

Socio - Economic Conditions of Auto Drivers- with Special Reference to Mandya Taluk : A Sociological Study

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Abstract

Transportation plays a fundamental role in our lives, allowing us to travel from place to another place and access goods and services. It is one of the most dominant elements of the infrastructure and economic development of a society. Transportation is the movement of people, goods and services from one point to another point. It plays a crucial role in the economic, social and cultural development of any city or country. Auto-rickshaws, a ubiquitous mode of public transportation in many Indian cities, play a significant role in the urban transport ecosystem. This study aims to provide insights into the socio-economic conditions of auto-rickshaw drivers, their challenges, and potential avenues for improvement. Auto-rickshaw drivers form an essential yet often marginalized segment of India's urban transportation workforce. Auto rickshaw driving activity is an important occupation of the informal sector, where a million of poor not only serve the transportation needs of the society but also try to meet out their own economic and employment needs of the society but also try to meet out their economic and employment needs. Economically, auto rickshaw drivers are one of the poorest of the poor in the society This research delves into the socio-economic conditions and challenges faced by auto-rickshaw drivers, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of their livelihoods. Through a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, the study examines income disparities, working conditions, legal ambiguities, and social stigmas affecting this group. Preliminary findings highlight irregular income patterns, precarious working conditions, and the absence of legal protection. The study also uncovers the social stigma associated with the profession, impacting the mental wellbeing of auto-rickshaw drivers.

Keywords : Public Transportation, Employment, Goods and Services, Socio-Economic Conditions, Marginalized Segment. Social stigmas.

Introduction:

The oldest means of transportation used by human beings is walking and running. These methods have been used from thousands of years and are still widely used today. After this, animals were used as means of transport. There are instances where animals were and still are used for riding and carrying goods. In addition to this, human beings have found the use of simple boats and rafts to cross water bodies such as lakes, rivers, and seas. As human civilization advanced, various types of wheeled vehicles and ships were

developed for navigation. The vehicles and passenger ships of the film are significant milestones in the history of transportation.

And because of the physical evolution of human beings, people invented new tools to travel long distances. In ancient times, new tools such as ankle boots, snowshoes and scope shoes helped to journey of long distances. By finding new innovations for transportation problems, when the distance, capacity and need to spread increased, it was possible to increase the efficiency of transportation by finding many research-based transportation equipments and for that, more new innovations are being found as part of the continuous effort to find new ways. Human beings depend on transportation systems to move from one place to another and to transporting the goods.

History of Transportation:

In the pre-modern world, transportation was used for the purpose of goods from one side to another side. Used to carry Dilapidated paths were converted into roads in many cases using pains, i.e. horses, bullocks and donkeys were used to create footpaths, and then the footpaths were converted into roads, i.e. the roads were systematically laid out in the shape of an elaborate shapes using frames according to length and measurements. An attempt was made to build roads and make them easy to travel on. It is recorded in history that chariots that could be pulled by animals were developed around 4th & 5th millennium BC. By 1200 BC, chariots of this type began to provide transportation facilities in Europe, India and China. It is worth mentioning that the Romans developed roads to expand their empire. Later in England As a result of the Industrial Revolution, Monlodon McHadam designed the first modern highways, using cheap paving materials, such as dirt and stone aggregate, to prevent water from standing on the roads, and new technologies to allow vehicles to land on the roads As paving technology advanced, roads began to be constructed using concrete. In 1902, Nottingham's Rod Clip Road became the world's first asphalt road. The most widely used form of transport today is land transport. Land transport is a wide variety of vehicles that are being used on the roads by inventing and adapting vehicles to suit human abilities and needs. At first human beings invented wheeled vehicles and they were transported by animals. A major milestone in the history of transportation was the introduction of wheeled carts drawn by oxen, horses and donkeys. Almost every transportation vehicle plying on earth currently runs on wheels. Wheeled vehicles starting from horse or bullock carts Cycles, scooters, 3 wheeled vehicles i.e. auto rickshaws treaded 3 wheeled cycles 4 wheeled vehicles mainly including cars, taxis, light vehicles, 6 wheeled vehicles such as buses, lorries and 12 wheeled heavy vehicle trucks etc. Goods carrying people according to capacity the introduction of multi-wheeled vehicles to the roads to transport extremely difficult goods and the creation of roads corresponding to them using innovative new technologies are the most unforgettable inventions in the history of road transport in the world. Vehicles are being used in transport according to capacity, for the number of people traveling. Eg: Cycles, cycle rickshaws are used without using fuel. Also one or two using fuels scooters are used. Human-powered bicycles, human-powered cycle rickshaws are the most common form of simple transport. These human-powered wheeled vehicles are still used today for both personal use and rental use. As human purchasing power, business, commerce and trade expanded, new technologies were invented along with economic power and automatic machines made their way into road transport.

