# AN ECONOMIC STUDY ON THE E-RICKSHAW DRIVERS: WITH REFERENCE TO ENGLISH BAZAR MUNICIPALITY AREA, MALDA

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**ABSTRACT:** The main town of Malda District is Malda Town whose alternative name is English Bazar. A large number of people of this Town live in urban slums and they are basically engaged in unorganised sector. Hawking, rickshaw pulling, e-rickshaw driving are the main source of earning of these people. Urban as well as rural poor people are coming to this town to run e-rickshaw for maintaining their livelihood. It is significant to know the economic status of the people of this area. The main objective of this study is to know the demographic profile of the e-rickshaw drivers, the socio economic background of the e-rickshaw drivers and to know the relationship among different socio-economic variables. The study is based on primary data. The data have been collected randomly from different e-rickshaw halts. 300 data have collected within the town. Then the data have been analysed. For different statistical calculations IBM SPSS version 20 has been used. It is found from the study that the drivers within the age group of 36-45 are 40.3% which is highest. 39.3% drivers are below Madhyamik passed and 16.7% are illiterate. Most of the drivers' father is illiterate (65.7%). Their average earning per day is Rs 500-700. The correlation coefficient between respondents' education level with their father's educational level is 0.606. According to the response of the respondents most of the e-rickshaw drivers are satisfied with this profession. But the cause of concern is that there is no sufficient future protection plan like LIC, Medical insurance, recurring or fixed deposits, gold ornaments etc. for their sustainability. It is found from the study that there is no rout demarcation, fare chart, plying time, compulsory saving for future replacement etc.

KEYWORDS: E-rickshaw, unemployment, education, savings, earnings, correlation.

**INTRODUCTION:** one of the most important economic activities in informal sector is E-rickshaw driving. A large number of people from rural and urban areas are engaged in this profession for maintaining their livelihood. The main objective of this study is to know the socio economic condition of the people who are engaged in this informal sector. Since 2015 a large number of e-rickshaw drivers are engaged in this profession. In recent years the e-rickshaw driving trend has been increasing and it becomes a very important activity in informal economy where poor rural migrants as well as poor urban people are taking benefits of this profession. E-rickshaw driving activity reduces the unemployment problem to some extent in English bazaar municipal area. A large number of educated unemployed people of English bazaar municipal area are taking this profession for maintaining their livelihood. People who were engage in cycle rickshaw pulling earlier now few of them are engaged in e-rickshaw driving. It takes lesser time and toil as compared to pulling cycle rickshaw. People do not ride on cycle rickshaw due to higher fare and lesser comfort ability as compared to e-rickshaw. So the traditional rickshaw pullers are forced either to buy e-rickshaw or to hire e-rickshaw on per day rent basis. This activity helps to develop the rural as well as urban economy.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:** The main town of Malda District is Malda Town whose alternative name is English Bazar. It is situated in the bank of Mahananda River. It has been established in 1868. It faces huge population pressure. According to the census report 2011 total population of English Bazar Municipality is 205521 out of which 106824 are male and 98697 are female. Literacy rate of this town is 86.46%. People of different religion live in this town viz. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain. About 86.95% people are from Hindu and Muslim is 11.02% of the total population of the Municipality. Total geographical area of this town is 13.25 square kilometres and the population density is 15511 per square kilometre.

According to the census report 2011, the English Bazar Municipality has a total slum population is 61053 out of which 31832 are male and 29161 are female. Most of them are engaged in unorganised sector. Rickshaw pulling, e-rickshaw driving and hawking are the main source of income of the male members of

this area. Female members of this area work as maidservant at different houses. Maximum people of this slum area came from neighbouring country Bangladesh. They depend on this unorganised sector for everyday living, for education of their children, for medicine of their dependents, for daughter's marriage etc.

**OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY:** The main objectives of this study are as follows:

1) To know the demographic profile of e-rickshaw driver within English Bazar Municipality
2) To know the socio economic background of the e-rickshaw driver.
3) To know the relationship among different socio economic variables.

