



Auto-Rickshaw Drivers and Their Livelihood in Baglung, Nepal

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Abstract

This research paper analyzes the socioeconomic background and survival issues of auto rickshaw drivers of Baglung Bazaar both by quantitative and qualitative methods. Explanatory and exploratory sequential research is used. Survey, observation, interview and case study data and information were collected. The total 98 auto drivers were there, out of them 60 auto drivers were selected using a simple random sampling of Baglung Bazaar in the year 2024 to find out the facts of their livelihood after adopting this occupation. The aim is to provide voices in favor of legalizing rickshaws and e-rickshaws in the city, and provide policy suggestions on enhancing safety and efficiency. Massive fleet growth in the rickshaw sector has resulted in earnings crumbling and there is more traffic risk through over-competition. If properly controlled rickshaws, rickshaws would be able to serve an effective purpose in urban planning, gather government revenues, and enhance road infrastructure for transport. On the basis of assessment, the study identified the socio-economic impacts of diesel and battery rickshaws and validated that 80% of operators are content with the profession. Recommendations of the paper focuses to self-reliance, service quality, and addressing workforce migration to enhance livelihoods and guide policy formulation. More research must be done to formulate a regulatory framework. This study will be useful for future researchers and policymakers dealing with this problem.

Keywords: auto- rickshaw, Baglung, driver, household, livelihood

1. Introduction

Auto rickshaws are major contributors to the growing transport system in India, providing commuters an economical and handy way of travelling from one place to another. They are often hired anywhere at any time without prior booking and many drivers have private driver licenses. Online applications have introduced facilities for online bookings, charging the drivers by locations.

The term 'rickshaw' is native in the Japanese language, which means "a human-powered vehicle" (Singh, 2014). Rickshaws are stated to have emerged in Japan in 1868, when it was pulled by two poles protruding from a cabin that had been mounted on wheels. The first pedal rickshaws are said to have been invented in 1929 in Singapore when a bicycle was integrated into the body of a rickshaw (Kathmandu Post, 4 May, 2018). They entered Nepal in the mid-20th century. But since they were introduced to Nepal, rickshaws have received very little technology, and individuals still pedal them with their muscles. Minimal research on rickshaws has been conducted in Nepal.

In Baglung auto rickshaws are gradually on the increase, and the majority of drivers do not learn higher classes. Many of them are jobless because they are not highly educated, and that has brought a unhealthy competition among drivers to capture and hold clients. Public transport, particularly city and government buses, is the greatest competitor, and the majority of people travel in their own vehicles. Auto drivers are influenced by traffic rules, infrastructure, and health, which can negatively impact their earnings. They earn approximately RS 500-800 per day, but they don't receive as much as they spend. Studies have shown that auto drivers in Bangalore are financially hit with low returns and savings.

When electric rickshaws gained popularity as a mode of transport in Nepal's Terai region in 2015 (Pandey, 2017), a number of research journal and newspaper articles were published reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of electric rickshaws in detail. According to them, electric rickshaws are faster than pedal rickshaws, reduce physical exhaustion, facilitate more trips per day, and provide higher earnings to drivers. The positive impacts have been targeted towards employment opportunities, reduced transport costs, and enhanced transport sustainability, resulting in a rise in the number of rickshaws in most cities (ADB, 24 Apr. 2019). There are a host of concerns on the livelihood of Gandharva people of Baglung, who face discrimination based on caste, economy, health, education, and political representation (Panta, 2021). However, some of the problems are road traffic congestion, regulatory barriers, lack of policies affecting rickshaw pullers, and the government's inability to devise an appropriate management strategy for both motorized and e-rickshaws. There is not much research on e-rickshaw drivers' job satisfaction, despite the fact that several youths adopt this profession in order to fund their families.

