Ole, Ole,… "Ola…"

"1990: Waiting on the curb of Elphinstone Road, Bombay[1], looking for a taxi. It is 11:00 in the night and raining. I see a black car with yellow top approaching and I call out, anxiously, "Taxeee…". The taxi speeds off, only splashing the muddy water….

2000: Waiting in the lounge of the Taj West End, Bengaluru for the taxi. It is 3:00 pm and I am anxious to get home. I had booked taxi with "Bhoo-rath Travels" and hoping that the taxi will arrive in time. Will it, will it not….

2015: I need to go to an office at Silk board junction, Bengaluru and use my "Ola" App[2] for booking a taxi (oops! I don't have to book a taxi; I just have to hail a taxi!) And, press "Now". My taxi arrives in five minutes (in fact, three minutes!). I get into the taxi and say to myself (inaudibly!), "Ole[3], Ole,…. Ola!"

Personal travel

The way people have travelled, even if the mode of travel was the same (taxi as in the vignettes above), has changed with time. But then, what is travel? And, why do people travel?

Business Dictionary defines travel as an "Act of traversing through a geographic region or moving from one place to another. This can be temporarily, as is often the case, and can be for a short period of time. Salespersons often travel to different regions in order to generate sales with another company, for example" (Business Dictionary, 2015). Travel can involve travel by foot, bicycle, automobile, train, boat, airplane, or other means, with or without luggage, and can be one way or round trip. Travel can also include relatively short stays between successive movements.

People move for various reasons. Reasons for travelling include business, trade, recreation, tourism, vacationing or research travel for gathering information, for holiday to visit people, volunteer travel for charity, migration to begin life somewhere else, religious pilgrimages and mission trips, commuting, and other reasons, such as to obtain health care or fleeing war or for the enjoyment of traveling.

Motives to travel include pleasure, relaxation, discovery and exploration, getting to know other cultures and taking personal time for building interpersonal relationships. Travel may be local, regional, national (domestic) or international (Anonymous, Travel, 2015).

As in any other aspect of life, Americans are born consumerists and travel a lot (Haven't we all heard of "American Tourister Luggage"?!). Personal Transportation in the U.S., the predominant mode of travel is by automobile and light truck, accounting for about 86% of passenger miles travelled in 2012. The U.S. has less than 5% of the world's population, but has 17% of the world's cars, compared to 8% in Japan, 6% in Germany, 6% in China, and 3% in Canada. That the above consumption patterns indicate that the current automobile-dominated transportation system is not sustainable (Center for Sustainable Systems, University of Michigan, 2014) is another matter. If you are curious to know the corresponding statistic for India, the

number of cars in India as a percentage of world's total number is 2.4 % (Urban Emmisions, 2015).

Taxi Services in India

The middle class population in India rose from 15 million in 1991 to 160 million in 2011. This segment with its increasing disposable income started demanding and has been willing to pay for better services across sectors including private and public transportation. Rapid economic growth coupled with huge infrastructure development, rigorous effort from Ministry of Tourism to project India as travel destination and emergence of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry has given a huge push to the car rental industry in India. Till 2003, the point-to-point taxi market in India's big metropolitan cities was completely unorganized. It was served either by unorganized, inconsistent and somewhat expensive private operators or by state government controlled pre-paid taxis offering a standardized but low quality service. But in 2003 the Radio cabs business emerged as one of the fastest growing businesses in the Indian transportation sector with Delhi-based Mega Corp setting the wheels rolling under the Mega Cabs brand in cities such as Bangalore, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Ludhiana and Amritsar. Today, 15,000 plus professionalized air-conditioned taxis are available to customers in 6 big cities in a largely reliable, convenient and affordable manner (Rahman & Anand, 2014).

That was about Radio Taxies. But a new concept called "taxi aggregator" is emerging in India. So, who or what is a taxi aggregator?

