



## THE MUDDLE ECONOMY & LIVELIHOOD ISSUES OF AUTO-RICKSHAW: STUDY BASED ON NORTH CALCUTTA

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### ABSTRACT

Kolkata is experiencing the "Autocracy" as "Auto-rickshaw" is main mode of public transport. This study concentrates on the current socio-economic condition, the prospects and problems auto-rickshaw drivers in Kolkata. Road fatalities, air pollution and frequent congestions are very common to Kolkata metropolitan city but the chaos is the muddled socio-economic system of auto-rickshaws. Despite, the status as mega city, Kolkata metropolitan region with unusual combination of high population density, was chosen because it arguably has the most varied & complex set of transport system. 200 auto-drivers and Auto-owner-drivers of north Calcutta were surveyed to understand their economic and lifestyle stature, expectations, problems and need for reforms. "The formal economy of auto-rickshaws is social-economic problems as many people get into this profession with hope of earning a decent income for the benefit of themselves and their families" considered and the situation becomes in-formal economics according to today's observation. However, the life of auto drivers is one of financial struggle with earnings and savings. The study reveals the situation of the govt. introduced different social security scheme for the informal labour sector as Kolkata "Auto-rickshaw" drivers are the very prominent in transport sector.

**KEYWORDS:** Auto-rickshaw, Social security, economic and lifestyle, north Calcutta.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

The State of West Bengal was created, curving out of the east while State of Bengal under British Rule, at the time of the partition in 1947 which coincided with the freedom of this great country. Thereafter, Notified earlier and fully fledged Transport Department was started functioning with its separate entity in the early eighties. Though the history of bus services in the city of Calcutta had its start in the year of 1920, the organized Road Transport in the public sector dates back to 31st July 1948 with the creation of Calcutta State Transport Services under the department of Home (Transport), Government of West Bengal. The main idea behind the opening of State Transport was to provide employment to the young men in the Transport Industries as well as Transport Engineering. In the year 1949-50, Diesel era started with acquisition of two double decker vehicles. Later on, the Self Employment Scheme for Registered unemployed youths in West Bengal 1985 was introduced under the Department of Labour (G.O. No. 420 – EMP dated 04/07/1985) to encourage finding meaningful employment, with marginal grants from the government and loans from selected banks or government financial institutions. While this scheme was replaced by Udiyaman Swanirbhar Karmansthan Prakalpa (USKP), 2008, it was the starting point of creating a network of auto-rickshaw operators in Kolkata. The scheme only covered the recognized individuals who were registered with the employment exchanges under the directorate of employment under the govt. of West Bengal. The process of getting an auto-rickshaw under this scheme was multi-level. Once the individual has the permit

s/he may utilize the loan/buy the auto-rickshaw in the specified route. Auto-rickshaws have become a very common mode of transport for short distances. They are usually not metered but usually are shared. There are several routes, and the auto-rickshaws of a particular route ply between two distinct places of that route only (CSCP PERMIT). These auto-rickshaws are not allowed in major arterial roads and certain parts of the city. Transport is the artery of a nation’s economy influencing every facet of its development. It is important in the growth of economic prosperity and social up-liftmen needs.

Kolkata is the economic hub of eastern India and with a vast hinterland which is much bustles with economic activities. Kolkata creates a huge number of employments and supports to a large number of migrants from neighboring states and other parts of the country. According to the state transport department's 'traffic modal-split' study, autos carry as many as 31.50 lakh passengers a day, while eastern railway and south eastern railway together carry 33.90 lakh. The Metro, which is hopelessly jam-packed these days, carries 4.50 lakh passengers daily after its extension to New Garia but the circular railway, despite its huge capacity, carries only 26,000 passengers. Autos, in fact, carry twice as many passengers as the five state transport corporations taken together (15.60 lakh) and even taxis (14.57 lakh). Private buses are still numerouno, carrying 42.80 lakh passengers daily. The auto fleet has seen the biggest growth in the transport sector. In 1991, when the last study on auto-rickshaws was carried out, it revealed a growth of 1086% over five years, compared to two-wheeler's 103%. If this came as a surprise, the growth in the later years was mind-boggling, as per the senior transport officials.