Academics downplay the contribution of electric rickshaws and consequently overlook the need for studies on the stakeholders involved in the industry. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to identify various aspects of e-rickshaw drivers' livelihoods, including levels of satisfaction, incomes, and prior experience. Abuhashesh et al. (2019, p. 1) stated that even though everyone is on the same page regarding the presumption that work is fundamental to life, individuals perceive work differently. Natarajan (2014) further discussed the socio-economic status of auto-rickshaw drivers, the future and issues faced by stakeholders, and social organizations' role in transforming lives in Chennai, India.

He also explained that auto-rickshaw informal economies not only have socio-economic but also serious environmental problems. Abuhashesh et al. (2019) also suggested that some view their occupation solely as profitable, and some view it as that which determines social class. Different occupations are favored by individuals depending on choice or circumstance. Occupation selected through preference is selected by individuals with a higher satisfaction rate. Wiener and Klein (1978) and Chen (2006) came to the same conclusion that job-satisfied individuals are less likely to desire a change to different jobs. The Government of Nepal devised a draft policy in 2016 titled "Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy, 2073" under the Ministry of Population and Environment with a view to implementing clean energy policies to reduce the utilization of conventional and external energy through improved access to renewable energy to improve people's livelihoods and offer employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas.

Maintaining in mind the government's policy to promote clean energy in a bid to end poverty, provide jobs, address world environmental issues, and balance the growing cost of fossil fuels, electric rickshaws are part of the solution to these issues. Electric rickshaws currently constitute a huge part of the vehicles plying on rural and urban roads, and they are the mode of survival for many individuals. However, just like in any profession, driving an electric rickshaw also comes with its issues.

2. Methods and Materials

This study applied both by quantitative and qualitative methods. Explanatory and exploratory sequential research is used. Survey, observation, interview, questionnaire and case study data and information were collected. The total 98 auto drivers were there, out of them 60 auto drivers were selected using a simple random sampling of Baglung Bazaar in the year 2024 to find out the facts of their livelihood after adopting this occupation. Auto-rickshaw owners and drivers were surveyed, observed, interviewed and case studied through questionnaires as a means of gathering primary data. Secondary data were obtained from various books, journals, periodicals, and municipality profiles of respective institutions. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis of data was conducted, and tables were utilized to understand and interpret the results. The updated version of SPSS software was used in the current study.

2.1 Study Area

This study was conducted in Baglung Municipality. It was selected purposively as the research site among the four municipalities of Baglung District. It lies in the western side of Gandaki Province and was established as a municipal government in 1997 (Magh 18, 2053 BS). Its seat is situated in Baglung Bazaar. According to the population census of Nepal in 2021, the altitude is at 3,350 feet from sea level and is comprised of 14 wards. It has 15,182 households and 57,823 residents in this Municipality. Its area is 98.01 km² (37.84 sq. meters). The population density of Baglung Municipality is 589.97 (CBO, 2023).

3. Analysis and Findings

People are observed engaged in various sectors as a livelihood to them. Service businesses are found in a variety of industries, including manufacturing, retail, technology, finance, and healthcare, and in size from small hometown businesses to multinational corporations. Non-profit and for-profit organizations can both benefit from the same business practices, although there can be variations in their core goals and income streams. In this study, the analysis of the central parts of Baglung municipality by using microdata is made to present the situation of the auto-rickshaw service and their livelihood. The findings from the study have been presented by the following tables: The incidence of auto-rickshaws in Nepal imposed economic, social, traffic, and environmental implications.

This occupation yields greater revenue, generates self-employment, reduces pollution, undertakes economic functions, and creates entrepreneurial capability. The economic benefits are instant, and there is no need for experience (Ahmed et al., 2022). Therefore, this study is regarding the socio-economic impacts of auto-rickshaw in Baglung Bazaar. Auto-rickshaw owners and drivers are focused on this. SPSS software has been used for analysis. Perception of drivers towards profession has been measured based on five-points Likert Scale.

