. We had also heard tour operators about a necessity to prescribe parameters for the services, as stated to be existing in southern States. We had also heard the grievances of drivers of these types of vehicles, who were attempting to highlight that primary facilities were not being given to them when the travel time took them away from home for days together on a shoestring budget.

15. Under the leadership of "Kerala State Autorickshaw-Light Motor Vahana Thozhilali Samyuktha Samara Samithi" (Joint Action Council) in the banner of CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, TUCI, KTUC, JIU it appears that a representation had been placed before the State Government on 19-06-2018 giving notice that an indefinite strike

had been proposed to commence from 04-07-2018. The grievances highlighted were about the impact of extra-ordinary cost of the fuel, running expenditure, inflated taxes and insurance, cost of living, harassment from authorities etc., and the need for a substantial revision of rates, so that they can continue in the field.

16. In the light of the above notice given, the Government had directed the Committee to submit a report to them to ^{hear} have the details of the problems highlighted. As it has to be noted that the subject, that had been referred to this Committee, was only about the revision of rates of autorickshaws and taxi cars and ~~therefore~~ we are confining our report to the matters which had been directed to be commented, but referred to highlighted problems as they should not go unnoticed.

17. There was uniformity in the demand made by the Union's representing the operators and drivers of autorickshaws and taxi cars. These suggestions were endorsed as acceptable to all the three regions of the State – southern, central and northern regions of the State.

18. In respect of autorickshaw minimum charge, uniformly demanded was that it should be revised to Rs.30/- for a distance up to 1.4 or 1.5 kilometer; the running kilometer charge is to be fixed at Rs.15 per kilometer. In the matter of waiting charges, it was to be Rs.30/- for 15 minutes

in the Corporation areas; for trips of more than 4 kilometers, which were dropping trips, 50% of the meter charge should be additionally payable. The night hours were also to be refixed, instead of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. it should be 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. In the high range areas, up and down charges should be payable and in other areas, especially in moffusil areas, where return trips are not possible, for travel beyond journey after the minimum charges per kilometer 50% additionally requires to be levied.

19. In respect of motor cabs up to 1500cc, demand was that the minimum charge should be Rs.200/- for a distance of 5 kilometers and running kilometer rate should be Rs.18/-. Proportionate increase in the waiting charges was essential. In respect of motor cabs with higher horse power, the respective figures should be Rs.250/- and Rs.20/- per running kilometer. In respect of quadricycles, the minimum charges should be Rs.35/- and per kilometer rate Rs.16/-.

20. Transport facility is a basic service for bringing social integration of different strata of people and economic development of a State. The rapid growth in our population was brought exposed inadequacy of transport system in general. Development of infrastructure is not catching up as per requirement. Public transport system is unavoidable as there is deficiency of co-ordinated system. The agency in the nature of metro services

available at Cochin is found to be ideal but the huge capital outlay stands against an immediate decision for revolutionary transportation. Intermediate public transport (IPT) plays an important role in fast and efficiency movement of people. It also supplements in enhancing connectivity. By the term IPT, the vehicles used on hire for flexible transportation is intended and the advantage is that they do not follow the fixed time schedule. The vehicles are not expected to follow a fixed route. Taxis and autorickshaws are the most important players in this sector and the advantage of service is not only that they have acceptance, but are also flexible and provide door to door services. In fact, it fills the gap between the private transport and public transport so far as cities are concerned. In villages they have adopted themselves as major mode of transport providing for better mobility and connectivity. The function as a major source of employment everywhere, which is a prime factor, and it cannot be ignored. They are really indispensable, but gradually for reasons, which are not possible to be identified, the number of such vehicles have shown a decrease, it may be for the reason that economic viability may not be there as expected, because of higher vehicle cost, higher maintenance charges and inadequate compensation in the form of returns. Perhaps, in future, because of the advent of energy efficient vehicles, such as

CNG, electric vehicles etc., there is likely to be an upsurge in the number of such modes of transportation, because of the transport need of the general public, which is increasing day by day. Private vehicles are not attractive and are becoming non-affordable and there is not enough road space for comfortable journey. The importance of such services cannot be ignored.