Together with the mammoth illegal fleet, autos have seen a growth of 2000% in the city area over the last decade. Later on, the introduction of LPG / CNG auto-rickshaw was made by hon’ble supreme court of INDIA, for less pollution.

THREE WHEELER PRODUCTION				
Company	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Bajaj auto	182341	192738	189615	193223

TABLE 1 : SOURCE: I.C.R.A INFORMATION SERVICES.

Autos are considered as an irritant on the roads, mainly because of the rough, erratic driving and because the fleet is growing unchecked and are taking over even small lanes and by-lanes. But there is no denying that the city cannot do without them and as auto operators create new 'routes' for themselves, the population’s dependence on them increases. However the entire protocol of auto-rickshaw system is not perfect. As per the research report<sup>1</sup>, the most commonly reported problem was the unavailability of exact changes for fares. Users also demanded higher frequency of auto-rickshaws on busy routes. Automatic cut routes are also the problems. As well as, data on complaints by male & female users reveals that male auto-rickshaw users perceive the behavior of auto-rickshawsdrivers as more problematic than female travellers do (figure:1).

However, the fact, that the 'educated and uneducated unemployment' is a part of the complex problem of 'over-all unemployment' or 'general unemployment'. For a useful discussion of educated and uneducated unemployment, the problem is of 'overall unemployment'. The attempt is made to have glimpse of self-employment of late in India, greater thrust is given to self-employment as a strategy to mitigate

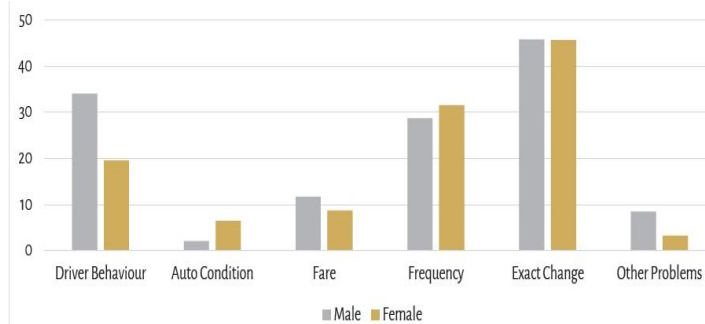


FIGURE 1: PROBLEM FACED BY MALE AND FEMALE PASSENGERS

unemployment and underemployment among both educated and uneducated youths. As a part of such strategy, many a novel schemes for both educated unemployed and uneducated unemployed has been installed. Auto-rickshaw permit is one of them. But the observation on the auto-rickshaws is not monitored by the Kolkata PVD. The social security is not considered also part of the research proposal. There are more than two drivers for a single auto-rickshaw. There is no regularity or observation for the drivers only as driving auto-rickshaws as a form of livelihood was promoted by the govt. of West Bengal. The demographic observation is also considered as a part of this research where educational qualification and age is important.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

**Research Report<sup>1</sup> 30th January, 2016:** This research report focuses on the regulatory and operational aspects of Intermediate Public Transportation (IPT) in Kolkata, India. This report focuses on the role of auto-rickshaws as IPT in the city as studies have demonstrated that auto-rickshaws in Kolkata serve a larger population of commuters at lower fiscal costs, and levels of environmental destruction and infrastructure usage. This report argues that auto-rickshaws are viewed as a primary form of IPT because they are affordable, regular, safe, predictable and cover wide-ranging of the city's inhabited geographic area.