Table 1: *Socio-economic and demographic information of the respondents (N= 60)*

Factors	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	60	100
	Female	0.0	0.0
Marital status	Unmarried	12	20.0

	Married	38	80.0
Total		60	100.0
Age	Age 20-30 years	21	35.0
	Age 30-40 years	16	26.67
	Age 40-50 years	14	23.33
	Age 50 above years	9	15.0
Total		60	100.0
Education	Basic level	25	41.67
	Secondary level	23	38.33
	University education	11	18.33
Total		60	100.0
Family size	2-4 persons	24	40.0
	4-6 persons	25	41.67
	More than six persons	11	18.33
Total		60	100.0
Caste	Brahmin and Chhetri	12	20.0
	Janjati	17	28.33
	Dalit	31	51.67
Total		60	100.0
Monthly income (In Rs.)	15,000-30,000	15	25.0
	Above 30,000-50,000	35	58.33
	Above 50,000-70,000	7	11.67
	Above 70,000 up to one lakh	3	5.0
Total		60	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2024.*

Table 1 shows that the demographic information of the respondents in the study area was differ. All males were found to adopt auto-rickshaw driving profession. The respondents' participation in this profession having unmarried, aged 50 and above, university education and 2-4 persons in their family was found very low. Almost married aged 20-30 years' (35 %) and basic level education up-to eight class (61.67 %) found involving in auto-rickshaw driving. This table further shows that the family size having 4-6 persons took this profession as their main livelihood. This study also observed that 51.67 percent Dalit had created self-job. Similarly, 58.33 percent respondents found earning income above 30-50 thousand monthly from this profession in the study area.

Table 2: *Year of involvement, sources of fund and amount invested in Auto-rickshaw (N = 60)*

Particular Years	Frequency	Percent
Below one year	13	21.67
One year	11	18.33
Two years	28	46.67
More than two years	8	13.33
Total	60	100.0
Sources		
Banks	10	16.67
Cooperatives	34	56.67
Self-finance	16	26.66
Total	60	100.0
Amount invested (Rs. In Lakhs)		
Up to Three lakhs	6	10

Three lakh to Five lakhs	34	56.67
More than five lakhs	20	33.33
Total	60	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2024.*

Table 2 shows that the year of involvement in driving profession, sources of fund for auto-rickshaw purchase and amount invested. The respondents (21.67 %) were found involving in auto-rickshaw driving since one year. Almost of respondents said that they were adopting this profession as a self-job from two and more than two years. Recently, they were creating self-motive jobs for their livelihood in the study area. For this, about 56.67 percent auto-rickshaw drivers found taking loan form cooperative source and followed by self-finance (26.66 %). Only 16.67 percent respondents used the sources of fund from banks. Similarly, of the respondents, 33.33 percent found investing five lakhs and more than five lakhs in auto-rickshaw purchase for self-employment generation within their area.

Table 3: *Types of auto rickshaw and appropriate season for business (N = 60)*

Particular Types	Frequency	Percent
Electric	12	20.0
Petrol	48	80.0
Total	60	100.0
Appropriate seasons		
Dashain and Tihar festivals	21	35.0
Marriage season	15	25.0
Chaite dashain and mahotsab	24	40.0
Total	60	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2024.*

Table 3 shows mainly auto-rickshaw and appropriate season for the business in the study area. As per the findings, auto-rickshaws with petrol are more popular (80 %) than those with electric auto-rickshaws (20 %). The drivers play a crucial role in travelling under the informal economy of service sector, the Auto Drivers entered this profession with a hope of earning an honest income for leading their life, some Drivers were partially involved in other works with their interested area (Tigari & Santhosh, 2020). Baglung Festival and fest (*Chaite Dashain and Mahotsab*) (40 %) was found the most popular season for the driving activities, followed by Dashain and Tihar festivals (35%). Of the total, Marriage season (25 %) was found the least important for these activities.

Table 4: *Motivational factors and satisfaction level with the profession (N = 60)*

Particular Factors	Frequency	Percent
Unemployment	16	26.67
Self-motive	14	23.33
Family	18	30.0
Society	12	20.0
Total	60	100
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	61.67
No	23	38.33
Total	60	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2024.*

According to the findings mentioned in the Table 4, family was more prevalent (30%) motivational factors than the others. Of the total, self-motive factors covered 23.33 percent, followed by unemployment (26.67 %), and the least important factor was considered society

(20 %) in the study area. Similarly, 61.67 percent respondents were satisfied with their driving profession. In this context, switching intention of e-rickshaw drivers means their willingness to change their occupation Locke (1976) had defined job satisfaction as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's occupation or occupational experiences.

