



A STUDY ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF AUTO-RICKSHAW DRIVERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ERATTUPETTA MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

Autorickshaw transportation is having a vital role in the city life. Auto drivers provide transportation facility to all sections of the people in the city regardless day or night. Auto rickshaw serves an integral transport role to resident of all cities. It is the most popular para - transit mode connectivity to a greater fraction of population. Auto rickshaw industry provides greater number of job opportunities to the unemployed people. Auto and allied industry provided employment opportunity to technicians, dealers, auto finances and the firm is the livelihood for millions. Auto rickshaws are an important part of urban mobility and a step to improving sustainable transportation, as well as quality of life in Indian cities. Integrating autorickshaw services as a feeder mode complements public transportations systems, ensuring connectivity and easy access throughout the city. Auto – rickshaws also bridge the gap between public transport and door- to – door services, providing an alternative to private vehicles. Auto – rickshaws are an important part of urban mobility and a step to improving sustainable transportation, as well as quality of life in Indian cities. Integrating auto rickshaw services as a feeder mode complements public transportations systems, ensuring connectivity and easy access throughout the city. Auto – rickshaws also bridge the gap between public transport and door- to – door services, providing an alternative to private vehicles.

Keywords: Auto rickshaw, surcharge, shift, transportation, fuel usage

INTRODUCTION

Auto – rickshaw transportation is having a vital role in the city life. Auto drivers provide transportation facility to all sections of the people in the city regardless day or night. Auto – rickshaw serves an integral transport role to resident of all cities. It is the most popular para - transit mode connectivity to a greater fraction of population. Auto – rickshaw industry provides greater number of job opportunities to the unemployed people. Auto and allied industry provided employment opportunity to technicians, dealers, auto finances and the firm is the livelihood for millions.

In Kerala, one can travel short distances by taxi or auto – rickshaw. These two vehicles are readily available in the streets. They have meters attached to it for calculating the charge according to the distance covered. This is considered to be the cheapest and convenient method of transportation. There are auto stands near bus stops and other important places. Some drivers fix the rate before starting the journey while some depend on the meter charges. The government

has fixed the fares for auto – rickshaws and taxis. There are more than thousand auto rickshaws in Kottayam. There is an upward demand for auto rickshaws.

In case of auto – rickshaws, the minimum charge is Rs. 10/- for a minimum distance of 1.25 km. After the minimum distance, Rs. 6/- will be taken for each kilometer. In case of taxi, the minimum charge is Rs. 50/- for a distance of 3 km. Rs.7.5/- will be charged for each kilometer after the minimum. There are prepaid auto services available at certain places such as railway stations and bus stands.

As a parallel transportation facility, auto – rickshaw transportation plays an important role in the city life. Auto rickshaw requires less road spaces compared to taxis. Auto run 25km/ litter petrol, while taxi will run only 12km/ petrol. So auto – rickshaw reduces 50% of fuel consumption and pollution. Auto – rickshaw industry provides greater number of job opportunity to the unemployed people in India. Majority of the population in the country earn their livelihood by working in the informal sector with urban growth. There is a marked increase in the population in this sector consisting of skilled, semi – skilled and unskilled persons. They representing the literates, traditionally oppressed, vulnerable and economically poor and socially exploited migrating from rural areas to cities in search of comparatively better income opportunities and a chance to have better living conditions. The hope for better tomorrow makes these people work for days and nights without any restrictions on working hours and rest hours without adequate holidays and proper working conditions.

Auto – rickshaws are an important part of urban mobility and a step to improving sustainable transportation, as well as quality of life in Indian cities. Integrating auto – rickshaw services as a feeder mode complements public transportations systems, ensuring connectivity and easy access throughout the city. Auto – rickshaws also bridge the gap between public transport and door- to – door services, providing an alternative to private vehicles.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Primary and secondary data have been used in the study. Primary data is collected with the help of an interview schedule and with telephonic interview. A sample size of 50 respondents was selected from the auto rickshaw drivers in different areas of Erattupetta Municipality. Interviews were held by using different interview methods such as preparation of questionnaire, personal interview, telephonic interview etc. The secondary data is collected from various websites, magazines, newspapers etc. This method helps to understand the living conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This segment of the paper aims at evaluation of the socio-economic conditions of auto rickshaw drivers with special reference to Erattupetta Municipality. The primary data collected are analysed and presented here in order to arrive at valid conclusion.

Table: 1 Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Between 18-25	2	4
Between 25-35	5	10
Between 35-50	13	26
Above 50	30	60
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 2 drivers have the age between 18-25. 5 drivers have the age between 25-35. 13 drivers have the age between 35-50. 30 drivers have the age above 50. It shows that most of the drivers have the age above 50.