**Emma Shlaes, Akshay Mani (2013)<sup>2</sup>** concluded about to understand the role of auto-rickshaws in Mumbai's transport system and the distinct challenges and opportunities that the sector presents in promoting a sustainable transport system for Mumbai. The study is based on a ground-level assessment of the sector and its role, with the aim to understanding several potential challenges that it faces. The research included both quantitative and qualitative methods to form a case study of the auto-rickshaw with a structured survey of 500 auto-rickshaw drivers and 500 auto-rickshaw passengers over a 10-day period in July 2012 at eleven high demand locations around the Suburbs of Mumbai. While the auto-rickshaw industry in Mumbai is very complex and rife with tension, it has clear opportunities for improvements and some changes are already being made.

**Anandabazar Patrika, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2016:** West Bengal Transport minister hon'ble **Mr. suvendu Adhikary** was also frustrated with reckless Auto-driving. According to high court order on 09.04.2010, the new permission for auto route and auto-rickshaw has been closed. But the most surprising topic is that a lot of auto-rickshaws are persistent in the old & new routes. It is also truth that the unemployment situation also forces to push the unemployed youth to be auto-rickshaw drivers. There is no documentation of all auto-rickshaws as according to Annual Review 14 & 15, Kolkata Traffic Police, the number of auto-rickshaws are 40,790 on the year 2015.

## 3. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA:

Metropolitan Kolkata shall continue to remain as the strong in intermediate public transport services as before. As, on 14<sup>th</sup> august 1947, India achieved "freedom at midnight", the province of Bengal found itself divided into two –east & West. West Bengal was born as a constituent state of the Indian Union. India got an indelible mark on the Bengalis and west Bengal including the trajectory of urbanization centering disproportionately on the city of Calcutta, later renamed Kolkata. The epitome of urban West Bengal is the area covered by Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and Kolkata Municipal Area. KMC act 1980, later forced in 1984, the KMC covers an area 205 Sq. KM with 1850 km road, 144 wards, population 44, 96,694 as

<sup>1</sup>**Research report:** Integrating Intermediate Public Transport within Transport Regulation in a Megacity: A Kolkata Case Study, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2016. Centre for policy research, New Delhi.

<sup>2</sup>**Research report:** Shlaes Emma, Mani Akshay (2013), " A Case Study of the Auto-Rickshaw Sector in Mumbai", Embarq India.

per 2011 Census, floating population 6 million per day and vehicular population 1.05 million (Source : KMC) of registered 7.8 million (Source: Ministry of Statistics & programme Implementation ,2012) .

#### 4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

There are very few research papers on the **auto-rickshaw** of Kolkata. This study mainly covers the demographic situation, social security factors, savings policy, and Living condition of **auto-rickshaw- drivers but not in wide view**. The study is based on the following:

- ✚ To know the transformation of formal economy to informal economy of **auto-rickshaw** in Kolkata.
- ✚ To describe the socio demographic characteristics of Auto-rickshaw drivers.
- ✚ To assess the condition of Social security of Auto-rickshaw drivers in Kolkata (North).
- ✚ To analyze livelihood aspects of Auto-rickshaw drivers in Kolkata (North).

#### 5. DATA & METHODOLOGY:

This study was conducted among randomly selected auto-rickshaw drivers from the route chart selected randomly in Calcutta city (North). The data of route structure and number of four stroke LPG single mode auto-rickshaws with the order (Vide notification- 2027-WT/4M-23/95 dated 09.04.2010) of hon'ble high court are collected from the similar department. Inform consent was obtained and subjects were interviewed by using structured questionnaire. There are 125(126) routes with 10118 auto-rickshaws (The regional transport authority, Kolkata should also ensure that such permits are given against such existing Auto-rickshaw which are already registered and no newly registered auto-rickshaw be allowed to have such permits as above, except by way of replacement: By order-no. 2027/1(1)-WT of the Governor) under KMC are considered for sampling. Through random sampling system considering the population size is known, proportion value 0.5 and the marginal error 0.05 with the confidence level 95% (Z score value 1.96) total sample size **three hundred seventy (370) is selected for north and south Calcutta**. As well as using similar formula and by random sampling 94 auto-routes are selected for data collection 370 auto-rickshaw drivers. For north Calcutta, half of the total sample size is considered. But for the better result, sample size 200 is considered for this research study. SPSS, Microsoft Excel is used for the descriptive statistics analysis. An institutional ethical clearance was obtained. The result is obtained from the primary data. The study period was august 2017 to December 2017.