The New Concept of "Taxi Aggregator"

The aggregator or "marketplace model"[4] is new in India and until now there has been a lack of clarity about whether operators such as Uber, Ola and TaxiForSure are radio taxi or just an aggregator. This came into sharp focus especially with the ban on Uber services when a woman in Delhi, who used the Uber Company's app to hire a taxi, was allegedly raped by the driver. Uber may face lesser liability if it is treated as a taxi aggregator and a greater liability if it is treated as radio taxi (Vijayakumar, 2014). What or, who then, is a taxi aggregator?

The central government, vide its budget 2015-16 has now clearly defined the term aggregator:

"Aggregator means a person, who owns and manages a Web-based software application, and by means of the application and a communication device, enables a potential customer to connect with persons providing service of a particular kind under the brand name or trade name of the aggregator;" (Shah, 2015).

In the budget, the government has also clearly stated that if the aggregator does not have a physical presence in the taxable territory, any person representing the aggregator for any purpose in the taxable territory shall be liable for paying service tax.

The budget also stated that if the aggregator does not have a physical presence or does not have a representative for any purpose in the taxable territory, the aggregator shall appoint a person in the taxable territory for the purpose of paying service tax, and such person shall be liable for paying service tax (Verma & Dalal, 2015).

Indian taxi market is estimated to be around $8 billion (Rs 48,000 crore) right now, out of which only 5% is being managed under organized sector; which means that the market is wide open right now. It is being projected that in the next 5 years, organized players such as Uber, Meru and Ola will capture 15% of this market, which is growing at an astounding rate of 45% per year (Ghosh, 2015).

Taxi space (market) in India is seeing a phenomenal growth in the past six years. $400 million (Rs 2400 cr) of venture capital (VC) is pumped in the last four years (2010-2014) (Utkarsh, 2014). The major player in the taxi aggregator space is Olacabs and is threatened by the coming of Uber. These taxi aggregator companies don't own cars or even employ drivers; they simply connect users with drivers, using technology. They are not into inventory but technology-driven marketplace business model and will make money (not yet, though!) and how?

This case is a study of Olacabs and the strategies it is adopting to face the challenge thrown in by Uber. So, sit back, enjoy the drive and say, "Ole, Ole"!

The History of Ola

Ola translates to 'Hello' in Spanish. Probably to indicate that their services are as easy and friendly as that, just like saying a 'hello'.

Perhaps every story of an entrepreneur starts off with a "bad"[5] experience. First of all to people who may not know, Bhavish Aggarwal and Ankit Bhati, the founders of Olacabs, are two Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay graduates. Engineers are good at engineering and can be good businessmen too, especially if they come from IIT[6]! Bhavish worked for Microsoft after college for two years and then left Microsoft and started an online company to sell short duration tours and holidays online. While running that business for a couple of months, he took a car rental from Bangalore to Bandipur and had a very bad experience.

This is what happened - The driver stopped the car in the middle of the journey and demanded a renegotiation of what Bhavish was paying. After being refused, he proceeded to abandon him en-route his destination. This is when he realized how his plight was probably similar to a lot of customers across the country who were looking for a quality cab service, but ended up with a one that stood them up, arrived and dropped them off late[7] or did not stick to their promises, and came with drivers that were nightmares behind wheels. For the first time, he saw the amount of potential that a cab booking service could have, and hence, he changed his business from the earlier mentioned start-up to the one we today know as – OlaCabs. This was in December 2010, where he was joined by his co-founder Ankit Bhati in his start-up journey. His parents didn't agre**e** with his idea in the beginning of course, like all Indian Parents won't. They were thoroughly displeased with his decision to become a 'travel agent', but when OlaCabs received its first round of funding from two angel investors, they started to believe in the change he was planning to bring (Santosh, 2015).