**METHODOLOGY:** The study is based on primary data. The data have been collected from different e-rickshaw halts. There are many e-rickshaw halts within the municipal area like 420 mor, Rathbari mor, post office mor, sonoscan mor, tulsi mor, Malanchapally mor, Rabindravavan mor, Hantakali mor, Gour road mor, LIC mor etc. The e-rickshaw drivers are frequently circulated within the town. I select the different halts from the survey area. A written questionnaire was formed and on the basis of this questionnaire each respondent was requested to give the answer according to the question. After getting the response the answer is noted down instantly. Some drivers did not respond because they feel that I am checking something. Sometimes I made them motivated to respond. I met with 520 drivers and finally 300 responses came out. The response rate is 57.69%. All sample units were chosen randomly. For different statistical calculations IBM SPSS version 20 has been used. Some secondary sources like books, journals, Websites are also used.

**RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS:** It is found from the study that 67% of the e-rickshaw drivers were from within the town and 33% were from outside the town. 80.7% of the respondents were married and 19.3% were unmarried.

**Table 1: Frequency of Age of the respondents**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Below 25 | 41 | 13.7 | 13.7 | 13.7 |
| | 26-35 | 104 | 34.7 | 34.7 | 48.3 |
| | 36-45 | 121 | 40.3 | 40.3 | 88.7 |
| | 46-55 | 20 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 95.3 |
| | Above 55 | 14 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

It is found from the table 1, the respondents are largest within the age group of 36-45 that is middle aged and its percentage is 40.3%. 11.4% of the respondents are above 45 years of age and 48.4% are below 36 years of age.

Table 2:

**Frequency of family size of the respondents**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | 2-4 | 61 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 20.3 |
| | 5-7 | 185 | 61.7 | 61.7 | 82.0 |
| | Above 7 | 54 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

The table 2 shows that 20.3% of the respondents' family size is 2-4 members, 61.7% of the respondents' family size is 5-7 members and 18% respondents' family size is above 7 members. Most of the e-rickshaw drivers are from nuclear family.

Table 3:

**Educational Qualification of the driver**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Illiterate | 50 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 16.7 |
| | Below Madhyamik | 118 | 39.3 | 39.3 | 56.0 |
| | Madhyamik | 53 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 73.7 |
| | Higher Secondary | 29 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 83.3 |
| | Graduate | 47 | 15.7 | 15.7 | 99.0 |
| | Post Graduate | 3 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