#### 6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

**A. Introduction of Formal Economy to Informal Labour Sector:** According to the SESRU and the modified notification no. 1443-WT/4M-23/95 dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2003, Govt. of West Bengal Transport department, the routes are fitted with the route strength (number of Auto-rickshaw) and appointment letter is issued as an employment to the registered unemployed youth. This section is monitored by GOI (Gov. of India) for the growth of economy. But in other word, the informal sector, informal economy, or grey economy is the part of an economy that is neither taxed, nor monitored by any form of government. In Kolkata, two different units of auto-rickshaws are observed as the big gap between PVD and Kolkata Traffic report.

**i. Situation of Auto-rickshaw Drivers:** The burning problem of unemployment is frustrating the intellectuals, the cream of the society. The spreading sphere of this problem of unemployment has turned the political and economic structure of India restless. It is not only awesome and painful at personal level but it is also a source of tension, which often threatens the whole fabric of the society. The burgeoning population of autos is an index of its success story. Also, it generates great job opportunity. What is required is a better management system & cooperative model to reorganize the fleet. As a result, it is observed that only 17.5% auto-owner drive their Auto-Rickshaw where 82.5% are drivers who drive others Auto-Rickshaw. There is only essential of driving license (CAB) for the driver.

AUTO-rickshaw					
AUTO-rickshaw		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Driver	165	82.5	82.5	82.5
	Owner-Driver	35	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

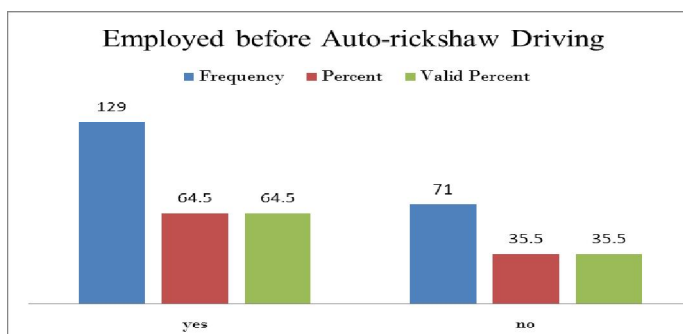
**TABLE 2: SITUATION OF AUTO-RICKSHAW DRIVERS IN NORTH CALCUTTA; SOURCE: SURVEY DATA FOR THIS STUDY**

**ii. Employment before Auto-rickshaw Driving:** From the data, it is also identified that 64.5% respondents were employed before the driving auto rickshaw & the rest 35.5% have chosen the driving job as the primary option. The most of them was in industry as wage labour or permanent labour but due to insecurity or low income they have opted the Auto-rickshaw driving.

Employment before Auto-rickshaw Driving in this sector					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agriculture	17	13.2	13.2	44.0
	Any Other	7	5.4	5.4	47.5
	Industry	75	58.1	58.1	85.0
	Service Sector	30	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	129	100.0	100.0	

**TABLE 3: EMPLOYMENT BEFORE AUTO-RICKSHAW DRIVING IN THE SECTOR**

23.3% of the respondents have attached with service sector job before taking up auto-driving as profession. From the agriculture sector only 13.2% population are attached with this profession. In most cases, the insecurity, low income, temporary situation and independent job are the factors for changing the profession.



