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"Drive for Change: Investigating the Socio-Economic Landscape of Auto-Rickshaw Drivers in Panvel"

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	Abstract
	This study focus on the often overlooked yet critical socio-economic landscape of auto-rickshaw drivers in Panvel area. Auto-rickshaws serve as a lifeline for transportation in urban and suburban areas, and the drivers operating these vehicles constitute a vital but marginalized segment of society. The study is primarily based on primary source of information. For collection of primary data, we are using a schedule and interview method. The research aims to meticulously examine the multifaceted dimensions of auto rickshaw drivers and their socio-economic conditions, shedding light on their livelihoods, income levels, expenditure pattern, and other social aspects.
CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0	***Keywords: Transport, Economic scenario, Social Status, Services, etc.***

Introduction: -

The Socio- economic development of each community is equally important, in order to develop a country. Due to various reasons in the recent times, auto rickshaw drivers have been constantly being in news, be it high rates loans causing suicide, rising CNG prices, or selling of auto rickshaw because of not being able to bear household expense. Auto rickshaw drivers are deprived of various economic and social aspects. Government is also focusing this segment very rarely and very less policies are framed for their economic development and upliftment.

Rationale of the Study: -

For the development of a nation, it is important for each section of society to develop. One of the part, where various economic challenges has been observed is on the auto rickshaw driver side. An attempt is made here to find the roots of these problems.

Objective of the study: -

1. To study the economic status of auto rickshaw drivers in Panvel.
2. To study the level of social development of auto rickshaw drivers in Panvel.

Research Methodology: -

This study is primarily based on primary source of information. For collection of primary data, we are using a schedule and interview method. We are using survey, interview method for the purpose of collection of data.

Review of existing Literature: -

Nandini Rao, "Urban Informality and Livelihoods of Rickshaw Drivers in India" (2018): This study focus on the informal economy dynamics and the socio-economic challenges faced by auto-rickshaw drivers, shedding light on their precarious livelihoods within the urban context.
Ravi Kumar, "Income and Social Conditions of Auto-Rickshaw Drivers in Indian Cities" (2020): Kumar's research focuses on the income disparities and the interplay between social conditions and the economic status of auto-rickshaw drivers, providing a nuanced understanding of their socio-economic realities.
Priya Sharma, "Working Conditions and Health Challenges Among Auto-Rickshaw Drivers in Mumbai" (2019): Sharma's work highlights the working conditions and associated health challenges faced by auto-rickshaw drivers, emphasizing the need for improved occupational health support within this community.

Data Collection and Sampling: -

The study is based on primary as well as secondary information. For collection of primary data, we are using a schedule and interview method. We have prepared a schedule of selected questions and these questions were asked to respondents at the time of interview and data filled in these schedules. For secondary information we get the research papers, thesis related to our study area from the internet. Published reports of government of India, Maharashtra and Panvel area are being used. Books related to Socio-economic study of auto-rickshaw drivers in India are used as a secondary source. We have used random sampling for collection of information. For the purpose of collecting samples, following places were selected namely, Old Panvel, New Panvel, Adai and, Asudgaon. From these areas we have interviewed 100 auto-rickshaw drivers randomly. Data is collected, scrutinized, classified and tabulated. A pie chart is prepared for presentation of data.