Since then there has been a phenomenal growth in the Olacabs with the number of cabs in the network growing from just about 7500 in December 2013 to more than 40,000 in November 2014 (See **Figure 1**).
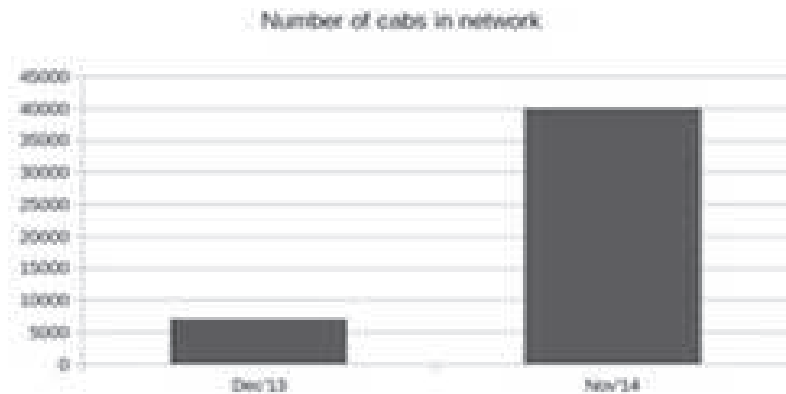

Figure 1: Growth of Olacab

Ola is now handling around 1.5 lakh booking requests per day which translates into around 40 lakh for a full month (factoring in a few low days). With the average ticket size (gross transaction value of ride) being Rs 320-400, it is doing Rs 130-160 crore in gross transaction value a month, which means on an annualised basis it is on a run rate of $250-300 million. Ola, is now planning to add on-demand auto rickshaw booking facility to its platform, and is running a pilot with around 300 three-wheelers in Bangalore (Abudheen, 2014).

The Present Growth

With the help of such ahead of its time & long term strategies, the company began to grow at the speed of light. By 2014, the company was now pocketing a network of more than 200,000 cars across 100 cities. Additionally, it was also clocking an average of more than 150,000 bookings per day and also was now sitting on 60% of the market share in India. Soon the company also brought about some huge developments which again, benefited them greatly. Some of these included, launching of Ola Mini service in Bangalore & consecutively in Delhi (NCR) with a fleet over 250 cars and were also in preparations to grow to 800 by 2015. Their offer again was pretty unique and luring.

They had started with an introductory price of Rs12 per kilo-meter (km) with a base price of Rs.150 for the first six kilometres, making them the cheapest AC cab services available (Karan, 2015).

Competition

As already mentioned, Ola has 60% market share in India, the other players in organised taxi sector being (with Market share shown in parenthesis), Taxi for Sure (14%), Meru (16%), Uber (5%) and others (5%) (Business Standard Reporter, 2015). Taxi for Sure was acquired by Ola (mind you, acquisition is not merger!) for $200 million i.e., Rs 1200 crore in March 2015 (Business Standard Reporter, 2015).

Why should Uber, with just 5% market share, be a competitor to Ola?!

This is because Uber[8] is a San Francisco based taxi aggregator valued at $40 bn as compared Ola valuation of $2.5 bn. Uber has a war chest of $1.5 billion for international expansion and has committed $400 million to grow and expand its services in India; according to some estimates, Uber is likely to plough in as much as one billion $ in India in this year 2015 to take on Ola. The money will be used to improve the operations, expand into newer cities, develop payment solutions and establish a robust support network according to Amit jain, President, Uber India (Team VCC, 2015).

The relevant question, therefore would be, how is Ola responding the challenge? What is the strategy of Ola?

Strategy at Ola

Simply put, Ola's strategy was to leave no stone unturned; be it attending customer calls to driving a passenger to the airport while managing the operations, they did everything. And on the other end, to woo the drivers, they used an equally unique strategy! For the first few months, they used to pay drivers Rs 5000/day tips but no salary, provided they met the criterion which was that, a driver must have completed one single trip for that given day. To add to that, the Integration Devices which they use were provided free of cost! During

that time, with a rough potential monthly income of Rs 1.5Lakhs literally every driver, even including many part-timers did anything to get themselves attached with Ola. As their motive was fulfilled, later this payment module was reduced to half i.e. Rs 2500/day and then Rs 750/day tips + salary consecutively. And now the tips would be provided only if they covered minimum 10 trips in a day.