Table: 2 Educational Qualifications

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 4 th	7	14
Up to 12 th	38	76
Graduate	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: primary data

The above table shows that 7 drivers have been studied upto 4th. 38 of the drivers have been studied upto 12th. Only 5 drivers have been studied graduation. It shows that most of them are above 10th.

Table: 3 Place of residents

Residents	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	7	14
Urban	35	70
Semi - urban	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that most of the auto-rickshaws drivers are living in urban areas. Only 7 have been living in rural areas.

Table: 4 Nature of Vehicle

Type of Vehicle	Frequency	Percentage
Own	39	78
Rental	4	8
Loan	7	14
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 39 of the drivers have their own auto-rickshaw. Only 4 drivers have auto-rickshaw by rent. 7 drivers have auto-rickshaw by loan. It is clear that more are capable to buy an auto rickshaw. During the number of years of experience, the loans will be cleared by the drivers.

Table: 5 Fuel used by Auto-rickshaw Drivers

Fuel	Frequency	Percentage
CNG	0	0
Petrol	16	32
Diesel	34	68
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that more drivers are used diesel as their fuel. It shows that 34 drivers are using diesel. And it shows that no one can use CNG as their fuel. More usages are petrol and diesel.

Table: 6 Shift of Drive

Shift of Drive	Frequency	Percentage
Day	11	22
Night	8	16
Both	31	62
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that more drivers are drive both day and night for meeting their needs. They suffer from medical care, educational facilities etc. Only 11 of them are only drive day. The number of night shift reduces due to they have another jobs in day shift. And they also drive auto for better standard of living.

Table: 7 Monthly Incomes of the Respondents

Type of Vehicle	Income (monthly)	Frequency	Percentage
Own	15000-20000	39	78
Rental	12000-15000	4	8
Loaned	12000-14000	7	14
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that own auto rickshaws drivers have income level between 15000-20000. 78 % of the respondents have own auto rickshaws. There are 4 respondents have income between 12000-15000 who have auto by rent. There are 7 respondents have auto by loans and they have income between 12000-14000. As from the table, it is clear that there is difference between the incomes of drivers. But that is not much higher.

Table: 8 Season wise changes in Income

Seasons	Frequency	Percentage
Rainy	43	86
Winter	0	0
Summer	7	14
Autumn	0	0
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that the season wise changes in income is mainly occurred with rainy season. 43 respondents have the opinion that rainy seasons provide additional incomes to them. As summer season there is not high demand for autos.

Table: 9 Monthly Expenditure of Respondents

Type of vehicle	Expenditures (monthly)	Frequency	Percentage
Own	Greater than 20000	39	78
Rental	Greater than 20000	4	8
Loaned	Greater than 20000	7	14
Total		50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that the monthly Expenditures of the respondents. It shows that the whole drivers have expenses greater than 20000. Which means that they cannot meet their standard of living with this income. Their Income level is less than that of expenses. They are struggle to meet needs.

Table: 10 Major Problems of Respondents

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Police Checking	0	0
Road conditions	10	20
Traffic Congestion	3	6
Online taxi services	2	4
Impact of Two-Wheelers	35	70
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly shows that more auto-rickshaw drivers facing mainly the problem of Two-Wheelers and the road conditions. The bad condition of road damages the vehicle suddenly. And also, it shows that traffic problems also become a burden for them.

Table: 11 Suggestions Recommended by the Respondent

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Union Membership	2	4
Government Schemes	22	44
Financial Assistance	26	52
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that the major suggestions Recommended by the respondents. They are mainly recommended increasing the level of financial assistance which will help to improve their standard of living. And also implement schemes by the government to the development of this sector. Through union Membership, the welfare activities are to be increasing that will help to improve the quality of life.

CONCLUSION

Auto rickshaw is one of the largest movers of commuters in India. This sector serves as a safety net for the uneducated and unemployed, providing a lucrative Income of thousands of poor who join this profession to support their families. This sector is experiencing various problems like financing of auto rickshaws, hectic traffic rules or regulations, corruption in providing permits, setting acceptable fares, parking problems, impact of two whalers on their demand. This is in

turn affecting the ecosystem of auto rickshaw drivers to a greater extent. The study is conducted to cover the socio-economic background of the auto rickshaw drivers in Erattupetta Municipality.

To conclude the auto driver's social-economic lifestyle is neither good nor bad. They have moderate level of satisfaction in their profession. The socio-economic status of the auto drivers can be enhanced by launching new schemes by considering their safety and security by the government.

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