**FIGURE 2: EMPLOYMENT BEFORE AUTO-RICKSHAW DRIVING**

**iii. Working hour:** Almost 70% respondents drive auto-rickshaw for 10-12 hours and other 12% for more than 12 hour.

WORKING TIME IN HOUR					
Working Time In Hour		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4-6 hours	4	2.0	2.0	70.0
	7-9 hours	36	18.0	18.0	88.0
	10-12 hours	136	68.0	68.0	68.0
	More than 12 hours	24	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**TABLE 4 : WORKING HOUR OF AUTO-RICKSHAW DRIVERS IN NORTH CALCUTTA; SOURCE: SURVEY DATA FOR THIS STUDY**

As the most auto-rickshaw drivers are not the owner & they are compelled to work more working time to pay the hiring charge which is so called "BATCHIT". It is observed from the analysis that those who drive 4-6 hours are drivers, but in 18% cases those who are driver never have less likeliness to earn more by appointing a driver. State Governments in India issue different types of Ration Cards. They are provided according to the groups divided; for instance: BPL (Below Poverty Line), APL (Above Poverty Line), Antyodaya Families. A Ration Card is a document issued in India by the State Government as per the Public Distribution System for the purchase of essential commodities from Ration shops or fair price shops. According to the figure 2, only 30% auto drivers are in BPL category, and 57.5 % auto drivers are in APL category, 0.5% in ANTODAYA category.

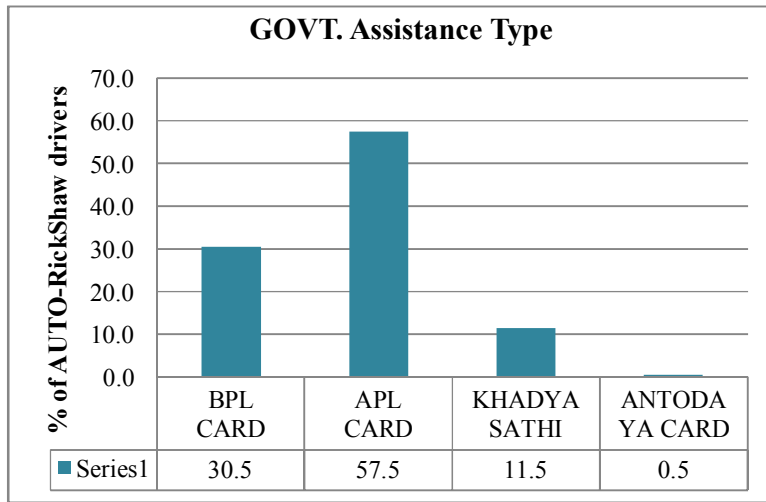


FIGURE 3: THE SITUATION OF THE GOVT. ASSISTANCE ACCORDING TO CATEGORIZATION

Most of the Auto-rickshaw drivers are in financial crisis with less social education and utilized by the political party. As they don't have personal vehicle, the frustration, economic situation, working culture compelled them to be addicted. According to figure 3 it is observed from the analysis that only 0.4 % are without any kind of addiction. According the respondent data, 62.5 % are addicted to smoking, 59.5 % are alcoholics, 27.5 % consume tobacco & 13% are attached with other kind addiction like (Prescribed Drugs, Gambling

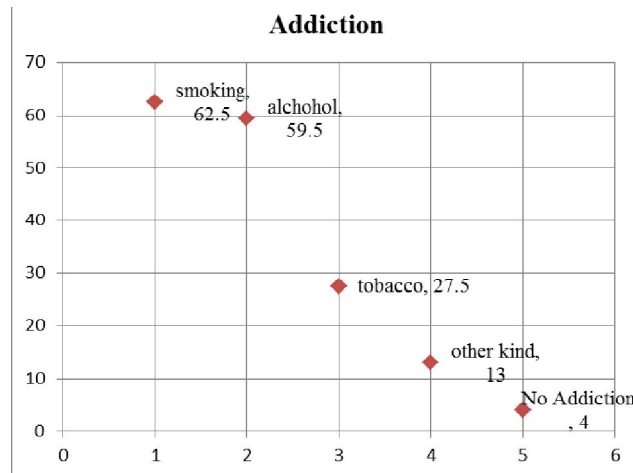


Figure 4: Type of addiction & involvement of Auto-rickshaw drivers

**B. Demographic condition of Auto-rickshawdrivers:**An analysis on the demographic profile of the sample comprised of individuals with varied Age, Education, Religion, Marital status, Family Status, Dependency of parent details are provided as tables. From the basic profile of respondents, it is clear that the employment of auto-rickshaw is carried out by men.