Analysis of Data: -

1. Status of No. of Children
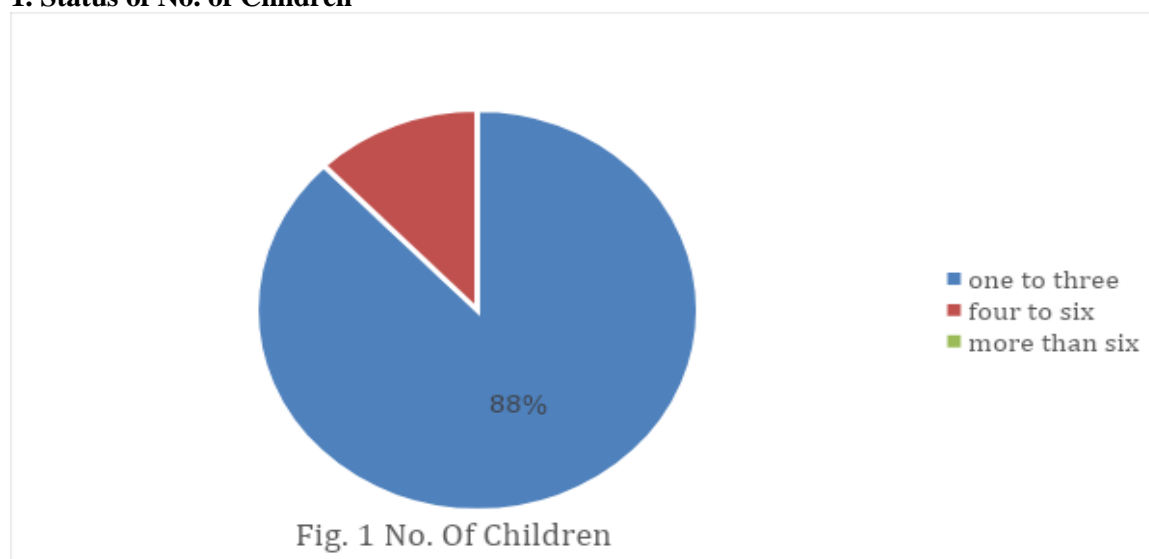
Source-Computed by authors on the basis of collection of primary data

We have considered family size for the study purpose. Out of 100 respondents we have interviewed and we have found that about 12 percent auto rickshaw drivers were having four to six children's. At the same time 88 percent respondents are having one to three children's.
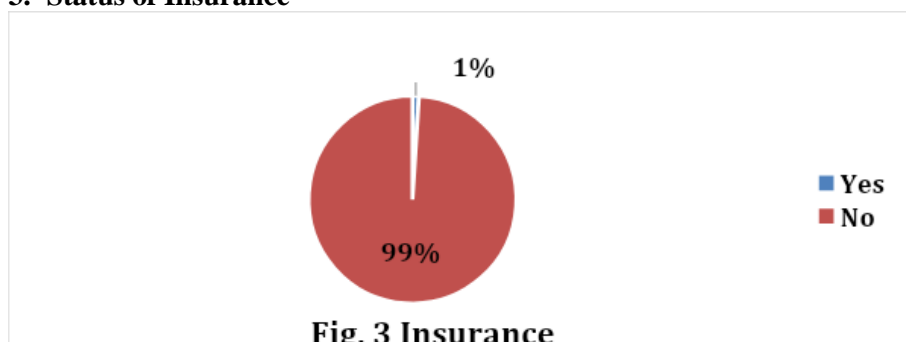
2. Status of education

Fig. 2 Educational Status
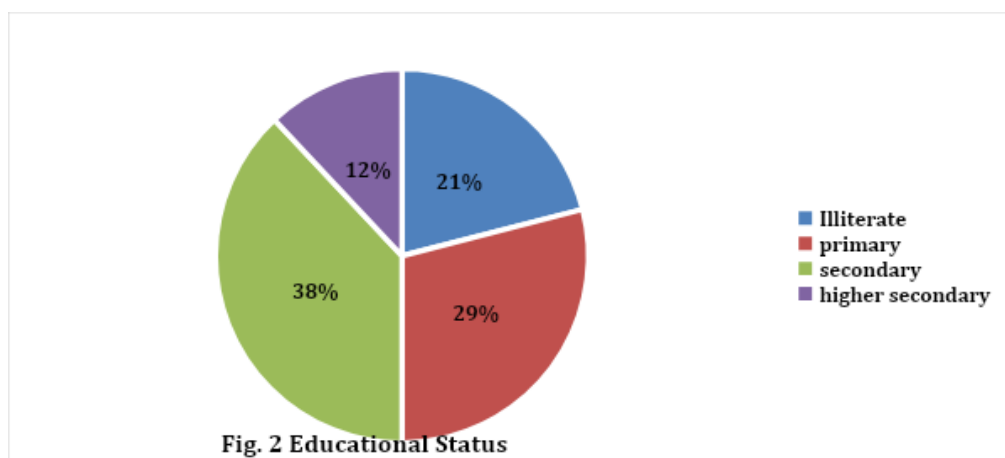
Source-Computed by authors on the basis of collection of primary data

