



## Article

### An Ethnographic Study of Rickshaw Pullers in Lucknow City, Uttar Pradesh, India

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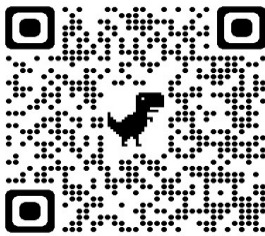
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#### ABSTRACT

Rickshaw pullers are a vulnerable section of the society, migrating to urban cities for their livelihood. The study has explored the socio-economics culture of rickshaw pullers origin and Lucknow city (South Asia), India. Rickshaw pullers are low-income people. Rickshaw pullers are suffering overburden of family members, health issues, isolation, and low protein intake. The study has tried why? Respondents have chosen Lucknow city for their livelihood. Lucknow is the capital city of Uttar Pradesh states. An ethnographic approach has Used in-depth interviews of the respondents. Rickshaw pullers are in Lucknow city migrated alone for bread and butter for their family members. The method has used purposive sampling. 30 Rickshaw pullers have taken face-to-face interviews. The study has found rickshaw pullers different groups of lower section of the society. The study has highlighted social culture distinguished among respondents.



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## 1. Introduction

Rickshaw pulling, even though an out-dated mode of transport, is still popular in India (Census of India 1981 Series-26, n.d.). Rickshaw word come from the Japanese word “Jinrikisha” which literally means human powered vehicles. Rickshaws are called by different names in different countries such as ‘becak’ in Indonesia, ‘cyclo’ in Phnom Penh of Cambodia and in Vietnam (Khan et al., 2012). India, rickshaws were first seen in Shimla in around 1880. About twenty years later, at the turn of the century, they were introduced in Kolkata (Samanta & Roy, 2013). People who, belong to Lower ladder of Indian society, their socio-economics culture are not good. India second the most populous country after China and 69 percent peoples living in rural India. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India and the most of population are living rural India (Brass, 2015). Post globalization and urbanization has been mass mobility toward urban cities for livelihood. Urban cities have absorbed these informal workers. Post three decade are eradicating poverty but draw big line of the financial inequality. Rickshaw pullers are illiterates, unskilled, semi-skilled, and low-income people groups in the society. They have migrated alone in urban cities for seasonal works and few of them permanent settled there. Ever-growing population and urban population growth add a new dimension in urban areas. Slums and ghettos have been fabric of rickshaw pullers particularly in the cities of BIMARU states. The cycle rickshaw is a small-scale local means of transportation having three wheels. They are often used to carry passengers by negotiated fare and widely used in major cities of the South-Asia, South East-Asia particularly in India for shorter distance (Ali, 2013). Rickshaw is easily access and quicks providing income urban cities especially India. They are marginalized and lower strata of the Indian society.

## 2. Literature review

India has made a remarkable progress in different sectors of the economy since last three decades. However, the benefit could not percolate to bottom level. Thus, different strategies have been made from time to time to improve the economic status of poor and population engaged in unorganized sector, but their conditions are still unsatisfactory (Ali

2009). People who belong to lower segment of the society, their deterioration continue day by day particularly in rural masses where More than 70% population resides. Unemployment, illiteracy, unhygienic health conditions and discrimination regarding distribution of resources and assets is common (Ali, 2013). A big segment of the rural population migrates to the urban centres for earning income and livelihood (Bhatt 1989). they prefer the business of rickshaw pulling to get quick cash earning and employment. It is the fact that now rickshaw pulling has become a popular source of income and employment among the rural immigrants in the urban masses (Begum & Sen, 2012).

## 3. Tools and Techniques

This study is based on ethnographic approach of participant observation, through by focus groups, semi-structured, field notes, photographic technique. Statistical data have analysed through sample descriptive method and in-depth interviews of 30 respondents. The method has used purposive sampling to know socio-economics status, health issues, isolation, COVID-19 crisis. The study has tried to find out why? Respondents have chosen Rickshaw pulling as their livelihood. Lucknow is the capital city of Uttar Pradesh states. The study has found rickshaw pullers different group of lower section of the society. The study has highlighted social culture difference among respondents.