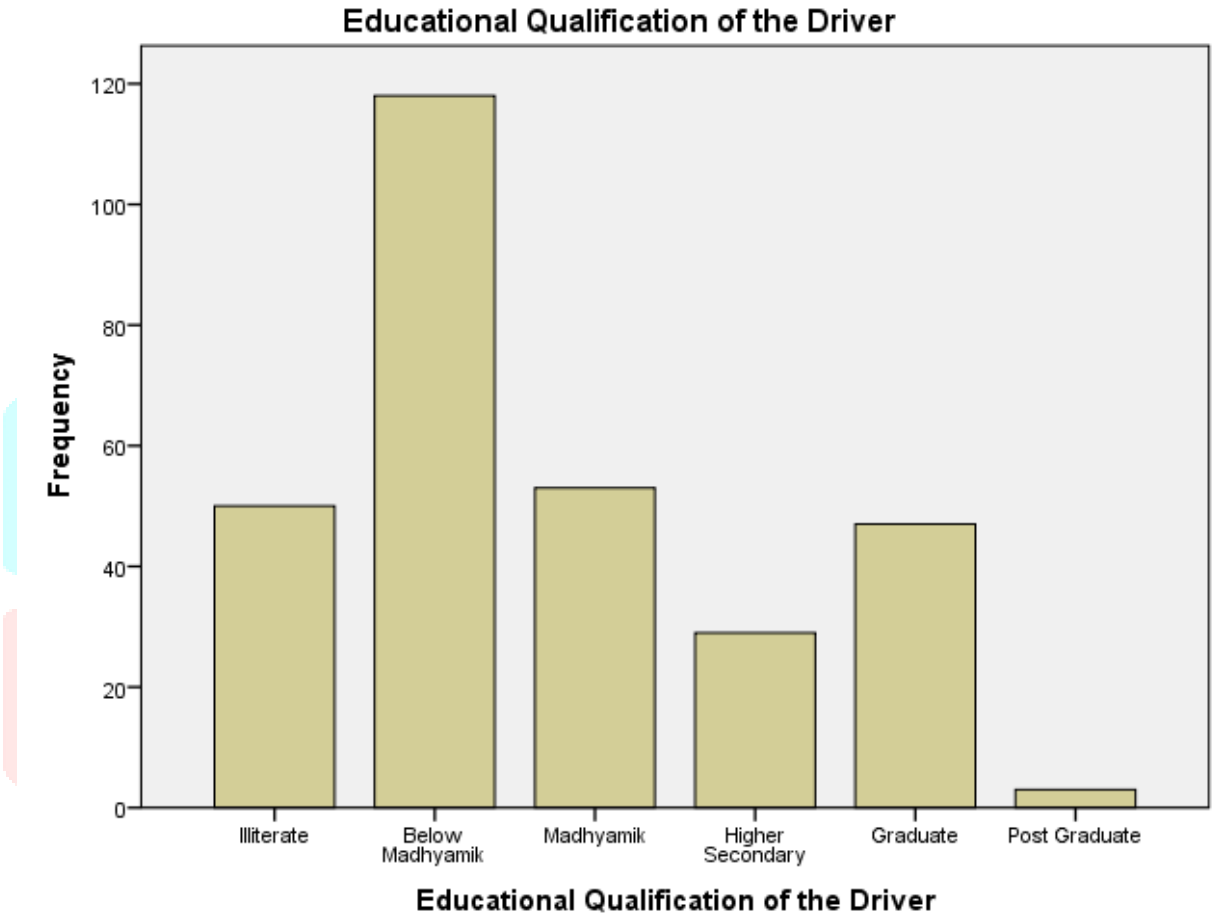



Table 3 shows the frequency of educational qualification of the e-rickshaw drivers. 16.7% are illiterate who do not even able to sign his name. 39.3% are below Madhyamik, 17.7% are Madhyamik , 9.7% are Higher Secondary passed and 15.7% are Graduate.

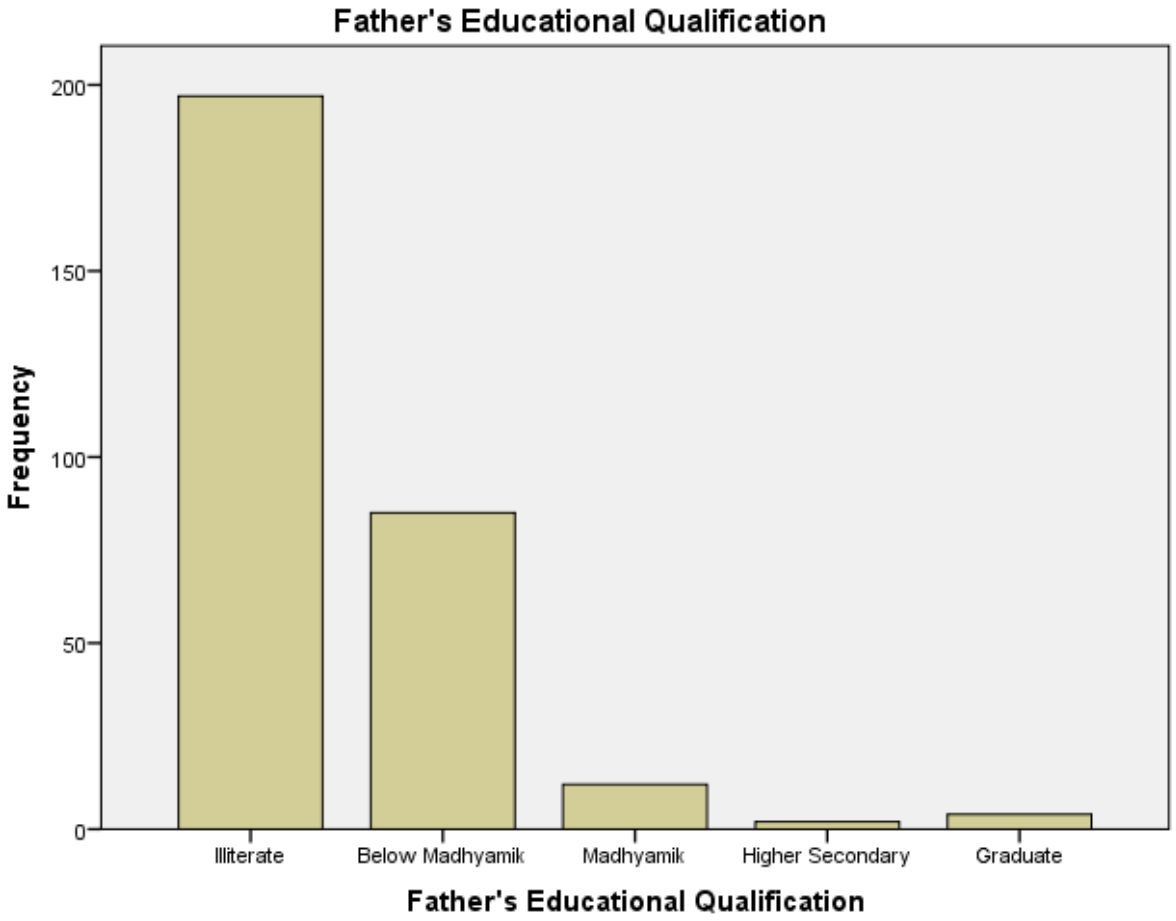
A considerable amount of unemployed Graduates are engaged in this job for maintaining their livelihood.