People had adjusted to the marginal resources in the neoliberal economic context and faced many problems. They were inclined to change their traditional professions to boating, firewood selling, gold mining, and fishing. Globalization forces them to make changes to their livelihoods. Modern transport facilities and meager incomes are not sufficient to fulfill their basic needs. They suffer from social, economic, and physical problems in their daily lives (Panta, 2022). Employee job satisfaction and their desire to change careers are inversely correlated. This indicates that higher levels of satisfaction in their current roles lead to a decreased likelihood of employees seeking alternative employment. The factors contributing to this job satisfaction extend beyond the nature of the work itself; they also include elements such as the work environment, relationships with supervisors and colleagues, corporate culture, and management practices.

Table 5: *Challenges of auto-rickshaw driver (N = 60)*

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Legal challenge	15	25.0
Weather and parking	15	25.0
Unhealthy competition and fare	8	13.33
Road safety and Traffic	10	16.67
Occupational challenge	12	20.0
Total	60	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2024.*

Table 5 presents the challenges faced by auto-rickshaw drivers in their profession. Of the total, 40 percent respondents were found facing legal challenges, followed by legal challenge and weather and parking (25%). As per the responses of the respondents, they also faced unhealthy competition and occupational challenges in the profession, but occupational challenges found only 10 percent. Auto drivers' socioeconomic backgrounds were neither favourable nor unfavourable. E-rickshaw drivers considered the traffic and the condition of the road as the most problematic factor in their occupation and livelihood. All the vehicle owner's timely payment of road tax, renewal of permit of the vehicles to the concerned authorities are major problem (Rai, 2019). Auto rickshaw were the convenient way of transportation within the cities and most of the people are trusted their day to day life activities of travelling from the place to their destination (Tigari & Santhosh, 2020). The most common problems they face are "the condition of the road" and "traffic problems" (Rai, 2019). Their job was a source of moderate job satisfaction for them. Furthermore, a large number of people really on the services of auto drivers, who contribute to economic activity (Tigari & Santhoshi, 2020). This research also found the same.

The study highlighted some barriers such as poor physical and mental well-being, disrespect in the profession, lack of adequate time for family, lack of adequate proper time for social activities etc. The drivers were not that well-educated, and although they were earning an honest living in the community, the auto drivers were facing a lot of issues in the workplace, including health issues, poor infrastructure facilities, and traffic management (Tigari & Santhosh, 2020). In spite of some barriers in the profession, respondents highlighted recommending this to others for self-worth in the society as a revolutionary potentialities of self-employment job in the society.

Marriage and livelihood are financially strained 30-40. Marriage and living because of childbearing and providing education to their children. Education at the basic level leads to

taking up auto-rickshaw occupation to fulfill basic requirements. Family size is 4–6. Therefore, economic burden leads to this profession. Experience is 2 years: almost all of them took up this profession after marriage and struggled for livelihood. Due to easy accessibility to avail loan from co-operatives rather than bank. More than 5 lakhs had been invested for this work. Encouragement of family members towards involvement in one's own line of work and country. Dalit people were here working the job compared to other individuals. 50,000 is monthly salary although there are many problems and opportunities for self-employment with this occupation. Before taking this job, there was severe situation to meet up the expenditures of daily but after starting of this job by and by it becomes easy.