Let us see the strategy of Ola with the application of a model, namely, "Strategy Diamond".

Based on the application of "Strategy Diamond" (Donald C Hambrick, 2005), the author has tried to analyse and understand the strategy at play at Ola. The framework is illustrated in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 : Strategy Diamond

Source: (Donald C Hambrick, 2005)

Arena can refer to geographical areas, products and market segments and services Ola is into. Ola is into the product category of personal transportation. "Ola offers a strong value proposition for both users and drivers and is transforming personal transportation in India", said Rahul Mehta, Managing Director, DST Global (Business Standard Reporter, 2015), one of the key investors in Ola. Ola is already into metropolitan cities (Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkatta, Chennai and Bengaluru) and tier II and III cities. In fact, Ola made its debut into Mysore as early as September 2014 (Radha, 2015) and discount coupons[9] were available for use of App in February 2015.

Vehicle

This refers to how Ola would like to grow. Would it be through organic growth or the inorganic route such as mergers and acquisition? Ola has grown both ways. As already mentioned, Ola acquired its competitor, taxi for Sure for $ 200 million in March 2015 (Business Standard Reporter, 2015). For some time, the two entities were to retain their identity but the more recent developments show that Ola is closing TaxiForSure in twenty two cities such as Coimbatore, Hubli-Dharwad, Vishakpatnam, as these were non-performing cities. It did not make sense to increase cost by having two sets of operations in these cities. Therefore, there was consolidation in these cities by pulling out TaxiForSure (Business Line Bureau, 2015).

Differentiator

Both Olacabs and Uber are competing on a price platform; at least as of now (See **Annex 1**). The logic seems to be that Indian middle class are price sensitive and will be wooed to using taxies which they otherwise consider it as costlier than "autos". If both competitors are waging a price war, price cannot be differentiator.

The rapid growth of Ola is due to the technology differentiator. Initially, Ola depended on web operations but later moved on to mobile operations. This makes a lot of sense with the growing usage of Smart Phones and Apps available for booking. The cost of operations

via mobile platform is also cheaper and to woo the customers to download and use the apps, Ola routinely provides good discounts[9], sometimes free first ride using app! Even as late as September 2015, Ola offered "Free First Ride" at Mysore to encourage use of app to hail an Ola taxi (See **Annex 2**)

The other differentiators are (see **Annex 3** for Differentiators and Customer feedback):

1. Convenience ("Book within seconds and get instant confirmations. Easy online payments or cash on delivery. Booking car rentals will never be a headache again!"),

2. Quality ("Our cars are audited for cleanliness, safety and comfort. Our drivers are well trained and reliable. Sit back and enjoy the Ola experience!")

3. Control ("We have clear and transparent pricing listed online. Never haggle with drivers again on payments and be confident and assured of what you are being charged for!")

Staging and Pacing

In order to bring on-board enough number drivers, Ola and Uber recruit student drivers. The companies carry out background checks**.** Before on-boarding the student drivers, all the cab drivers go through a thorough background check, including collecting personal and professional documentation. The companies also run a complete criminal check and police verification. Assistance of companies such as "AuthBridge", India's leading background verification company, is taken. After a background check, the drivers go through a strict training program that involves behavioural training, etiquette, route training, and technological training. Anand of Olacabs says that the student drivers are encouraged to take ownership of the ride like entrepreneurs, and not just as drivers (Kashyap, 2015).

Economic Logic

The revenue is generated by catering to large volumes by adopting

tiered fee structure (See **Table 1**) (Rates as on 16 September 2015, Yelahanka, Bengaluru).