Origin of Auto rickshaw transport:

In Auto rickshaw itself, light vehicles, known by different names, are used for rental as well as for own

use. By using all these modes of transportation, the mobility of human beings, moving from one place to another and transporting goods has been greatly simplified. Today, it can be observed that transportation is a symbol of the progress of a country and transportation is compared to the nerves and circulatory system of a person. The transport system is just as important as the circulatory system in a person's body. The contribution of transport in the development of the country is significant. Starting from small children to the transportation of the elderly, transportation is being used in one way or another. Auto rickshaws are the means of transport for the poor. This topic has been chosen to study in detail about the origin and development of these Auto rickshaws, the role of Auto rickshaws in the present society and the socio-economic status of their drivers.

Literature Review:

Harish Tagari and Santhosh HB - Socio-Economic Basis of Auto rickshaw Drivers (2020) - Family members of Auto rickshaw drivers depend on rickshaw earnings the need has been realized in this study. A data analysis found that since the government has installed meters, consumers have recently signed bargains, with less annoyance. Problems such as violence by passengers against Chariot Auto rickshaw drivers at night and harassment by the police, fatigue from prolonged work, ill effects on health from road pollution and Research has found that rickshaw pullers face problems like accidents.

The researchers mainly focused on the study of the socio-economic conditions of the Auto rickshaw drivers and their problems, and the efforts of the Auto rickshaw drivers of Davangere city to fight against their problems and to improve their lifestyle were collected through primary data and analyzed scientifically. 60percent of export rickshaw pullers were found to have less qualification than SSLC. 80 percent of drivers are married they depend on Auto rickshaws for their livelihood. 55 percent of drivers are earning 9000/- thousand and above. 65 percent of the drivers own autos while 35 percent drive rental autos for a living which shows their economic status. Auto rickshaw drivers are the lowest earning category. This study shows that 95 percent of the auto drivers face problems due to traffic rules, 30 percent of the auto drivers have the problem of lack of auto stop, rest 75 percent suffer from mental stress and 70 percent of the drivers do not have any life insurance policy.

Ashwini Ramakrishna Bate - Socio-Economic Conditions of Auto rickshaw Drivers in Kolhapur City (2021)

The researchers in her research study looked at the social, economic and income related problems of auto rickshaw pullers in Kolhapur city. Social security and future ideas are collected through primary data. Examined the relationship between leisure time and occupational health of Auto rickshaw drivers. Auto-rickshaw drivers have explored the hobbies they have incorporated into their careers and how those hobbies have influenced their socio-economic status. Based on the primary data collected by the researcher through interview manual and observation and subjected to scientific analysis, it is found that 100percent of the Auto rickshaw drivers are men. It is clear that women do not enter the field of rickshaw driving in Kolhapur city. The lowest 2percent of the rickshaw pullers are in the age group of 21-30 and the highest is 54percent in the age group of 41-50. The research found that 28percent of people above the age of 51 depends on Auto rickshaws for their livelihood. 6percent of Auto rickshaw drivers in Kolhapur city are illiterate, 14percent have primary education and highest 52percent of Auto rickshaw drivers have secondary education. P.U.C. And if we observe that 24percent of those who have received graduate education and the number of educated people are high, the profession of Auto rickshaw driving is a pillar for many families in solving the unemployment problem, 68percent of the Auto rickshaw drivers are native