21. The report from the NATPAC shows that there was a growth in the number of IPT vehicles during 2014-2017, but there has been a decline. They have found that the number of autorickshaws presently is 6,30,609 in 2017, whereas it was 6,63,241 in the year 2014. There has been a reduction in the number of ^{Taxi Cabs} ~~autorickshaws~~ as well. The cost of calculation done by NATPAC and PIATO indicates that there is in fact an increase in the operational cost in general and prima facie this calls for a revision of the rates so as to make the industry sustainable and attractive for the new entrants to come and occupy principally for the convenience of the general public.

22. As briefly referred to earlier, generally there was a consensus among the autorickshaw and taxi operators as to how much should be the extent of revision, highlighting the necessity for ensuring at least a sustainable return/remuneration and we also note that they had in mind that the additional burden may result to the travelling public. The

Committee feels that although comparable with general transport services, this sector could be considered as special transport conveniences, for the use of which customer is expected to spend additional expenditure, taking note of the conveniences provided. By the nature of the terrain of the State they are really very much part and parcel of the social fabric, catering to the needs of transport requirements, and have to remain.

23. In view of the active participation of the stake holders, we feel it will be appropriate to write down the names of the associations/persons, who found time to participate in the hearings, and submitted written memorials. They are the following:

- (1) **Autorickshaw Drivers Union.
Kannur Jilla Co-ordination Committee.**
- (2) **Kerala State Auto-Taxi & Light Motor
Workers Federation, represented by its
General Secretary Sri.K.V.Haridas.**
- (3) **Autorickshaw Drivers Union,
Thalassery, Kannur.**
- (4) **Kerala State Motor & Engineering Workers Union
(STU), STU Centre, Kozhikode represented by its
General Secretary Sri.Salim Narikkuni.**
- (5) **Motor Thozhilali Federation (INTUC), Malappuram
Jilla Committee, represented by its President
Sri.V.P.Firose and Secretary Sri.K.Balan.**
- (6) **Kerala Motor Thozhilali Federation (INTUC),
Kozhikode Jilla Committee represented by its
General Secretary Sri.K.C.Sasikumar.**
- (7) **Motor & Engineering Workers Union (CITU),
Malappuram, represented by its Jilla President
Sri.V.Prebhakaran.**

- (8) **Federation of Indian Trade Unions (Automobile Workers & Drivers Union, Malappuram District Committee, represented by Sri.Muhammed Abdurehiman.K.**
- (9) **Private Motor & Engineering Workers Union (AITUC), Rajaji Road, Kozhikode, represented by its Secretary.**
- (10) **Revolutionary Motor Thozhilali Union (RMTU) State Committee represented by its General Secretary Sri.K.K.Kunhikanaran.**
- (11) **Kerala State Motor & Engineering Labour Centre Kerala State Committee, represented by its General Secretary Sri.Manayath Chandran, Kozhikode.**
- (12) **Kozhikode Jilla Auto-Taxi Light Motor Workers Union (CITU), represented by its General Secretary Sri.K.K.Mammu.**
- (13) **Kozhikode Jilla Motor Employees Union (INTUC) Represented by its General Secretary Sri.V.C.Sedhumadhavan.**
- (14) **Payyannur Area Auto Drivers Union (CITU) represented by its Secretary Sri.U.V. Ramachandran.**
- (15) **Swethanthra Autorikshaw Thozhilali Union (SATU) HMS, Kannur District Committee, represented by Its Secretary Sri.N.Lekshmanan.**
- (16) **Kenannur District Motor Thozhilali Union (CITU) Kannur, represented by its Secretary Sri. P.K.Sathyan.**
- (17) **Kannur Jilla Auto Drivers Union (INTUC) District Committee represented by its Secretary Sri.Kunnath Rajeevan.**
- (18) **Auto Labour Union (CITU), Kannur represented by its Secretary.**
- (19) **Kerala State Motor & Engineering Workers Union (STU), District Committee, Kozhikode represented by its General Secretary Sri.U.A.Gaffoor.**
- (20) **Thrissur Dist.Auto & Light Motor Drivers' Union (CITU), District Committee, represented by its General Secretary Sri.K.V.Haridas.**