### Objectives

- 1-To examines socio-economics status of rickshaw pullers in Lucknow city.
- 2- To an ethnographic analysis through photographic technique of respondents.
- 3- To understand COVID-19 crisis people perception and attitudes toward respondents.

## 4. Result and Discussion

The study has found more than 90 percent of the socio-economic and demographic profiles of the respondents are poor. Their living and health conditions are not good both origin and destination place. They are visible urban citizens through social culture distinguished among different social groups.



90 %rickshaw pullers are living open space, on rickshaws and slums and 10 percent rented. 95% of rickshaw pullers do not have basic facilities. They have lack housing facilities, proper clothes, proper food, lack of drinking water, toilets facilities, wellbeing life, health, and good education facilities for their children. They are working overtime hard work earning bread and butter for their family. The study has found that most rickshaw pullers seasonal migrated to the city. The study has found 96 percent migrated alone, 4 % with family or parent. 86% of respondents are Hindu and 14% Muslim. The study has found 65% RPs Scheduled caste, 33 % other backward class, 2% general. Research has highlighted 15-35 age groups respondent 60 % and 40 percent 36-60 age groups. 83.5 % of respondents are married rest of unmarried. The research has found more than 60 % of respondent's illiterate and 20 % primary schooling, 16.7 % secondary schooling, and 3.3 higher secondary schooling. The previous occupation of RPs 40 percent daily wage workers, 33.3 % rickshaw pulling, 16.7 % agriculture laborers, and 10 % not answered. Pre-COVID-19 daily earning 150-450 Rupee 93.3 % and > 451-500 rupee 6.7 % RPs. During the COVID-19 lockdown no income. Post COVID-19 120-350 rupee daily earning 95 percent rest of >400-rupee daily earning. The research has revealed truths, 95 % (120–150-rupee) daily earning expenditure on rickshaw rent, two-time food, smoking, chewing), rest of >150 rupee. The study has revealed poor physiques, low protein intake, malnutrition by their children and themselves because of the large size of the family. The study has found intergeneration poverty in RPs. The study has highlighted why? They are chosen rickshaw pullers as their livelihood. They are mostly illiterate, semi-skilled. Rickshaw pulling no needed formal education or any training skill. Rickshaw easily access in city and instants income. The research has highlighted poor health conditions among >45 respondents, young respondents' normal health. Most of the RPs going to direct medical shops take medicine during the health problems. They were migrated, neighbouring districts as Hardoi, Sitapur, Unnao, Lakhimpur Khiri, Rae Bareilly. During the field survey interaction with RPs, I asked about saving habits of them have welling save money for the future but, day to day increasing-price goods and services all earning spend on basic needs, not fulfil all basic needs.

The research has revealed during the Lockdown peoples, perception and attitude changed because of fear of novel coronavirus infection people avoid riding a rickshaw. The study has highlighted double competition within the occupation, new short distance city means of transportation as e-rickshaw. The study has found high fear level anxiety, tension, and frustration during the COVID-19 lockdown among RPs. They lost jobs, uncertain future, alone, no social security hard time RPs due to COVID-19 lockdown. The research has found no significant knowledge about the government welfare schemes and their basic right.

#### **An ethnographic study photographic observation of respondents**

The photographic observation is an ethnographic study of a different place in Lucknow city. Below Fig.01-to- fig.03, shows socio-economics and ethnic groups of rickshaw pullers. Fig.01 shows how? RPs holistic social harmony among them. Below fig.02-04 shows a different angle of respondents as clothing senses, interaction with passenger's, wearing COVID-19 mask, long hours waiting for passengers. Below fig. 02 to 03 shows socio-culture groups of RPs, living conditions of family and children in city rickshaw pullers dwellers. Most of the rickshaw pullers have been wearing muddy clothes, low-quality slippers, housing conditions, sleeping on a rickshaw, all these photos revealing the reality of RPs. They are low-income groups people. They are coming different socio-culture backgrounds.