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Age 18-25	40	20	20

	26-35	68	34	34
	36-45	54	27	27
	46-55	35	17.5	17.5
	56-60	3	1.5	1.5
Education	Primary	43	21.5	21.5
	High School - Madhyamik	69	34.5	34.5
	Higher Secondary School	71	35.5	35.5
	Graduate	17	8.5	8.5
Marital Status	Single	50	25	25
	Married	139	69.5	69.5
	Divorced	11	5.5	5.5
Religion	Hindu	163	81.5	81.5
	Muslim	36	18	18
	Others	1	0.5	0.5
Family Status	Joint	113	56.5	56.5
	Nuclear	87	43.5	43.5
Dependency Of Parent	No	150	75	75
	Yes	50	25	25

TABLE 5: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS (AUTO-RICKSHAW OWNER-DRIVERS & DRIVERS)

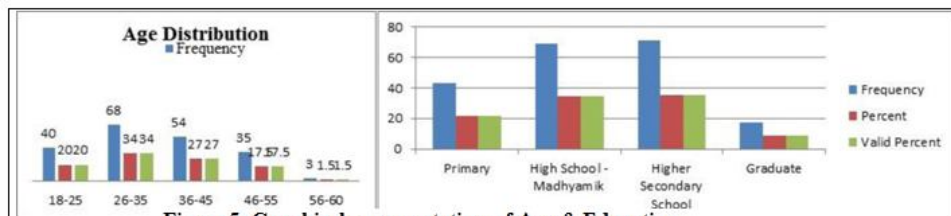


Figure 5: Graphical representation of Age & Education

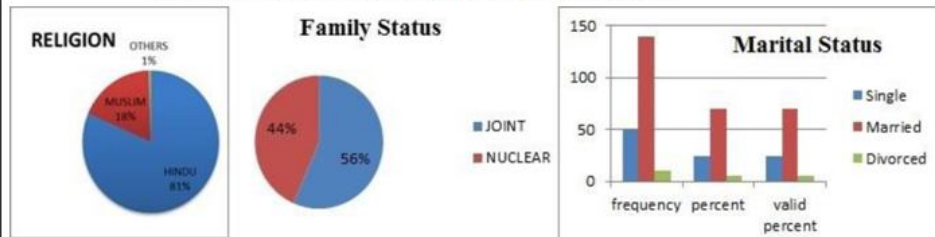


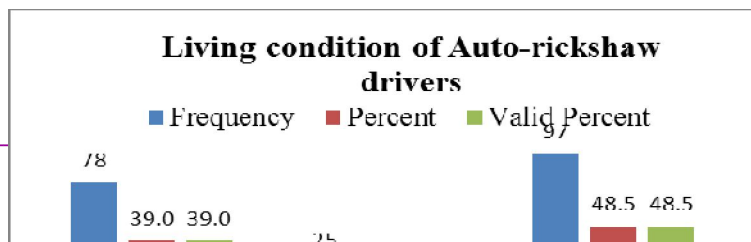
Figure 6: Graphical representation of Religion, Family status & marital status

**Living condition of Auto-rickshaw Drivers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Leased	3	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Make Shift Homes	1	0.5	0.5	2.0
	Owned	114	57.0	57.0	59.0
	Tenant	82	41.0	41.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 6: LIVING CONDITION OF AUTO-RICKSHAW DRIVERS