Table 4:

**Father's Educational Qualification**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Illiterate | 197 | 65.7 | 65.7 | 65.7 |
| | Below Madhyamik | 85 | 28.3 | 28.3 | 94.0 |
| | Madhyamik | 12 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 98.0 |
| | Higher Secondary | 2 | .7 | .7 | 98.7 |
| | Graduate | 4 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey




The table 4 reveals that the respondents' father's educational qualification is not satisfactory. 65.7% are illiterate and they do not even sign his name. From class 2 to 9 the percentage is 28.3. Only 4% are Madhyamik passed, Higher Secondary and Graduates are negligible.

It is found from the study that 60.7% of the respondents have either Municipality permission or permission from Transport Authority and 39.3% have no transport permission. The unauthorised e –rickshaws are coming mostly from outside the town and this is the cause of heavy traffic jam within the town.

On the basis of ownership 27.7% of the respondents have rented e-rickshaw on per day rent basis on an average rent of Rs 250 per day which they have to pay to their owners. 72.3% have their own e-rickshaw out of which 34.7% are purchased by loan taken from the bank (both public and private sector), 37.6% have purchased their e-rickshaw from their own resource.

Table 5:

**Respondents' Daily Earning before meeting expenditure**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Below Rs 300 | 3 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Rs 301-500 | 45 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 16.0 |
| | Rs 501-700 | 163 | 54.3 | 54.3 | 70.3 |
| | Rs 701 And above | 89 | 29.7 | 29.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

On an average the respondents' daily earning is Rs 500-700. Out of which they have to meet personal expenditure, family expenditure for maintaining livelihood and children's education expenditure , if rented , they have to pay daily rent and they have to bear maintenance cost whether own e-rickshaw or rented and they have to make future saving for replacement of batteries after two to three years. Average household expenditure is Rs 200-300 per day, average children educational expenditure is Rs 500-700 per month and average maintenance cost of the e-rickshaw is Rs 500-1000. Those who have their own e- rickshaw have to

pay monthly electric bill on an average of Rs 1500 those who have their rented e-rickshaw they do not have to pay the electric bill and borne by their owner.

On the basis of the respondents response on daily running hour the average running time is 10-12 hours. On an average they run their e-rickshaw 21-26 days and the running time is both day and night.

Table 6:

**Respondents Children Education level**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Not yet started | 134 | 44.7 | 44.7 | 44.7 |
| | Below Madhyamik | 130 | 43.3 | 43.3 | 88.0 |
| | Madhyamik | 15 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 93.0 |
| | Higher Secondary | 10 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 96.3 |
| | Graduate | 11 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

44.7% of the respondents respond that either they have not yet married or have no children. 43.3% have their children studying in below Madhymik or drop out. Only 5% have passed Madhymik, 3.3% children passed higher secondary and 3.7% are studying in degree level or passed out. No children of the respondents did Master degree.