language Marari speakers, 86percent are Hindus, and only 140percent are Muslims. Most of the auto drivers are married and live in nuclear families. He chose rickshaw driving for family maintenance and monthly income of 5000-6000 shows his earning status and his social status. This shows that 75percent of the auto rickshaw drivers who drive on rent are not capable enough to buy their own autos and the unemployed youth are not given bank loan facility. 85percent of the auto drivers drive only during the day time and only 5.6percent of the auto drivers' drive during the night time. 26percent of the auto drivers have developed the habit of saving, 74percent People are unable to save due to low income and poor management of expenses. Most of the Auto rickshaws drivers' earnings are wasted as bank loans are taken for health improvement and family maintenance. The biggest problem faced by most of the auto drivers is the high cost of fuel and rising prices of auto rickshaw spare parts. There is a feeling among the rickshaw pullers that they are living a contented life with the meager income they have. 38percent of auto drivers are involved in consumption of gutka, cigarette, paan masala, tobacco. Only 4percent are alcoholics. Driving an auto for a long time can lead to back pain, piles, heart related diseases. Not being aware of government facilities and not having auto insurance policies informs their thinking about the future. Research has found that most auto drivers are suffering from mental stress due to irritation of road rules, traffic police brutality and behavior of passengers.

Origin and Growth of Rickshaw:

A rickshaw is a 2 or 3 wheeled cart, usually a mode of transport that carries one person/passenger. Rickshaw basically refers to a pulled cart. The first use of the term rickshaw was in 1879 in Japan, when pedaled cycle rickshaws called pedicab/taipasha came into use. As technology grew, there were many innovations in the field of rickshaws and Auto rickshaws and electric rickshaws were invented. After that the use of pull rickshaws began to decline.

Pulled rickshaws became a popular form of transportation in Asian cities in the 19th century and a source of employment for male workers. As cars, trains, buses and other modes of transportation became available, the popularity of towable autos declined.

The word rickshaw is derived from the Japanese word genrikisha. Jin means human, rikee means power/force, and sha means vehicle. It is defined as "a human-powered vehicle propelled by human power". Rickshaws were first invented in France in the late 17th century due to the demand for alternative public transport created by the discontinuation of the first Omni bus service in Paris in 1679. First handcarts were invented. These vehicles were fully enclosed two-wheelers with room for one person. Gradually it was modified to 2 seats. (It is towed by a driver.)

The period between 1603-1868 in the history of Japan is known as the Tokugawa period. After the ban on two-wheeled vehicles was lifted in Japan during the Tokugawa era, strict policies on economic growth were implemented. As a result of rapid technological progress, Japan introduced rickshaws independently in 1869. Singapore started its first rickshaw drive in 1880. The use of rickshaws was introduced in 1885 at the Power House in Sydney, Australia. Hand-pulled rickshaws became more popular as roped-off transportation in most Asian countries. Rickshaw driving was introduced in China in 1873. Auto rickshaw driving was first introduced in 1875 in Kolkata, India.

An Auto rickshaw vehicle is a motorized or mechanized version of a pulled or pedaled rickshaw cycle rickshaw. An Auto rickshaw has 3 wheels. Auto, Auto Rickshaw, Baby Taxi, Moto Taxi Pigeon, Janibee, Bajaj, Chandgari Lapa, Tuk-Tuk, Tum-Tum, Keke-Napal, Maruva, Auto rickshaw by various names in different countries as Pragya, Baodao, Tukki.)

Auto rickshaw is a common mode of transport used all over the world both for hire and for private use. Being a very cheap vehicle, a large number of autos were produced in a short period of time and became very popular. India's Bajaj Auto is the world's largest Auto rickshaw manufacturer as of 2019, having sold 7 lakh 80 thousand Auto rickshaws in fiscal year 2019.

