SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF CYCLE RICKSHAW PULLERS OF DISTRICT NAINITAL : A STUDY [WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HALDWANI CITY]

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ABSTRACT: In the country like India the unorganised sector has a huge size so that it accommodates a number of people to earn their bread for their daily life. In transport sector which is lifeline of the country, a number of means of transport are used in daily life. Cycle rickshaw is one of an important mode of transport specially in cities to move people/goods from one place to another. Haldwani city which lies in District Nainital in Uttarakhanda has also cycle rickshaw pullers which pull cycle rickshaw as an important mode of transport. The city is selected as study area by researcher to find the socio-economic status of the cycle rickshaw pullers. A small sample is used to collect the data for fulfilling the purpose of the study.

Keywords : unorganized, cycle rickshaw puller

INTRODUCTION
Non-polluting and environmentally friendly cycle rickshaw; as one of the cheapest modes of intra-city transport, play a pivotal role in providing point-to-point connectivity, helping people reach nearly market, railway station and bus terminal [1]. It is comparatively a cheap mode of transportation if a person travels for a short distance. Cycle rickshaw is most popular in northern Indian cities. If we describe the cycle rickshaw it is a paddle tricycle with a seat for puller in front and a seat at back on two back wheels where the passenger can sit while using the rickshaw. According to Centre for Rural Development there are 8 million rickshaws pullers in India [2]. The man who operates the rickshaw is called as ‘rickshaw walla’ generally and they serve the society through carrying load, transporting people to their destination etc. But the hard work done by them is not get reward with the money they got for this work which makes their economic condition pitty and this impacts on their health, social status, future aspiration etc.

THE STUDY AREA
The present study is focused on rickshaw pullers of Haldwani City which is plain region (Bhabhar) of District Nainital in Uttarakhanda. The city of fully depend on road transport and cycle rickshaw is mostly used by local users for local transport. But in recent years the cycle rickshaw is less demanded by the localities and these cycle rickshaws are mostly replaced by E-rickshaw. But still cycle rickshaw are running on the roads of Haldwani City and present paper is an attempt to highlight the socio-economic condition of these cycle rickshaw pullers.

LITERATURE REVIEW :- A number of studies has been undertaken to find the problems and to suggest the suitable suggestions to enhance the condition of cycle rickshaw pullers. Khan et.al. (2012)² conducted a study on cycle rickshaw pullers and conclude that rickshaw pullers are one of the poorest sections of the society, living in abject poverty but play a pivotal role in intra-city transportation system. Mishra (2014)¹⁴ in her study suggests that awareness to be created among rickshaw pullers on social security scheme and social welfare provisions and no penalty to them by any government authorities. Pant & Lohani (2014)⁹ in their study found that the low income among respondents gives them low living standard which also effect their efficiency to work. Sayoojkumar (2017)⁶ conducted a study on auto rickshaw pullers on Calicut city and find that even the auto rickshaw pullers socio-economic and health issues needed to be addressed immediately to protect their health. These studies have been done in past and highlight the various aspects of the life of rickshaw pullers but the present study is highlighting the socio-economic status of rickshaw pullers in a most important city of Uttarakhanda state which is also pronounced as economic capital of Uttarakhanda.

SAMPLE SELECTION :- The study area is situated in the foothills and comes under district Nainital which is partial hilly district. The city is the gateway to the various districts of Kumaun division of Uttarakhanda state. It is well established with modern facilities specially in medical and education. Road is the main mode of transport. Bus, auto rickshaw, e-rickshaw, paddle rickshaw etc. are the main public transport in the city. The present study is based on cycle rickshaw pullers of Haldwani city and a small sample of (N=30) is taken randomly to fulfill the purpose of the present study.

COLLECTION OF DATA :- Both primary and secondary is adopted in the present study and the primary data was collected through a personnel interview, personal investigation and pilot survey methods. Secondary data is adopted mostly from websites and some other sources.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY :- The study is limited to the cycle rickshaw pullers of Haldwani city only. While interviewing the respondents, there were many problems which the researcher faced to collect the data from respondents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY – The present study is undertaken with having the following objectives keeping in mind –
1. To study the socio-economic status of respondent cycle rickshaw pullers.
2. To study the health status of respondents.
3. To study the problems of respondents.

HYPOTHESIS – The hypothesis for present study is that - 

$H_0$: Age negatively affects the income of respondents.

DISCUSSION:

SOCIAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The social study is an important factor which determines the status and development of an individual which is the smallest unit of the society. Age, caste, religion, education etc. are some such important factors to understand the social status of respondents.

**Age of Respondents** - The surveyed respondent rickshaw pullers age is minimum 20 years and maximum 70 years. So, the range of data of age group is 70 – 20 = 50. The average age of the respondents is 36 years. The highest percentage is in the age group of 25-35 and lowest in age group of 55 and above. **Educational Status of Respondents** - The educational status of respondents shows that mostly are Illiterate or followed by Primary as their formal education. The data also reflects that the higher educational status is less engaged in this self-employment activity due to various reasons and the physical hard work is one of them. **Marital Status of Respondents** - 94 percent respondents in the present study are married. Among married respondents’ 4 percent have more than 3 children and 9 percent have only one child and 60 percent respondents have two children. **Religion and Place of Origin of Respondents** - While knowing the religion of the respondents shows that 60 percent respondents belong to Hindu religion and 40 percent are Muslim who are engaged in this economic activity to earn their bread. The place of origin shows that 80 percent among Hindu respondents belong to Uttarakhand as their place of origin and among Muslim respondents only 30 percent belong to Uttarakhand as their place of origin. From outer state all respondents belong to Uttar Pradesh either they belong to any community.

ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS :

The economic condition of respondents is an important part to understand their status which determines the position of the person in the society. Income, Saving, Expenditure and Indebtness are some important variables to analyse the economic condition of the respondents.

**Income, Expenditure and Saving of the Respondents** - The average monthly income of respondent cycle rickshaw puller is Rs. 8709.60 which is much low and show the pity condition of respondent rickshaw pullers. There is a variation in income of the respondents due to their age and the type of cycle rickshaw puller. The first type of rickshaw pullers is having their own cycle rickshaw and second one who take cycle rickshaw on per day rent basis. So, the owner cycle rickshaw earns more than the rented rickshaw puller. The average expenditure of the respondents is Rs. 7500.00 per month. This shows the bad economic condition of the respondents and mostly of those who have unnecessary expenses mostly on their bad habits i.e., consumption of liquor, smoking, chewing tobacco etc. This bad habit not only increase their expenditure higher than income and also force them towards indebtness. But not all the respondents have indebtness due to the bad habits but some have taken loan for cycle rickshaw, loan for various rituals in family, low income, household problems etc. Mostly they have taken loan from informal sources to fulfill the purpose of loan. **Previous occupation of respondents** - As per the data collection most of the respondents who belong to Uttarakhand are mostly migrated from hilly parts of the state are marginal or landlers person and the respondents who were migrated from other parts/outer state were agriculture labours, bricks kiln, landless workers, construction workers by their previous occupation and have migrated to the study area for improving their economic condition for a better life to them and their family.

$H_0$: Age negatively affects the income of respondents.

The correlation analysis results that the value of $r = -0.79$ which shows the negative relation between the age and income variables. So, the hypothesis is true that the age affects negatively the income of respondents. This shows that as they are of old age due to their low physical efficiency they will earn less.
Daily working hours of respondents - As the cycle rickshaw pulling is a hard physical work but even the respondents work average 7-12 hour daily to earn their bread. They make a little rest on their cycle rickshaw under a tree for an average of an hour per day and sometimes not. Health status of respondents- While observation and questioning to the respondent more responded disease related to lungs, liver and joints. One of the main reasons behind this is their bad habits of consuming intoxication and hard physical work is responsible for their joint’s pain. They have less attention to their health, less nutrition in take due to poverty and many others reasons having the poor health status.

Whether they find any change in their socio-economic status?

While asking this question 40 percent respondents responded their answer in ‘Yes’ and 10 percent responded that their status has declined than previous one and 50 percent has no answer or they replied that their life remain unchanged even after joining this new occupation.

What about the level of satisfaction from current occupation?

The data collected to know the level of satisfaction from current occupation shows a huge percentage (60 percent) of respondents were not satisfied from their current working occupation and only a few (10 percent ) responded that they find them satisfied from the current occupation and 30 percent of the respondents were not able to say anything about the satisfaction from present occupation.

PROBLEMS OF RESPONDENTS :- While interviewing the cycle rickshaw pullers during the primary survey a number of problems were shared by them related to their occupation. The prime problems which were noticed are threat of life, abusing and exploitation by the authorities and sometimes misbehave by the passengers or other vehicle owners, low level of housing with no basic amenities, due to less income there is no saving, no shelter in case of rain during working time, no facility of clean drinking water and sanitation at workplace are some of the common problems of the respondents.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION :- The current study is direct investigation with respondents with interview as the main method the researcher found a number of problems the respondents face while they are earning bread for their family’s daily life. Most of them are married and educated up to Highschool so they opted the present occupation. The cycle puller belongs to Uttarakhand and outer of the state who migrated to the study area to earn their bread. The income, expenditure and saving is much less so that they are caught in the clutches of poverty. Most migrated respondents from other state belongs to poorer economic background as they work in unorganized sector as labors or brick kiln. Their health condition is also not so good due to various reasons and low income, consuming of intoxication are primary reasons behind this.

So, it is suggested that the cycle rickshaw puller who work as a lifeline of the city by transporting the passenger in the different parts and people use this mean of transport for their various purposes. It is necessary to eradicate the problems of the respondents. It is suggested to provide them medical facility by authorities in the case of emergency, easy and simple formalities to renewed cycle permit, clean drinking water & sanitation facility should be provided by the cycle rickshaw union, as per the prices of fare should be revised time by time and fixed by the authorities, they should be educate for the social security schemes which the government provides, strict action should be taken against the person who exploits them, they should be aware for the consequences of their bad habits and encouraging them for a minimum saving through social campaign time by time, loans should be provided at low rate of interest for buying the cycle rickshaw if anyone want to buy its own, free health checkup camps should be organized for them, any Non-Government Organizations (NGO) should come forward to help them.

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