Source: Field Survey, 2021 (Fig.01)



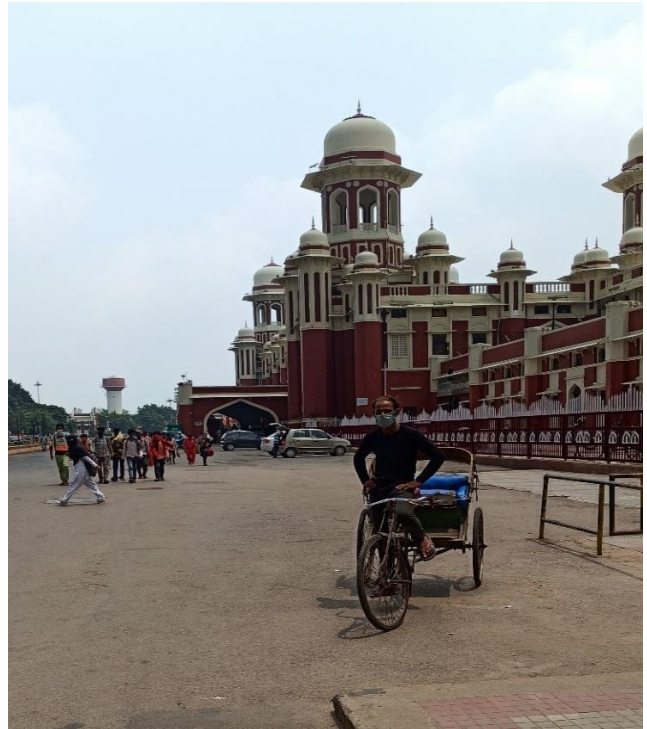
(01-Auto-stand in Charbagh Railway Station Behind)



(02- Charbagh Railway Station)



(03-Shopping Mall in Lucknow city)



(04-Charbagh Railway Station in Lucknow city)



Dwelling condition of RPs, and their children, Rickshaw colony behind the residential building in Lucknow city



Difference between Rickshaw pullers base on different social groups in Alambagh Lucknow city



Source: Field Survey, 2021,

Fig.02

Fig.03

During the Field survey I and With RPs different worksite in Lucknow city



Source: Field Survey,2021



## 5. Conclusion

This Ethnographic study has been revealed rickshaw pullers come from different socio-culture. The research has revealed why? They are migrating city, because of no local job's opportunities and poverty. Rickshaw pullers are a marginalized section of society. They are poor socio-economics cultural background section of society. Rickshaw pullers are bearing dirty, clothing and illiterate, unskilled, unemployment's and overburden of the family members. An ethnographic study has found the same culture but a different social status in the Indian social hierarchy. The Hindu rickshaw pullers are celebrating Holi and Dussehra. The Muslim RPs celebrate Ramazan and Eid-al-Fitr, together. The study has highlighted most rickshaw pullers migrated to Lucknow city alone and few with family. The study has highlighted the reality of dwelling conditions not good both origin and destination place. During the field observation, rickshaw pullers have passed the night open spaces on a rickshaw, railway stations, bus stands, Jhuggi/Slums, and a few rickshaw pullers living rented houses. This study has revealed current novel coronal virus ruptures their life and livelihood. 25 March 2020, India has suddenly declared a nationwide lockdown. COVID-19 crisis negative perception and attitude because no one wants to ride a rickshaw to hit rickshaw pullers. They are lost jobs, shelter, food, fear of the virus infection, and are afraid lost near and dear. They are invisible citizens of the city. Most of them don't have proper documents. They are dwelling together with three or six members in slums or small rented rooms. They are sharing a kitchen, toilets, drinking water, and space. The study has found most rickshaw pullers enter this profession early age. The study has found why? They chose rickshaw pulling as their livelihood because of no need for formal or training. They are struggling double burden, one chronic poverty another historical subaltern of the Indian society. The study has

observed rickshaw pullers overnight working same time they did not get enough money to pay rickshaw rent or take a meal. The study has also found a high rate of school dropout of their children. The study suggests the government could work together with corporate, CSR of the financial inclusion through a skill development program (the government and CSR, civil society together work) and subsidized loan for their established new business.

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