Among the auto rickshaw drivers around 21 percent respondents out of 100 were not educated (Illiterate). At the same time 29 percent auto rickshaw drivers were acquired primary level education. Whereas 38 percent respondents were obtained education upto secondary level. Only 12 percent auto rickshaw drivers were obtained higher secondary education. It clearly indicates that there is no satisfactory education awareness among the respondents.

### 3. Status of Insurance

Fig. 3 Insurance

Source-Computed by authors on the basis of collection of primary data

Second socio-economic factor we have considered for study was the health insurance. It was observed that negligible awareness among the auto rickshaw drivers related to the health insurance.
We have asked this question to 100 auto rickshaw drivers and unfortunately only 1 percent respondents were having health insurance and rest were even not aware about it or some were aware about it but couldn't afford it as their income level is very low.

4. Status of Income

Fig. 4 Income
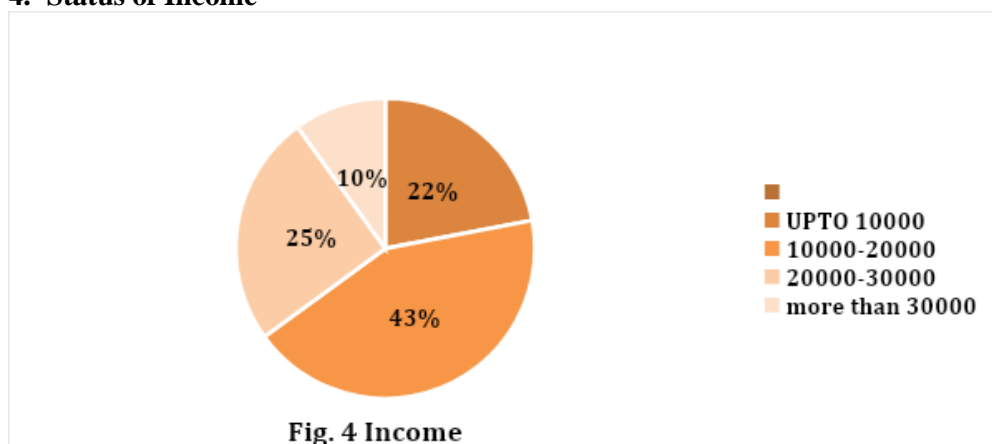
Source-Computed by authors on the basis of collection of primary data

The data we have compiled of auto rickshaw drivers related to the monthly income level indicating various levels. It indicates that 22 percent respondents are earning Upto Rs.10000 per month which is quite low and not allowing them to satisfy even their daily required necessities. At the same time around 43 percent respondents are earning between Rs.10000 and Rs.20000 per month. Around 25 percent auto rickshaw drivers are earning between Rs.20000 and Rs.30000 which is somewhere satisfactory than above income levels. Only 10 percent of respondents are earning more than Rs.30000 per month. In the lump, the income generated by running rickshaw is not much and restricting them from use of various goods and services too.
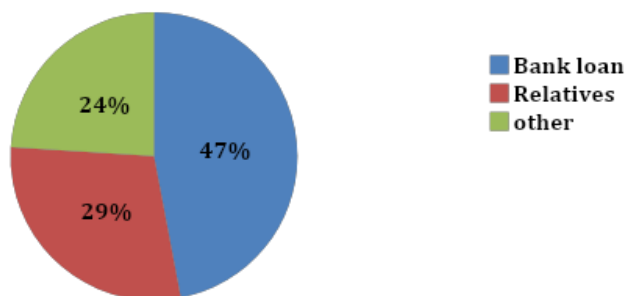
5. Status of Debt