They are mostly between young age 26-35 years. The educational status of



the auto-rickshaw drivers is comparatively medium as 34.5% are madhyamik standard and 35.5% are higher secondary standard and only 8.5% are graduate. There have been noticed that 69.5% respondents are married, 25% are unmarried and 5.5% are divorced. So the respondents who are married and unemployed took this profession as their bread winnig for their family. From the religion perspective, in north calcutta the majority auto-rickshaw drivers 81.5% are hindu, rest are from muslim and other community. From the analysis, it is clear that 56.5% are living with joint family and 43.5% are from nuclear family. Though there is good no. of auto-rickshaw drivers 57% own their house but the 43% don't have own house. But the condition of house is quiet different according to result. Only 39% are having the concrete house in the citybut rest 12.5 % are having hut and 48.5 % live in tiled house. As per the basic amenities one should have hygienic shelter.

### C. SOCIAL SECURITY OF AUTO RICKSHAW DRIVERS:

a) **Any Insurance for Life or family:** Insurance is a financial instrument in which losses of few are compensated out of funds (insurance premium) collected from many insured (insurance policyholders). Insurance offers economic security for such losses arising out of happening of insured events e.g. in personal accident policy death due to accident. Insurance is assurance against instabilities of life. It gives money related recompense to misfortunes emerging out happening of unforeseen occasions, protected under the strategy of insurance. Insurance is no more ideal movement.

Any Insurance for Life or family					
Any Insurance for Life or family		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	114	57.0	57.0	100.0
	NO	86	43.0	43.0	43.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 7: ANY INSURANCE FOR LIFE OR FAMILY

b) **Status of RSBY (Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna):** The auto rickshaw drivers form an important segment of the unorganized workers in urban areas. The auto rickshaw drivers are registered presently by the State Transport Authorities. In order to enroll the auto drivers under RSBY, States have been requested to identify such auto rickshaw drivers and prepare their data in the format under RSBY. Owner driven Auto-rickshaw and auto drivers are also proposed to be covered under this scheme. Under the scheme, auto drivers have to contribute 50% of premium for the RSBY, as applicable in that district, in addition to Rs. 30/- as registration fee. Remaining 50% of premium would be shared by the Central and State Government i.e. 25% each.

RSBY					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	10	5.0	5.0	100.0
	NO	190	95.0	95.0	95.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 8 : STATUS OF RSBY



A health insurance scheme, **Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)** is being implemented by Ministry of Labour & Employment since 01.10.2007, providing for smart card based cashless health insurance cover of Rs. 30000/- per family per annum on a family floater basis to BPL families in the undersigned sector. RSBY coverage has now been extended to auto-rickshaw drivers in addition to various other categories of unorganized workers as per report 27-February-2014. But during research period, the data is collected and observed from the analysis that the little 5% respondents are included with the RSBY scheme. The govt. have no major action to cover RSBY among them.

**c) Report on financial inclusion of govt. introduced APY, PMJJBY and PMSBY for Auto-rickshaw Drivers:** A large proportion of India's population was without insurance like health, accidental or life. As well as young population ages, which is also going to be pension-less. For creation of universal social security system for all Indians Government of India announced insurance schemes **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana** (for Accidental Death and Disability), **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana** (for life insurance) and **Atal Pension Yojna** (for pension). These schemes were launched by Prime minister on 9 May 2015. **Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana** is national mission for financial inclusion by using technology to the extent possible to reach out to the beneficiaries, thereby plugging leakages in the system.

**APY** is a government-backed pension scheme in India targeted at the unorganized sector. It was originally mentioned in the 2015 Budget speech by Finance Minister in February 2015. It was formally launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9 May in Kolkata. The result is provided in the table that no auto-rickshaw drivers are included or modified for their future security.