3.1 Participant Perception on Livelihood Before and After Business

An employee's intention to voluntarily change jobs or firms is called switching intention or turnover intention, as per Schyns, Torka, and Gossling (2007). The tendency of e-rickshaw drivers to change careers is termed here as their switching intention. An employee's intention to voluntarily change jobs or firms is called switching intention or turnover intention, as per Schyns, Torka, and Gossling (2007). The e-rickshaw drivers' intention to switch careers in this regard has been referred to as switching intention. On this, one of the participants expressed as follows:

Biraj Kishan is a middle-aged worker who, like thousands of Nepal was forced to go back to his home country from Malaysia after he was poisoned by working there. He had spent his hard-earned money to buy an electric rickshaw so that he could sustain his family. Angry after he came to know that Baglung Municipality had arbitrarily imposed a quota on electric rickshaws after he had already bought the rickshaw. So, he faced trouble to register his electric rickshaw. Shortly, he was frequently harassed by traffic police, and was compelled to pay hefty bribes again and again. He had to drive carefully from the police to repay his loan timely like other people. This is one of such tales in Baglung.

As per details by Locke (1976), job satisfaction is the pleasurable affective state that one experiences as a consequence of evaluation of one's work or occupational activities. It is widely known that individuals with high job satisfaction are likely to have a positive job attitude, whereas those who are dissatisfied with their jobs are likely to have a negative job attitude. French (1982) and Tziner and Vardi (1984) have defined occupational satisfaction as an excellent response or adjustment to a wide range of conditions or aspects of one's job, such as pay, supervision, working conditions, and/or the work. There are, of course, some work-related aspects which can ensure occupational satisfaction, such as supervision, remuneration, opportunities for promotion, fellow workers, etc.; the nature of the work itself typically proves to be the most crucial occupational factor (Judge & Church, 2000). Rickshaws are the primary mode of travel in most Indian and Nepali cities. Yet there has been little reference to rickshaws or the drivers of rickshaws in scholarly literature. Despite this shortcoming, Jan Breman, a researcher who has worked on this mode of transport, writes that users of this mode of transport are found in the unorganized sector (1983, p. 165). Operating an auto rickshaw is men's work in Baglung. Among the rickshaw drivers themselves, also relationships become stronger in the city, on the basis of city experience in the city, such as participating in festivals and having meals together.

3.2 Participant Perception on this Occupation and Livelihood

Ramesh Kishan was a man, approximately 45 years of age when the researchers met him, who had been driving an auto rickshaw Baglung Bazaar for three years. To be able to remain in Baglung and to be a man required this work for him. Though Ramesh worked as an auto driver, this was quite a rare occurrence amongst the rickshaw drivers, the researchers meeting him acknowledged the fact that the work involved lots of problems. For example, there

was such a significant increase in uncertainty when it came to how much money he would make in a day. Moreover, like the rest of the rickshaw drivers, whenever we met him, he did not have any savings and no readily apparent reserve capital. If he falls sick or has to return to his village. Ramesh told us that on an average each day, he would be able to earn Rs. 1000-1,500. Even to earn that amount will require a lot of effort and hard work. There were no guarantees that if a person worked for 10-12 hours, one would really earn any money at the end of it. It was actually possible to incur a loss if too few trips were taken on a specific day. In so many ways, Ramesh and his friends stood apart from the other youth that we met in my fieldwork: they discussed freely and openly different aspects of their lives. They showed a sort of callousness and near disdain for the cost their bodies paid due to their line of work, despite the fact that their bodies were their source of livelihood.

Ramesh's life highlights in stark relief the tension between rickshaw pullers' bodies and their self-destructive habits, which appear all the more poignant against the background of unorganized work. Ramesh yes, definitely had physical effects; he can work with this, being a saving person, and he cannot eat it. He is exposed to various things, things that can enhance the chances of getting sick: water and cigarettes. He knew about the danger, but he understood the most important thing. His work he faced was his bad dinner, and he could not do anything. Mary Searle Chatterjee sees these kinds of questions for Brooklyn street cleaners: "We might say that those on the bottom] have less regard for their bodies, less interest in suburbia" (1981 p. 70). This is ironic because we can imagine those upon whose existence their bodies are dependent, Searle Chatterjee's sweepers, or in this case, rickshaw drivers, will take an initiative to protect themselves and go ahead with their ongoing activities. Rickshaw drivers are part of Janajati masculinity.