Table 7:

**Frequency of Why have You come to this Profession**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Not Having Service | 50 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 16.7 |
| | For Maintaining Personal Expenditure | 15 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 21.7 |
| | For Meeting Family Expenditure | 235 | 78.3 | 78.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

The respondents were asked to respond on why have you come to this profession. 78.3% of the respondents respond that they have come to this profession for meeting family expenditure and they have no other source of income excluding earning from e-rickshaw driving and they are mostly illiterate or below Madhyamik passed. 16.7% of the drivers respond that for having no service they have came to this job. 5% have come to this job for meeting personal expenditure and they are graduated.

Table 8:

**Previous Profession of the e-rickshaw driver**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Rickshaw Pulling | 31 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 10.3 |
| | Unemployed | 191 | 63.7 | 63.7 | 74.0 |
| | Labourer | 55 | 18.3 | 18.3 | 92.3 |
| | other | 23 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

10.3% of the existing rickshaw pullers are able to come to this profession either by buying e-rickshaw or rented. 191 respondents were unemployed and their percentage is 63.7 which are very high. More than 18% of the labourer left their labouring and came to this job. More than 7% of the drivers came from other profession. It is concluded that a large number of unemployed youth people have come to this job. Few existing rickshaw pullers have able to come to this job or they have stopped rickshaw pulling and started labouring because they did not survive in the job of rickshaw pulling.

Table 9:

**Future Protection of the e-rickshaw driver**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Nothing | 168 | 56.0 | 56.0 | 56.0 |
| | Life Insurance | 76 | 25.3 | 25.3 | 81.3 |
| | Medical Insurance | 12 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 85.3 |
| | Recurring Deposit | 28 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 94.7 |
| | Gold ornaments | 16 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

Respondents were asked about their future protection. On the basis of their reply the above results were came out. More than half of the respondents have no future protection plans like LIC, medical insurance, recurring deposit or gold ornaments. Only 25.3% have LIC, 4% have Medical insurance, 9.3% have Recurring Deposits and 5.3% have gold ornaments. It can be concluded that their future is not secured.

Table 10:

**Are You Satisfied In this Profession**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Satisfied | 274 | 91.3 | 91.3 | 91.3 |
| | Dissatisfied | 26 | 8.7 | 8.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Computed data from field survey

Respondents were asked about the satisfaction of this job. Most of the respondents (91.3%) replied that they are satisfied with this job and only 8.7% are dissatisfied.

Table 11

**Correlation among different variables**

| | | Age | Educational Qualification of the driver | Father Educational Qualification | Children Education of the driver |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Pearson Correlation | 1 | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | |
| | N | 300 | | | |
| Educational Qualification of the driver | Pearson Correlation | -.375** | 1 | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | | |
| | N | 300 | 300 | | |
| Father Educational Qualification | Pearson Correlation | -.127* | .606** | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .028 | .000 | | |
| | N | 300 | 300 | 300 | |
| Children Education of the driver | Pearson Correlation | .591** | -.328** | -.237** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Computed data from field survey

From the correlation table it is found that there is a positive correlation between age of the respondents and their children education and the correlation coefficient is .591 which is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Also it is found from the table 11 that educational qualification of the respondents' is positively associated with the educational qualification of their father's and the correlation coefficient is .606 which is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**CONCLUSION:** A large number of unemployed urban as well as rural migrants are engaged in e-rickshaw driving. Unemployment problem has been solved to a great extent. Their purchasing power has been increased and urban rural economy has been boosted up. Their contribution to the economy is considerable.

Most of the e-rickshaw drivers come from the illiterate nuclear family background. The average age is 36-45 years.

It is found from the study that there is a positive correlation between the driver's educational level and their father's educational level. More than 90% of the drivers are satisfied with their job. It is also found from the study that maximum portion of the drivers have no future protection like LIC, health insurance, recurring or fixed deposit, gold ornaments etc. After two or three years when the life time of the batteries will be exhausted, they may not be able to purchase the new one. Therefore they might be out of this job after two or three years. Side by side a large amount of e-waste will be created for obsolete batteries which will be the cause of environment pollution. Some of the problems are like lack of proper transport planning, specific rout demarcation for plying, lack of fare chart, lack of proper timing of plying e-rickshaw, lack of insurance coverage on e-rickshaw etc. Compulsory saving for future replacement of batteries and e-rickshaw is most essential for sustainability of the e-rickshaw drivers. Government subsidy is required for e-rickshaw drivers for purchasing e-rickshaw.

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