**PMJJY**, the idea of social inclusion through financial inclusion is a new and innovative approach for Participation of larger section of the labourforce, irrespective of socio-economic background and regions in generation as well as accessibility of 'pro-poor' growth. This scheme basically challenges to give life insurance cover to the poor and under-privileged populace of the country. The scheme is available in the age group of 18-50years extending life cover up to 55years of age. Under it, life cover of Rs.2lakh is provided at a premium of Rs.330/annum or less than Rs.1/day. The nominee should have a saving bank account through which the participating banks will auto-debit the installment amount and transfer it to the concerned insurance company.

**PMSBY** is a life Insurance Scheme to provide insurance cover at minimal annual premium for death or disability by accidents. The risk coverage of the scheme for accidental death or full disability is Rs. 2 lakhs and for partial disability is Rs. 1 lakh.

VARIABLE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
APY -ATAL PENSION YOJANA	YES	1	0.5	0.5
	NO	199	99.5	99.5
PMJJY-PRADHAN MANTRI JEEVAN JYOTI BIMA YOJANA	YES	1	0.5	0.5
	NO	199	99.5	99.5
PMSBY- PRADHAN MANTRI SURAKSHA BIMA YOJANA	YES	0	0	0
	NO	200	100	100

**TABLE 9: REPORT ON FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF GOVT. INTRODUCED APY, PMJJBY AND PMSBY**

**d) Medical Assistance from Union:** Thus more than 95% of respondents admit that they never get help from the union in cases of illness. Though the union must be a source of great strength for the auto-rickshaw drivers as members of the unorganized sector and often working amidst hazy legal framework would otherwise have been quite helpless. The drivers / owners have no health insurance where union may be a source of relief for many. In case of sickness or accident during auto driving the medical assistance is provided on those cases only. The responses are formulated in table 9.

MEDICALASSISTANCE				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	YES	8	4.0	4.0	100.0
	NO	192	96.0	96.0	96.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Table 10: Medical assistance received by Auto-rickshaw drivers**

### 7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- ✚ This study was time consuming and expensive for the researcher; because of respondents to get the answers from the respondents.
- ✚ The respondents were not easily willing and availing themselves to give information to the researcher.
- ✚ At present, the political issues with auto-rickshaw drivers and the reckless activities are highlighted with paper and print media. In this period, collecting data was really difficult.

### 8. CONCLUSION:

Auto-rickshaw drivers in Calcutta are astonishing to note that even though incidents are on the rise by losing their fear of the police. Auto-rickshaw unions have hiked fares even though the state government is against such a move. Autos also frequently carry five passengers, flouting rules. Auto-rickshaw drivers have long earned the dubious distinction of being lords of the city's roads. Many of them do not even have proper permit and driving license. In spite of some sincere but belated efforts by the transport minister to rein in rogue auto-rickshaw drivers of the city, they continue to rule the roads. Such acts of bullying and audacious law-breaking by the auto-drivers reflect the socio-political scenario of Bengal irrespective of the political party at the helm.

There are two reasons for this growing menace. First, the government promotes private transport. There is a dearth of state buses, as a result of which commuters are forced to depend on private vehicles. This also leaves commuters at the mercy of the auto-rickshaws. Second, a section of the semi-literate youth is encouraged to take up auto-driving as a means of livelihood without prior training — which explains the rash driving. The unionized groups of drivers have been emboldened by the political patronage they enjoy. They have turned into a threat for the law-enforcers and the common people. The social security, building pattern, choosing auto-rickshaw driving as profession is resulted in addiction. The illegal permit and the unemployed youth both are increasing for economic stability which resultant as muddle economy. The study reveals the controversy between the govt. plans for the unemployed youth with the actual situation.

### 9. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Awareness to be created among Auto-Rickshaw drivers on social security scheme and social welfare provisions i.e. RSBY, APY, PMJJBY and PMSBY.
- BPL cards for Auto-Rickshaw drivers to be issued not owner.
- Auto-Rickshaw drivers are needed to be made aware about their rights other stakeholders needs to be sensitized about protecting and improving the conditions of work, living conditions and other aspects related to their family life.

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