- (21) Kerala State Auto-Taxi Workers Co-ordination Committee (CITU, INTUC, AITUC, STU, HMS, TUCI, UTUC, KTUC, JTU) represented by Sri.K.V.Haridas.
- (22) Ernakulam Jilla Autorickshaw Thozhilali Sangham (BMS) represented by its General Secretary.
- (23) Thiruvananthapuram Jilla Motor Thozhilali Union (AITUC), represented by its General Secretary Sri.Pattom Sasidharan.
- (24) Swanthanthra Thozhilali Union (STU) District Committee, Thiruvananthapuram Represented by its State Secretary Sri.G.Mahin Abubacker.
- (25) Thiruvananthapuram District Motor Transport Workers Union (CITU), represented by its General Secretary Sri.K.Jayamohan.
- (26) ATUC Motor Association represented by Sri.Michale Bastian.
- (27) Kerala State Auto Thozhilali Federatopm (AITUC) reprsented by Sri.Pattom Sasidharan.
- (28) Auto Taxi Light Motor Workers Federation (CITU) represented by Sri.K.S.Sunilkumar and Sri.K.Jayamohankumar.
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- (29) Auto and Motor Employees Union, represented by Sri.S.Gopan.
- (30) Auto Taxi Light Motor Workers Federation (CITU) represented by Sri.Nalanchira Hari.
- (31) Motor Employees Union (UTUC) represented by Sri.Vetturoad Salam.
- (32) Swantanthra Autorickshaw Drivers Union, Muttathara represented by Sri.S.Peermohammed and Sri.T.Vijayakumar.
- (33) INTUC Railway Pre-paid Unit, Thampannoor, represented by Sri.T.Jayan.
- (34) Kerala Online Drivers Union, represented by its State President Sri.Jackson Varghese.
- (35) The State Secretary, STU Sri/Mahin Abubacker.
- (36) STU Jilla General Secretary Sri.Vempayam Nazir.

- (37) Ola Taxis represented by Sri.Akhil V.Nair, Sri.Binu Vijayan and Smt.Kala.
- (38) Uber Taxis represented by Sri.V.M.Fahad and Smt.Athira Menon.
- (39) Kerala Taxi Mazdoor Federation (BMS) represented by Sri.Jyothiskumar.

24. Following officials also had participated in public hearing, namely Smt.Kala, Niju Azhakesan and Sri.K.Rajagopal, Directors of Kerala Road Safety Authority. *Rejiv Pulickal, Asst. Transport Commissioner & Secretary*

25. Public hearings were held at Government Guest House, Thiruvananthapuram on 13-09-2018, *SGA Cont* Government Guest House, Ernakulam on 15-09-2018 and at Rest House, Kozhikode on 24-09-2018. *me sur* After the conclusion of the hearings, the Committee had deliberated on the inputs presented as also the materials collected from different sources and had *by him* come to a preliminary conclusion that a case had been made out for upward revision of the fares in respect of all sectors of auto and taxi vehicles plying in the State. As highlighted, at the time of hearing, what was pleaded was for a decent remuneration to persons who were spending major part of their life on the roads and a long range view was also to be taken about the hazards and health. It was highlighted that when unskilled workers were getting an average daily income of about Rs.800/- to Rs.1000/- per day for 8 hours work, for a person who was employed as a driver can earn only up to *common areas for full disc*

Rs.750/- and persons who were self employed also could not make much after the expenses in spite of the capital employed by them. Educated young persons had come to the scene for self employment. As we had hinted earlier, this supplementary transport system undeniably is part of life of a Keralite, whether he may be living in cities or towns, villages, mofusil areas or even hilly tracts. The cost of fuel, which is a major factor, is unsteady toppling of calculations and the report from NATPAC and PIATO indicate that there has been a substantial change warranting a revision of fares.

26. Prime factor to be borne in mind is that a burden on the travelling public may adversely affect this class of vehicles in the long run and steep increase therefore is to be ruled out. It may create practical difficulties if different rates fixed for different parts of the State and a uniform rate will therefore be advisable and liberty for ensuring adjustments to meet the needs of different locality such as Panchayats, Mofussil areas, hilly tracts, and the like.

27. We propose to deal with the minimum rates and per kilometer rate of auto and taxi cars and much advertence is not being made on the issues, such as waiting charges and similar other circumstances which had been highlighted. This is because some liberty should be reserved in the industry to be settled by negotiations as a straight

jacket pattern may not be workable to streamline the relations. Also the existing notification adequately deals with the subject. Of course, in the matter of running kilometers and return trips, we might suggest methods to tackle the situations, as demands raised in this context are extremely reasonable, which might affect the existence of the industry as such. The circumstances pointed out by NATPAC that there is a progressive decline in the number of autorickshaws and taxi cars needs particular attention. It may be due to the circumstance that majority of the travelling public and the younger generation might have switched to two wheelers and light motor vehicles for their commutation. It definitely may add to road congestion, but it cannot be helped. We have also to foresee that drastic changes might come in the area of fuels, which might be introduced in foreseeable future. Even now CNG has started to replace petrol and diesel as an acceptable economical option. Vehicles have also stepping in as Hydrogen as fuel, which may introduce changes in the whole sector. But, we are of the opinion that normally the rates which might be made operative is to rule for about 2 to 3 years and the Government may step in, in case changes are essential to be introduced in respect of the rates which may be notified.