In the 1930s, Japan, the most industrialized of Asia, first developed low-cost 3-wheeled Auto rickshaws based on the motorcycle. 1931 Invented the 3-wheeled open truck. Japanese model Auto rickshaws were first introduced in Kolkata in India and are now serving as common transport in all states including Punjab, Haryana. Auto rickshaw drivers are known as rickshaw-wala, auto-wala, tuksuk-wala.

There are 2 types of petrol version auto rickshaws in India

1. Engine installed under the driver's seat (Front Engine)
2. Back Engine of Auto

Along with these, CNG (Gas) engine autos have come into use as a revised model and environment friendly. Auto rickshaws have a total of 4 seats including the driver.

Auto rickshaw plying in Karnataka was first officially permitted in Bangalore city in December 1950 due to the efforts of Bangalore Mayor (Mayor) N. Keshav Iyengar by issuing licenses to 10 rental Auto rickshaws. In front of the First Auto Corporation building Started by Iyengar himself, there are currently 4.4 lakh Auto rickshaws providing transportation to passengers across Karnataka.

Auto Transport System in Mandya District:

In Mandya city, 3 wheeler autos or auto rickshaws are used as rental vehicles for city transport. Mandya district has 7 taluks with a total population of 1805769. The population of all these 7 taluks is as given in the following table.

| Sl. No | Taluks | Village population | Urban population | Total population |
|--------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Mandya | 277795 | 137358 | 415153 |
| 2 | Krishnarajpete | 234533 | 25946 | 260479 |
| 3 | Maddur | 260285 | 35147 | 295432 |
| 4 | Malavalli | 245664 | 37601 | 283265 |
| 5 | Nagamangala | 170121 | 17776 | 187897 |
| 6 | Pandavapura | 162953 | 20399 | 183352 |
| 8 | Srirangapattana | 146566 | 34135 | 180191 |
| | Total | 1497407 | 308362 | 1805769 |

(Source: Statistics of 2011 Census)

Krishnarajpet taluk has an urban population of 25946, a rural population of 234533, and a total population of 260479. Maddur taluk has a total population of 295432 in rural area and 35147 in urban area. Malavalli taluk has a total population of 283265 in which rural area is 245664 and urban population is 37601. Nagamangala taluk has a total population of 187897 in which total population is 170121 in Nagamangala town 6, Total in Pandavapur Taluk With a population of 183352, 162953 people live in rural areas. Pandavapur town has a population of 20399. There is a total population of 140191 in Srirangapatna taluk, 146566 people live in rural areas and 34135 people live in Srirangapatna city limits. A total population of 415153 is found in Mandya taluk containing the study area Mandya Nagar. Mandya taluk has a total population of 277795 in rural areas, Mandya Nagar has a population of 137358 and Mandya Nagar serves as the district administrative center which has the highest population in the entire district. Total number

of people living in rural areas of Mandya district is 1497407, total population living in all cities and towns of Mandya district is 308362

Mandya District is an agriculturally dominant district. Mandya Nagar is the district headquarters in which district collector's office, superintendent of police office, district agricultural officer's office, railway station, Karnataka state road transport station, star hotels, stadium, engineering college, university, many educational institutions, recreation centers, parks, Ambedkar Bhavan, Hospital, Medical College is the central part of the district administration where many such activities are being done by the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation as urban transport.

Importance of the Study:

Auto drivers are a category that easily fulfills the daily transportation demands of all classes of people on a daily basis. Auto drivers are trying to improve their daily lives with the money they earn daily by renting cars to auto owners, paying installments of other loans they have made and using the remaining money. The significance of the present study is to study the social and economic conditions of such auto drivers.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the social and economic conditions of auto drivers of Mandya taluk.
2. To know the impact of Shakti Yojana on auto drivers,
3. To study the problems and challenges faced by auto drivers.