Table 1 :
Tiered Rates adapted by Olacabs and Uber

Aggregator	Mini (Tata Indica, Nissan Micra, Maruti Ritz)	Sedan (Maruti Dzire, Tata Indigo, Toyota Etios)	Taxi for Sure (Hatchback)
Ola	Rs 80/- for first 4 km Rs 10/km after 4 km Re 1 / minute post 5 minutes	Rs 100/- for first 4 km Rs 13/km after 4 km Re 1 / minute post 5 minutes	Rs 49/- for first 2 km Rs 6/km after 4 km Re 1.5 / minute Ride time rate
Uber	UberGo Rs 35/- base + Rs 7/- per km, Re 1/- per minute, minimum fare Rs 50/-	Uber X Rs 40/- base + Rs 8/- per km, Re 1/- per minute, minimum fare Rs 75/-	UberBlack Rs 100/- base + Rs 17/- per km, Re 2/- per minute, minimum fare Rs 150/-

"Ganesha" – Happy Ganesha Chaturthi - Book now to get your eco-friendly Ganesha idol.

Source: Data collected by the author

The revenue of Ola has been drastically improved. Olacabs is likely to achieving gross revenue of $1 billion (Rs 6,364 crore) by the next quarter (Business Insider Bureau, 2015).

Interestingly, even though the Uber seems to be offering "rock bottom" rate of Rs 7 per km, which are cheaper than even the fare in an auto rickshaw, beyond 15 km, Uber charges at the rate of Rs 14 per km; this surcharge is shown as "Distance Surcharge" which one may not even understand! (See **Annex 4 & 5**). Auto fares in Bengaluru are Rs 25 for the first 1.9 km, minimum fare or the base fare and Rs 13 per every km thereafter (India Auto Taxi Fare, 2015).

For comparable distances, Uber fares were cheaper than the fares of Ola (see once again, **Table 1**).

Any wonder as to why Ola is making money!? That Ola is not making

profit yet is another matter (For 2013-14, ANI Technologies, which runs Ola Cabs, reported a 50 per cent jump in **net loss** at Rs 34.21 crore, against Rs 22.80 crore in 2012-13, according to filings with the Registrar of Companies (Mitra & Mishra, 2014)).

Operational Perspectives

The meteoric growth of Olacabs is due to intensive use of high technology, namely use of Google maps, fully automated operations, New security features in Apps (Some doubt it!), Use of data analytics software, ease of payment (using OlaMoney), tie-ups with clubs, sponsoring events. Some of the details of technology are as follows:

Technology

Olacabs is run by Mumbai-based ANI Technologies Pvt Ltd. Of the total, around four-fifths of the bookings come from mobile (See **Figure 3**) (Abudheen, 2014).
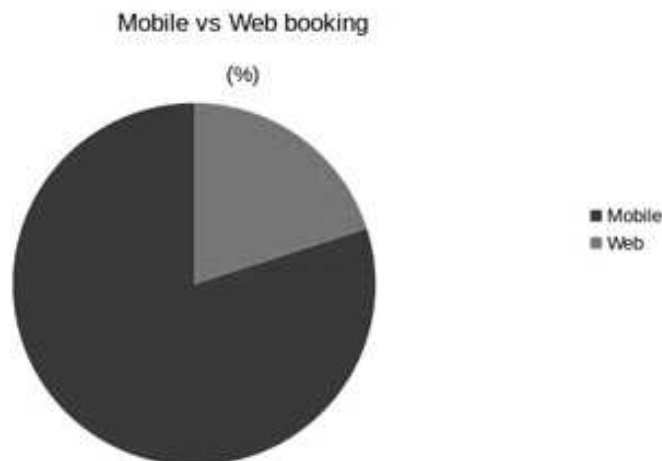

Figure 3 : Use of Mobile versus Web Technology

Ola offers platforms for complaints and rating of drivers on its Facebook Page (Visit https://www.facebook.com/Olacabs for some "interesting" feedbacks and responses from Olacabs!). The services are available on 24x7 basis (through dynamic pricing). The cabs are reasonably clean (Author's experience).