Fig. 5 Debt

Source-Computed by authors on the basis of collection of primary data

As we have mentioned earlier that income level of auto rickshaw drivers were low. For satisfying the remaining need such as children's education, marriages, medical emergencies, etc. These respondents have obtained loans from various sources. Around 47 percent auto rickshaw drivers have taken debt from various banks.
At the same time 29 percent respondents have obtained loan from relatives where they have promised to pay high rate of interest. Beyond that 24 percent auto rickshaw drivers have obtained loans from other than banks and relatives.

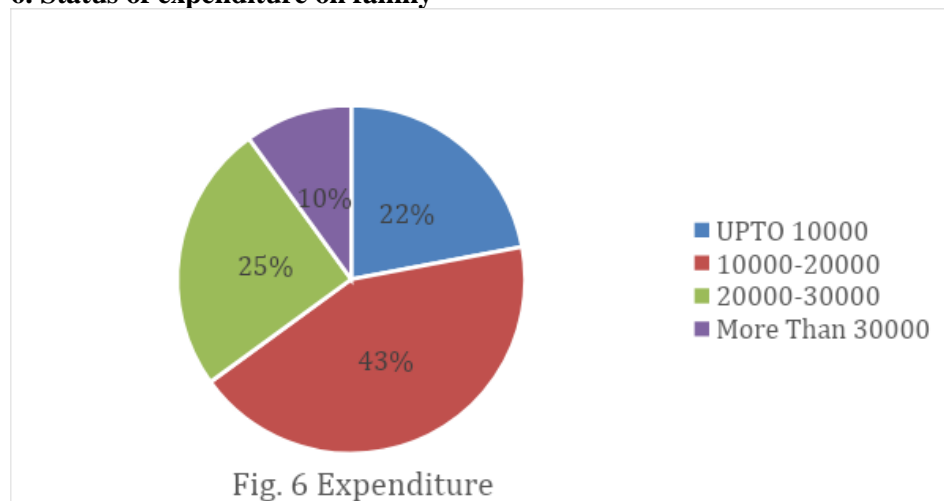## 6. Status of expenditure on family

Fig. 6 Expenditure

Source-Computed by authors on the basis of collection of primary data.

As we all know that income is deciding the expenditure volume of the person. We have already seen that income level is not much satisfactory. Around 22 percent auto rickshaw drivers are expending upto Rs.10000 per month which is significantly lower if we consider the inflation level. 43 percent respondents are spending between Rs.10000 and Rs.20000 per month which is comparatively greater than previous slab.

Around 25 percent respondents are spending between Rs.20000 and Rs.30000 per month. At the same time 10 percent auto rickshaw drivers are spending more than Rs.30000 per month.

Findings: -

1. 88 percent respondents are having one to three children's.
2. 21 percent respondents are illiterate.
3. All respondents are not having insurance except 1 respondent.
4. 22 percent of respondents are earning upto Rs.10000 per month.
5. 47 percent respondents have taken debt from various banks.
6. 22 percent auto-rickshaw drivers are spending upto Rs. 10000 per month.

Conclusion: -

The study showed the significance of acknowledging auto-rickshaw drivers as integral contributors to Panvel's transportation system, yet simultaneously recognizing their marginalized position within the socio-economic fabric. The basic reasons behind the social and economic backwardness of auto rickshaw drivers in the panvel area are lack of access to the basic services, no awareness, Illiteracy, limited income, more debt burden, etc. Conducted study focused at enhancing income stability, ensuring fair working conditions, and improving access to essential services like healthcare emerged as critical avenues for intervention.

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