Their bodies are integral components of such a group of rickshaw drivers' achievements. Relative frailty in bodies of some men set them further apart from ideal form of body and presumed physical capability (Wienke 1998). Younger drivers were most troubled with conflict between body and ideal vision of the successful rickshaw driver. The more success the younger drivers gained, the better their fit between bodies and expectation.

4. Discussion

The incorporation of pain within this discussion helps us to better understand aspects of masculinity through the male body and control of the body.

Victor Seidler has approached the very same question, noting that "men must prove their masculinity by showing that they can endure pain" (2006, p. 7). Pain management is one of the ways through which rickshaw drivers build and reproduce an ideal image of embodied masculinity. Most of the rickshaw drivers informed me that driving through pain and not paying attention to it all day was also an important aspect of survival and success. Being tired or expressing pain was to express weakness, which once again worked to lower the amount of success financially and in relative standing among other rickshaw drivers. Hurt is part of the job and being a rickshaw puller. Connell proposes, "The unskilled labourer has essentially one commodity to put on the market: his bodily capacity for labour" (2000 p.64).

Mary Searle-Chatterjee discusses these issues concerning road sweepers in Benares, she states "One might say there is less respect for the body [for those at the bottom of society as well as less concern for its margins" (1981 p. 70). This seems paradoxical since one would instinctively believe that those who survive by means of their bodies alone (sweepers, in the case of Searle-Chatterjee, or rickshaw pullers, in this case), would look after themselves so that they can continue with the same work. There has been work on the topic of renewable energy, but nothing has been attempted on this aspect; namely, the job satisfaction of the electric rickshaw driver.

Most of the young people of today opt for this as a profession to maintain their family income. The critical contribution of an electric rickshaw in establishing self-employment in the Nepalese context is underestimated to a large extent by the researchers, and its magnitude was hence missed. Hence, conducting research related to the stakeholders of e-rickshaws seemed useless. This research hopes to look into the various aspects of e-rickshaw drivers like their level of satisfaction, income, and history. The titles of means of transport commonly known as rickshaw differ from country to country.

In Cambodia and Egypt, it is known as tuk-tuk. It is known as car in Bangladesh, Kiki Marwa in Nigeria, Boda-bodas in East Africa, and Bentor in Indonesia (Ahmed et. al. 2022). The study found that the reason for the growth of auto-rickshaw in Egypt is unemployment. Because of the growth of auto-rickshaw, the crime rate, growth of violence and rape were on the rise but it occurred in remote areas and the victim got only the driver. The study concludes that the auto-rickshaws are the solution within reach to close the gap between transport and individual vehicles. Auto-rickshaw, or tuk-tuk, is the major way of making a living and being employed. Thirty million citizens make use of it daily, three million jobs are provided by it and six million citizens consider this profession as the main way of making a living in Egypt (Ahmed et. al. 2022). A study by Rahim et.al (2013) revealed that battery-operated auto rickshaws are bringing a positive impact on income, social status, comfort and environment, and unemployment is reduced in Rajshahi, Bangladesh where it was one of the largest problems. Auto-rickshaw reduces this problem by two percent in Rajshahi city, Bangladesh. The authors also revealed that air pollution is a great threat to human health where auto-rickshaw transport reduces this threat there.

The research revealed that tuk-tuks have created adverse impacts on the social, environmental, traffic, and economic spheres of the Egyptian society. Almost 49 percent of the tuk-tuk operators ignore the laws and regulations offered by the government. The safety rate within the tuk-tuk versus public transport has been higher. Despite this, Tuk-tuks are a significant source of revenue for owners, leaders, technicians, merchants and dependent families in Egypt. The elevated level of unemployment among youngsters in slums area, the possibility of buying at cheaper cost, and the refusal of fees or taxes by the tuk-tuks owner to comply with the Egyptian governments, this generates exceedingly high spread (Ahmed et. al. 2022). Auto-rickshaws have a significant influence on city transportation and reduce unemployment rates by providing self-employment (Rahim et al, 2013). The profession was adopted by auto-rickshaw drivers expecting a decent income.