Ola invests in Information Technology (IT) and training of drivers who get a part of the income. This will effect in increasing the customer base and market share. With improved quality, innovation and customer response, Ola gets bigger customer base with higher loyalty and huge reduction in churn reduction. This will show in future financial results.

Financial

Source of Funds

Olacabs raised $330k in its initial round of funding on April 21, 2011. The company received Series A funding of $5 million from Tiger Global Management; Series B funding of $ 20 million from Matrix Partners and Tiger Global; Series C funding of $41.5 million from Steadview Capital, Sequoia Capital and its existing investors. In Series D round of funding on Oct 25, 2014, it raised $210 million from SoftBank Internet and Media Inc. and its existing investors. Despite failing to break even in 5 years, Ola Cabs managed to attract new investment on the back of expanding top line (revenue) and balance sheet (Anonymous, Ola Cabs, 2015).

Leadership at Ola

As already stated, Bhavish Aggarwal and Ankit Bhati, are the co-founders of Olacabs. Together they have made a formidable team; one is a commercial genius and the other, a technical wizard! A short narration of what made each of them tick follows:

Bhavish Aggarwal

The 29 year old IIT–B Graduate, Bhavish Aggarwal, is the founder & CEO of India's most popular Cab Aggregator OlaCabs. Simple, yet charming, Bhavish with the success of his prodigy has certainly become the talk of the town. But even after becoming a millionaire, he still prefers to not buy a car and take a cab (to set an example, one presumes!), certainly doesn't goes down well with his wife. He believes that, such is a small price that every entrepreneur has to pay.

Anyways, when not crushing his competitors, one can catch Bhavish cycling, playing squash or doing what he loves the most – photography. He also maintains a largely popular photoblog!

Life Before OLA

Born in Ludhiana, Bhavish just like every other success-driven and successful entrepreneur, began at a very early age. Soon after he completed his Bachelors in Technology (Computer Science and Engineering) from IIT – B in 2008, he started his career with Microsoft Research India as a Research Intern and later got reinstated as an Assistant Researcher. During his more than two years of stint with Microsoft, Bhavish managed to file two patents and also got three papers published in the international journals. Now what many aren't aware is that, while he was at it, he had also turned into a blogger and had founded his own prodigy called – desitech.in. Desitech was all about hosting content which was mainly focused at technologies which again were inclined towards the Indian scenario. This content was a collection of start-ups in India, events and / or any other exclusive news. Anyways, during this same time, he took the biggest decision of his life and turned his personal pain-point (described earlier under "The History of Ola") into his first entrepreneurial venture!

That was when for the first time, he could vision the amount of potential a cab booking service could have. And after basic calculations, Bhavish changed his business from the earlier mentioned start-up to – OlaCabs.

The Change

This change including the entrance of Ankit Bhati was brought about somewhere around December 2010. His solution was simply introducing a technology that bridged the gap and connected the cab owners with the commuters through the Internet, telephone or a mobile phone app.

Moving on, Bhavish's believed that anyone can have a good business idea but to function it successfully one must have a scalable models upon which the business runs. According to him, the best or one of the best & safest model one can or should adopt is running a business with owning "zero" inventory. And following his own words, Ola, didn't buy even a single car and instead rented them. They went on to partner with a long range of Taxi Drivers, and all he did was add a touch of modern technology to the whole thing through which consumers could book cars at a short notice via their call centers or via their app.

Now clearly, the idea of cabs was not new to the Indian market, and there already were players like Fasttrack who had established themselves. There were radio Taxi services in every city of the country which used to run in the interior India as well, and you could easily find some of them at the airports and railway stations. Not to forget the car rentals and travel agencies. Basically, all of these had more or less a focus which was on similar lines.

So what made Bhavish or Ola One-up?

Bhavish very smartly had taken only cars which had an All India permit (similar to travel agencies) and used to run them both inside as well as outside the city. And then there were the unique and budgeted plans which they used to offer, to lure the customers.