Hypotheses:

1. There is no fixed income for auto drivers.
2. Socio-economic conditions of auto drivers are better.

Scope of Study:

Current Research Scope Auto drivers, family members of auto drivers, officers and staff of regional transport office, auto rickshaw mechanics, office bearers of auto drivers associations and auto passengers of Mandya taluk are covered under the study.

| Sl. No | Taluk | Total Registered Auto rickshaws | Total Unregistered Auto rickshaws | Total Auto rickshaws |
|--------|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Mandya | 2267 | 184 | 2451 |
| | Total | 2267 | 184 | 2451 |

(Source of information: District Transport Office, Mandya)

As per the above table prepared for the scope of the study, there are a total of 2451 Auto rickshaws in Mandya taluk, out of which a total of 2267 registered Auto rickshaws and a total of 184 unregistered Auto rickshaws are engaged in public transport service. All these Auto rickshaw drivers in Mandya taluk are under the scope of the present research

Sample Selection:

In view of the objectivity of the research, they were selected as a sample of 2percent, total of Sample 49 auto drivers were selected. 45 auto drivers from 2267 registered Auto rickshaws and 4 auto drivers from

184 not re-registered Auto rickshaws. Selected the sample through simple random method.

Sources of Data Collection:

Data collection stage is very important in social research as data collection is the process of collecting material or information using scientific techniques from various sources according to the choice of research topic.

Primary data sources:

Observation, interview and questionnaire these 3 methods are used in the present study and objective information is collected from the auto drivers selected through simple random method to the field study in Mandya taluk. Scientifically collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using the above 3 primary sources of data as required.

Secondary data Sources:

Additional information related to the socio-economic status of auto drivers in Mandya taluk is available from television, radio, public speeches, internet information, newspapers, books brought out by auto drivers and owners association, manuals of schemes undertaken by the government regarding the welfare of auto drivers, regional transport department magazines, personal biographies of drivers, their savings diaries. Information collected from ancillary sources such as data, health records etc. has been subjected to scientific analysis.

Data Analysis:

The primary and secondary data collected in connection with the present study were scientifically collated and analyzed through statistical methods. As auto drivers in Mandya taluk are covered by the study, sample is collected from the respondents. The information and figures are analyzed through tables scientifically objective and statistical methods.

Table-1: Daily earnings due to auto driving

| Sl. No | Earnings | Respond | Percent |
|--------|---------------|---------|---------|
| 1 | 200-300 | 05 | 11 |
| 2 | 301-400 | 12 | 24 |
| 3 | 401-500 | 20 | 41 |
| 4 | More than 500 | 12 | 24 |
| | Total | 49 | 100 |

Table-2: Daily savings due to auto driving

| Sl. No | Savings | Respond | Percent |
|--------|---------------|---------|---------|
| 1 | 100-200 | 10 | 20 |
| 2 | 201-300 | 12 | 25 |
| 3 | 301-400 | 22 | 45 |
| 4 | More than 400 | 5 | 10 |
| | Total | 49 | 100 |

Table-3: Shakti Yojana affected your earnings

| Sl. No | Answer | Respond | Percent |
|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| 1 | Yes | 49 | 100 |
| 2 | No | 00 | 000 |
| | Total | 49 | 100 |

Findings:

- The daily earnings of auto drivers are very low
- Savings per day are low
- Due to the state government's Shakti Yojana, the socio-economic conditions of auto drivers are very poor

Suggestions:

- Government should provide special financial facilities to auto drivers.
- Fuel should be subsidized
- Loan facility should be provided at low interest rate
- Free health checkup should be conducted

Conclusion:

The study covers how auto drivers are recognized as an important part of urban transport, performing a very important function as simple and low-cost vehicles of intra-city passenger and freight transport. The study found that Auto rickshaw drivers are fulfilling the transport requirement of the city besides improving their social and economic life. Local and migrant auto drivers are in harmony and are involved in social services despite not having much education. Providing free services, donating blood, arranging food donation, serving the elderly, pregnant women, school children at their doorsteps on time, they are an important part of the mobility of the city. The study found that the socio-economic conditions of auto drivers have not improved.

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