The drivers also experienced health, infrastructure and other transport-related problems. Opportunity cost, family size and operation cost were found to influence drivers' earnings. Battery-operated auto-rickshaws are now in vogue owing to their affordability and convenience (Tigari & Santhosh, 2020). A survey on the environmental, traffic, social, and economic impacts of the auto-rickshaw on Egyptian roads carried out by Ahmed et et.al. (2022) concluded that 71.17 percent of clients are offended with the fares of auto-rickshaws, 59.33 percent of commuters are dissatisfied with the age of auto-rickshaw drivers, 33 percent are afraid of traffic accidents, and 72 percent completely oppose the presence of auto-rickshaws on roads.

The returns on the investment of running an auto-rickshaw are instant, fleeting, and need not involve any prior experience. The two to three individuals can be accommodated in the small vehicle. Now, it is common in many cities of the world but they are in developing state. In Nepal, it has been cost and comfort travel in urban and village urban areas. Tigari & Santhoshi (2020) narrate the socio-economic and employment conditions of the auto-rickshaw drivers in Nepal. Through the study, it was ascertained that auto-rickshaws are the convenient means of transportation and play a critical role in movement under the service sector's hidden economy.

They are not well educated who are engaged in the auto-rickshaw line of work but are living a truthful life among their community and engaged in partially other activities. He also mentioned that the auto-drivers had various issues in the workplace, such as health issues, no traffic control, no infrastructure facilities, and unhealthy rivalry among two-wheelers and city buses, which affected their steady earnings. In auto-rickshaw profession, there was unstable income pattern, insecure working conditions and absence of legal protection (Ojha, 2024). The report of socio-economic status of auto-rickshaw driver was very poor and miserable; no employment security and welfare benefits; and the percentage of auto rickshaw driver belonged predominantly to backward castes.

Heinberg (2011) concluded that the cost of developing new capacity to extract oil has risen exponentially. \$20 per barrel oil prices were profitable in 2000, but now \$60 to \$80 per barrel prices are required to incentivize drilling in most locations. Concerns about global warming from the consumption of fossil fuels are also rising. Scientists and organizations like Souza and the International Energy Agency state that non-renewable sources of energy contribute towards a 60% percentage of greenhouse gas emissions, and for this purpose, a great necessity exists to reduce carbon emissions for climate targets. In support of this, Nepal's Ministry of Population and Environment formulated the "Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy, 2073" in 2016 for supporting clean energy, reducing fossil fuel use, improving livelihoods, and creating employment opportunities at the rural level. Electric rickshaws are seen as a solution to these issues.

Sarakikya (2015) indicated that energy security is crucial to ensuring the economic and political stability of a country, which plays a role in achieving sustainable development. The United Nations' SDGs put a big focus on the provision of modern and reliable energy to all people. Energy is either renewable or non-renewable energy, but the widely utilized non-renewable energies are fossil fuels. They are unsustainable because they run out and harm the environment.

Rai (2019) found that male e-rickshaw drivers earn more average daily than female drivers. Drivers of lower educational level earn more average daily. In addition, overseas returnee drivers earn the most compared to other drivers with different experiences. The average monthly increment among e-rickshaw drivers also shows astounding differences. Schyns, Torcka, & Gössling. (2007). Indicated that both constructs (readiness for change, turnover intention) are, to a certain extent, related and display, to a certain extent, similar relationships with antecedents.

Wiener & Klein. (1978), We had forecast that congruence of vocational interests with current job would be positively related to job satisfaction in long job-tenured employees, but uncorrelated for short job-tenured workers. For two samples of 54 and 47 middle managers, the hypothesis was verified regarding satisfaction with supervision and work. This differential set of correlations explains the mixed association between vocational interest and job satisfaction reported by prior studies.