But more than all that or what at least on an equal note, what helped them was M-commerce (mobile). Bhavish could clearly see that, M-commerce was growing at the speed of light and would only get better in the times to come.

Hence, given this environment, it would only become far easier for the consumer to access knowledge or data without much of a hassle, merely through their Smartphone. And with the improvement of connectivity this would create would only increase the convenience for the masses.

Bhavish decided to capitalize on this untouched factor, and took the leverage of this growing industry.

Ankit Bhati, Co-Founder and CTO

Ankit heads the technical aspects of Olacabs, ensuring a quick, convenient and instinctive experience for our customers and partners. He joined IIT Bombay in 2004 for Btech in Mechanical Engg and MTech in CAD and Automation. By 2009 he had already worked on several freelance projects and startups like Wilcom, QED42 etc. and finally decided to give up his nomadic professional life for a start-up of his own. He joined the Olacabs journey in November 2010. When not engrossed with his laptop, he loves to travel (preferably, to a beach) and often joins Bhavish in his cycling trips (Ola, 2015).

Going Forward: The Challenges to Ola

The price wars between Ola and Uber and the wooing of the customers with unheard of offers is draining the coffers of Ola. In fact, Ola raised $ 225.5 m to take on Uber through a fresh round of funding from investors led by New York based Falcon Edge Capital around 14 September 2015 (Reuters, 2015). The market potential in the taxi space in India is very high and has drawn the likes of Uber to India. However, Olacabs has reported a net loss at Rs 34.21 crore in the financial year 2013-14 (Mitra & Mishra, 2014)

Additionally, most taxi service providers are currently being probed following the alleged rape of a 27-year-old woman in Delhi by an Uber cab driver.

How long will this war of titans continue? Though the customers are smiling away to glory, the industry is now in flux and is moving into consolidation stage when the weaker players will fall out making way for the stronger ones.

Some of the interesting questions that the case brings up are:

1. How has Ola position itself as a brand? Is it a low cost provider or is it a differentiator? Or, is it that it is positioned as low-cost with

respect to certain competitors and differentiators with respect to the other?

2. With respect to the pouplar mode of transport, namely, auto rickshaws in cities like Bangalore, is Ola a differentiator? (Well, travelling in an AC car is any day better than travelling by an "Auto"!). But then, per km rate of Ola is cheaper than auto! So, is Ola a "best cost provider"?!

3. How long can Ola maintain this discounted rate? Will Ola have to raise tariff above that of auto to sustain and continue to provide superior service?

4. What will be the future implications of these strategies?

Ola is faced with the challenge of retaining its leadership position and has to keep its technological and financial prowess intact to successfully take on the international giant Uber. The success of Ola will ensure that millions of users will never have to own or drive a car to reach where they need to. Will Ola succeed, will it not? What is it that Ola needs to make sure for its success?

Will Ola succeed or fail in the long run, only time would tell us. Till then, we say,

"Ole, Ole, Ola!"

End Notes

1. Bombay was renamed as Mumbai in the year 1995. Traditionally, the town was named after the Hindu goddess Mumbadevi. "Bombay" is an Anglicization of the Portuguese name "Bombaim," which is believed to derive from the phrase "Bom Bahia," or "Good Bay." (Portugal held territories in western India until 1961.) (Beam, 2006).

2. App is a short form for "Application", a self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfil a particular purpose; an application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device (Google, 2015), Smart Phone, if you fancy.