28. Taking into account these factors, we recommend that minimum charges for autorickshaws may be revised as Rs.30/- for a journey up to 1.25 kilometer. Beyond the minimum distance it will be Rs.15/- per kilometer and Re.1/- for every hundred meter or part thereof. In respect of quadricycles, we recommend for an increase in the minimum rate i.e. Rs.35/- for a distance of 1.5 kilometer. They may be permitted to levy two rupees per kilometer after the minimum distance of 1.5 kilometer.

29. We would recommend the accepted pattern to be followed in respect of motor cabs. Different rate will be applicable for vehicles below 1500cc and above 1500cc. For the first category of motor cabs, minimum rate is to be fixed at Rs.200/- for a distance up to 5 kilometers. Beyond the minimum kilometers, for every one kilometer the fare payable should be Rs.15/- per kilometer. In the second category of motor cabs, the minimum charge should be Rs.200/- for a distance up to 5 kilometers and thereafter Rs.16/- per kilometer or part thereof. The stipulations regarding the waiting charge in all the categories of vehicles can remain without any change.

30. In the case of Autorickshaws and Quadricycles, an additional charge, at the rate of 50% of the above rate of hire charges, could be

leviable for the journeys performed between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m, and no change is called for.

31. At present, a stipulation is in the notification provides for levy of additional 50% of the meter charge in excess of the minimum charge when onward journey alone is performed and the metered charges when return journey alone is performed except in Corporation areas of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kochi, Thrissur and Kozhikode and in the major towns of Kannur, Palakkad and Kottayam, where only the metered charges can be levied.

32. However, the ambiguity, that is there when the stipulation is applied, had been highlighted by some of the trade unions (ASTU,HMS). It is pointed out that for autorickshaws a periphery is to be ascertained in towns, assessing possibility of getting opportunity for return trip, as otherwise it is causing great loss to the autorickshaw operators. The suggestion was that locally committees are to be formulated, including representatives of local authorities, Transport authorities and Police authorities to fix outer rates. It is highlighted at Kannur the Railway Station is considered as the centre point and a circumference of 2.5 kilometers is fixed as the limits of the town. But, Kannur Corporation as at present covers 83 sq.meters. Therefore, the present provision is not workable and hence the suggestion.

33. The Committee feels that due consideration to this respect is to be given and the limits of Corporations and Towns are to be appropriately fixed for ordinary charge and thereafter provide for an increase of 50% to compensate the expenditure the operator has to suffer, within a time limit and the present stipulation should continue only till such time and the exercise has to be expeditiously carried out at various centers. In principle, the fare fixed include the fuel expenditure but the special contingency, which is to be additionally borne, is apparent cannot be overlooked and authorization is to be given to collect 50% of the metered charges additionally.

34. We feel that modern concept of call taxis such as UBER, OLA etc., has received world wide acceptance and the objections raised by taxis and autorickshaws against their presence is because of misapprehension. It also may not be possible to enforce a stipulation that when minimum rates are fixed, taking passengers receiving a lesser remuneration is to be considered as an offence. It will be against public interest, when the whole scenario is taken into account, as we are not expected to take sides. Likewise, we are not specifically dealing with tourist taxi operations by entering to the region of tour packages, since various established practices might be there and the

parties are to be given freedom to negotiate as the State is expected to enter areas only where there is exploitation or unhealthy trade or restrictive practices. Therefore, our conclusion and recommendations are the following:

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35. We express our thanks for the assistance to the respondents, namely auto-taxi operators, driver community, public representatives and tourist operators call taxi operators as well as NATPAC for the assistance they had given to the Committee to finalise the proceedings with some amount of expedition.



(Justice M. Ramachandran)
Chairman

(T. Elangovan)
Member

(N. Niyathy)
Member

(K. Padmakumar, IPS)
Member Secretary