Auto rickshaws in Mumbai provide door-to-door transport and act as a feeder to public transport and have 9% of train users going to the stations by using them. However, there are still some problems with the current system from the passenger's, driver's, and government's perspective. Subendiran (2014) discusses the auto-rickshaw informal economies as a social and economic problem, as well as an ecological problem. Anitha Ramachander's 2015 study on the financial well-being of auto drivers in Bangalore found low earnings and savings, highlighting the relationship between education and financial well-being. Emma Shlaes & Akshay Mani's 2013 study on the auto rickshaw sector in Mumbai highlighted the challenges faced by passengers, drivers, and the government. Subendiran's 2014 study on the informal economies of auto-rickshaws highlighted the socio-economic condition of drivers,

the challenges faced by stakeholders, and the role of social organizations in transforming lives in Palani.

Rajesh Ranjan (2015) investigates the relationship between work-life balance and quality of life among auto-rickshaw drivers in Mumbai. The study highlights the deteriorating condition of these drivers and suggests that those who prioritize family over work experience a higher quality of life. Akshay P Shinde (2012) highlights the issue of inadequate road-based public transport services and a culture of tolerance, leading to traffic congestion, pollution, and stress-related travel problems. Aparna Mani & Pallavi (2011) examines the political economy affecting the auto-rickshaw system in Mumbai, examining factors involved and the reasons for imposing regulations. The authors suggest replacing existing three-seater auto-rickshaws with larger ones to promote shared traveling.

Illiteracy was a common factor because of the poverty and low income of auto-rickshaw drivers. Based on participants' feedback, there are a number of accidental hazards in the workplace. The working environment for auto-rickshaw drivers has been concluded to be poor (Ojha, 2024). Occupational satisfaction has been described as a general attitude towards work or as a collection of attitudes towards different dimensions of the profession. French (1982), Kovach (1977), and Tziner and Vardi (1984) define occupational satisfaction as an emotional response to a number of aspects of employment, including pay, supervision, working conditions, and work itself. Farmers and students have benefited extensively from this eco-friendly vehicle, which is relatively inexpensive. E-rickshaws have also become an affordable and cost-effective mode of transport for farmers, who are now utilizing them to transport their produce to the market (Kathmandu Post, May 4, 2018). Thus, it is observed that the majority of drivers of auto-rickshaw use shuttle system and found to create congestion on city roads.

5. Conclusion

The profession of driving an auto rickshaw contributes positively to the livelihood factors of Baglung Bazar. From the study, it was noted that all drivers were male, predominantly married, aged between 30 and 40 years old, with their basic education completed up to eighth grade. They had 4-6 members in their families and had taken up this vocation in the study area. Dalits were found to be creating self-employment for their living, which was motivating others in the vicinity. The socio-economic condition of workers from this sector was found to be good, with sixty percent of the auto rickshaw drivers having an income ranging from Rs. 30,000 to 50,000 per month. In Baglung Bazar, most of the auto rickshaws were petrol-run and drivers had invested more than five lakhs on them from cooperative sources. The driving profession was most profitable during Chaite Dashai and Mahotsab. It was also found in the research that a high percentage of auto rickshaw drivers belonged to Dalit castes based on marital status, education, and family size. It showed significant livelihood factors such as income, consumption, health, education, repayment of loan, saving, and changes in investment before and after working in the profession.

Common issues of this profession included health issues, road safety issues, poor parking, traffic obstacles, legal obstacles, financial insecurity, devaluation by society, lack of vehicle insurance, and poor medical facilities. It is recommended that policymakers, local government authorities, communities, stakeholders, and transport authorities join hands to improve the livelihoods and socio-economic well-being of auto rickshaw drivers. This involves providing equal opportunities, job security, welfare benefits, and dignified working conditions. Reforms include opening up tracks and auto parks, developing an easy loan scheme, providing insurance facilities, medical services, operating driving literacy courses, rewarding, welfare offers by local authorities, and granting tax-free facilities for some time, particularly during repayment of loan. These steps can encourage people to adopt self-employment avenues in the locality, eventually minimizing the cause of brain drain in the region.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate:

We declare that this research has been conducted ethically.

Consent for Publication:

Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials:

The data will be available upon request.

Competing Interests:

There are no individuals, groups, or agencies with competing interests.

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