3. Ole: A Spanish word used as a shout of approval, triumph, or encouragement (Dictionary.com, 2005)

4. An online marketplace (or online e-commerce marketplace) is a type of e-commerce site where product or service information is provided by multiple third parties, whereas transactions are processed by the marketplace operator. Online marketplaces are the primary type of multichannel ecommerce. In an online marketplace, consumer transactions are processed by the marketplace operator and then delivered and fulfilled by the participating retailers or wholesalers (often called "drop shipping"). In general, because marketplaces aggregate products from a wide array of providers, selection is usually wider, availability is higher, and prices are more competitive than in vendor-specific online retail stores. Since 2014, online marketplaces are abundant since organized marketplaces are sought after. Some have a wide variety of general interest products that cater to almost all the needs of the consumers, however, some are consumer specific and cater to a particular segment only. Examples of some online marketplaces are Amazon.com, Alibaba, Flipkart, Snapdeal (Anonymous, Online marketplace, 2015).

5. After all, "bad" may not be really bad as many times they turn out to be trigger for some entrepreneurs to start something to help people save from miseries that they themselves went through! Just as it happened in the case of "Ola"! Philosophically speaking As Swami Chinmayananda would say, "Pain is the kindest means to wake us up quickly" (Swami Chinmayananda Quotes, 2014)

6. Technology areas are hardly the only place where you find successful IITians. IIT not only gives you a world-class grounding in engineering but also – and perhaps more importantly – impart a wonderfully well rounded holistic education that prepares the IITian for success in any almost any field. IIT is not only the Indian Institute of Technology; it is the Indian Institute of Education (Deb, 2004). For success stories of IITians in almost all conceivable areas, please see "The IITians" by Sandipan Deb. Incidentally, the author

is also a "bye-product" of IIT, having studied his master at IIT, Madras!

7. Sadly enough, there quite a few sob stories from customers who had to miss flights since the promised Ola taxi was either late or did not turn up and the customer grievance mechanism at Olacabs was absent at the worst or ineffective, in the least. See, for illustration, the story of Arun Gopal who missed the flight to Hyderabad from Chennai because of failed service of Ola and his subsequent ordeal (Gopal, 2015).

8. Uber, according to Urban Dictionary, means "The ultimate, above all, the best, top, something that nothing is better than".

9. Discount coupons from Ola Mysore 49 Offer

Coupon code	MYS49,
Validity	Valid till Feb 28, 2015
Applicable on	Both Mini and sedan
Offer	Flat charge of Rs 49 up to 6 kilo metres.

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Annex 1: Rate Card (Uber and Ola)

Annex 2: Offers from Ola to entice customers to use of Mobile App

Annex 3: Ola – Differentiators and Customer Feedback (Positive)

Convenience

Book within seconds and get instant confirmations. Easy online payments or cash on delivery. Booking car rentals will never be a headache again!

My parents really had a very comfortable journey. They were very happy with the driver too. Thanks Ola, I surely would like to use your service again.

Mr. Deepak Abbot
Vice President - Product at Zapak.com

Quality

Our cars are audited for cleanliness, safety and comfort. Our drivers are well trained and reliable. Sit back and enjoy the Ola experience!

We had a really nice time. My family enjoyed a lot. Thank you so much.

Mrs. Aarti Palkar
Mumbai

Control

We have clear and transparent pricing listed online. Never haggle with drivers again on payments and be confident and assured of what you are being charged for!

The car was very well-maintained and the driver was well-behaved and courteous. It was a wonderful experience.

Mr. Saurabh Agarwal
Marketing Advisor, RWE Supply & Trading GmbH

Annex 4: The actual travel invoices from Ola & Uber for comparable distances

Annex 4: The Distance Surcharge in Uber

INTRODUCING LONG DISTANCE FARES
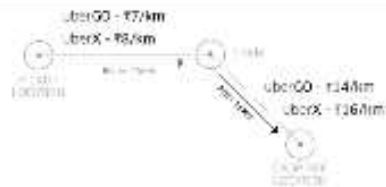
STILL THE MOST
AFFORDABLE RIDE

To justify partner economics, there's a change in pricing for long distance trips. Fares remain same at ₹7/KM for uberGO and ₹8/KM for uberX up to 15KMs and increase to ₹14/KM and ₹16/KM respectively, after 15KMs

Even with this increase in prices for long distance trips, Uber is still the most affordable ride in town!

CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS