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# A Comparative Assessment on the Working and Living Conditions of the Auto Rickshaw Service Providers of Dharmanagar and Udaipur Town of Tripura

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## ABSTRACT

Work is an important matter in the daily life as it involves both mental and physical effort done in order to achieve a result and sustain a life. In this context the auto rickshaw service providers depend on day-to-day work and earn for their livelihood by driving a small cab and providing movement to a commuter. This paper aims to compare the working and living conditions of the auto rickshaw service providers of Dharmanagar and Udaipur towns of Tripura. The present study had been carried out through personal interview method and obtained data were analysed by graphical presentation. The result shows that among the auto rickshaw service providers of two different towns of Tripura, the auto rickshaw service providers of Udaipur Town have a better working and living conditions in comparison to the auto rickshaw service providers of Dharmanagar Town.

**GENERAL TERMS:** Economic Geography, Agartala City.

**KEYWORDS:** Work, Commuters, Town, Service

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Transport network connotes the ability and the efficiency of the transport services in the specific region. The efficiency of transport systems is measured in terms of cost of providing the services and also the social benefits that are being provided from such services (Rodrigue, et.at; 2006). Thus the significant roles of the transport system in an area are very much indicative towards providing maximum social benefits along with minimum amount of resources consuming cost which is considered as efficient system. Thus the social benefits may include in perspective of health care, defences, political dimensions, educational facility, and other public utility services. Thus, the parameters of transport development may include accessibility level of all such services in social, economic and also with political sectors (Chandna, 2008). Tripura is located in the North-East India which became a full-fledged State of the Indian Union on 21 January 1972. It is situated between latitudes 22°56' to 24°32' North and longitudes 91°09' to 92°20' east. It covers an area of 10,491.69 sq. km. Tripura is a land-locked State, surrounded by Bangladesh on its north, south and west and the States of Assam and Mizoram on the east. Being a land lock state the communication and transportation system of Tripura is still on the merge of progressive development. Partition choked off Tripura's major lines of transport and communication by severing inland waterway, roadways and railway networks. Before 1947, the main railhead for Agartala was nearby Akhaura-at present in Bangladesh. After the disruption of rail connections in 1947, major efforts were made to create direct railway links between Assam and Kolkata



(Bhattacharya and Datta, 2013). In the sixtieth year of Independence, Agartala remains without a railhead. Extension of the existing rail track, from Lumding in Assam to Agartala via Manu in Tripura, was recently taken up as a national project. Presently, the National Highway-4, the lifeline of the State provides the vital road link with the rest of the country via Shillong and Guwahati. This lifeline is used for transportation of various goods including essential commodities as also passengers travelling to the mainland through Guwahati (Economic Review, 2010). Different transport system is introduced for the transportation of the people and goods from the one point to another. Among these variety of transportation, Auto rickshaw had gained an enormous demand for transportation purpose from one place to another. Being small in size and capacity to take few passengers is one of the main characteristics of the auto rickshaw transport services (Mani, 2012). The role that the auto rickshaw transport services are playing is enormously demanding by the mass for transportation in comparison to any other transportation. But the effort that an auto rickshaw service provider put on this commuting service is unseen. The working and living conditions of the auto rickshaw service providers are exhausting as they struggle for bread and butter by driving an auto rickshaw. Thus to dig the unseen a research had been carried out on two different towns as Dharmanagar and Udaipur of Tripura so as to compare and analyse the working and living conditions of the auto rickshaw service providers in the present study area. The study will also try to highlight various difficulties faced by the auto rickshaw service providers of the present study areas.

**2. OBJECTIVE**

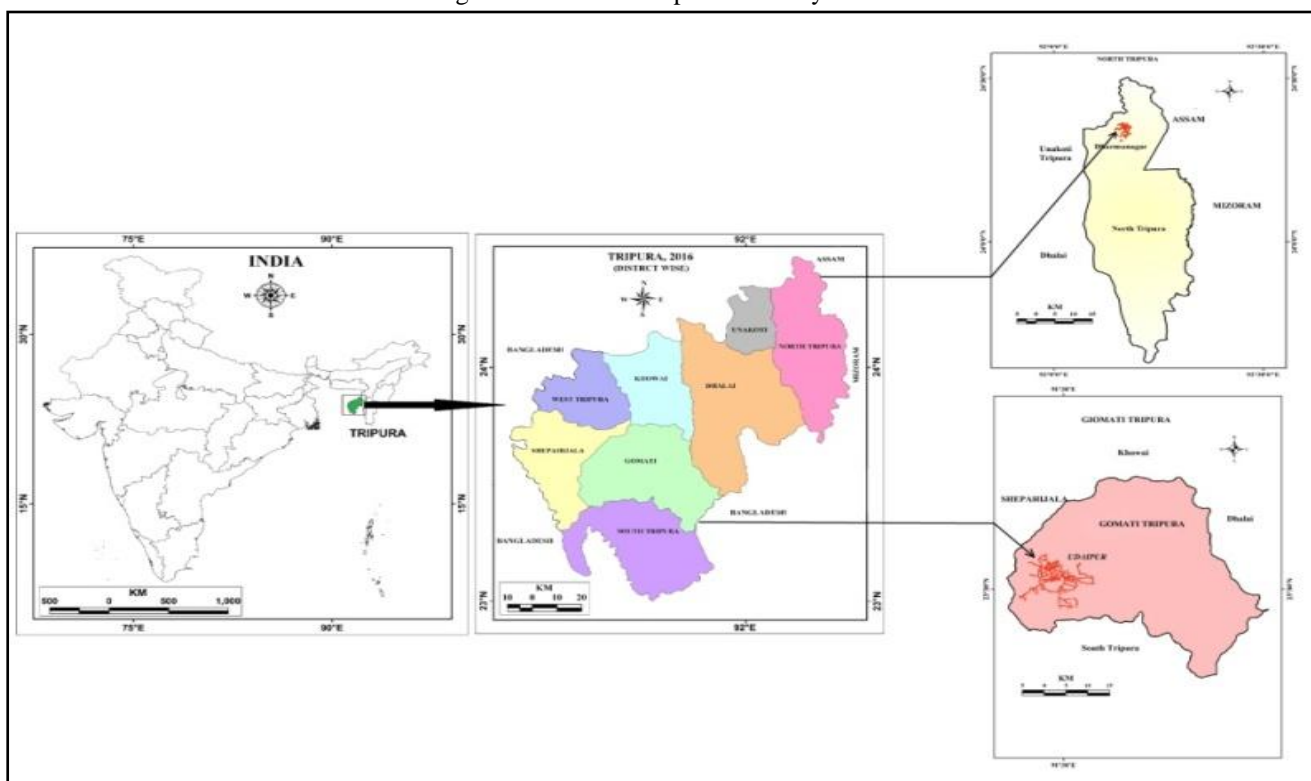
For the foundation of the present paper the following objectives adopted are:

- i. To compare and analyse the working and living conditions of the auto rickshaw service providers of the present study area,
- ii. To highlight various difficulties faced by the auto rickshaw service providers of the present study areas.

**3. STUDY AREA**

Tripura is a state in Northeast India. It shares borders with Bangladesh, Mizoram and Assam. Tripura is surrounded by Bangladesh on its north, south and west. The length of its international border is 856 km. The state is connected with the rest of India by NH 8. It had had an area of 10,491.69 sq.km with a total population of 36, 73,917 (as per Census 2011). Literacy rate of the state is 87.8 per cent (as recorded in 2011 Census). At present there are 8 districts in Tripura.

Figure 1: Location Map of the Study area





The study area is concentrated in two different districts town areas of Tripura. Dharmanagar and Udaipur are the two major towns of Tripura where the total population is 45,887 and 37,781 respectively. Both the study area had been carried out within the town area of Dharmanagar Municipal Council (DMC) and Udaipur Municipal Council (UMC). The total area of Dharmanagar Municipal Council is 7.77 Sq.km. It is the main town of the North Tripura District of Tripura with a density of population of 5906 persons/ Sq.km. Udaipur is another major town of Tripura that stands 3<sup>rd</sup> rank in population as well as in area after Dharmanagar. The total geographic area of Udaipur Municipal Council is 7.67 sq. km. Dharmanagar is the main corridor of Tripura by road ways through NH-8 whereas Udaipur is famous for its artificial lakes and historical temples. Both the town comprises various modes of transportation. Among these auto rickshaws are one of the important modes of transportation in the town areas of both the councils. On the other hand Udaipur another major town of Tripura is connected by different variety of vehicles in the town area. But the influences of other vehicles on auto rickshaws are less in comparison to other vehicles. Within a short period of time, Auto rickshaw transport service of Dharmanagar and Udaipur had made a faced identity in the Urban Transportation System and had achieved an important position in the present economic state. Not only had the auto service gained the achievement of minimizing the problem of unemployment but also it had moved to the interior part of the remote areas for service providing. Thus their impacts in respect of other transformational facilities are good enough in terms of both travelling as well as cheap rate. But somehow introduction to other particular vehicles such as battery operated rickshaws had majorly affected the auto rickshaw transportation in many cases. Especially in the study area of Dharmanagar where majority of the commuters prefer to take the auto rickshaw for commuting from one point of stating to the preferred to the study area.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The study had been conducted in Dharmanagar and Udaipur Municipal Council which are the headquarters as well as main urban towns of Tripura. Suitable questionnaires were prepared for carrying out a schedule survey in the major nodes of these two urban towns. In the Dharmanagar auto rickshaw stand a total number of 91 service providers whereas Udaipur town comprises of 94 auto rickshaw service providers had been surveyed to find out their working and living status by driving an auto rickshaw for their livelihood. The survey was carried out by personal interview method and the collected data were presented and analysed in the shape of tabular form along with logical elucidation of the facts of the present research work.

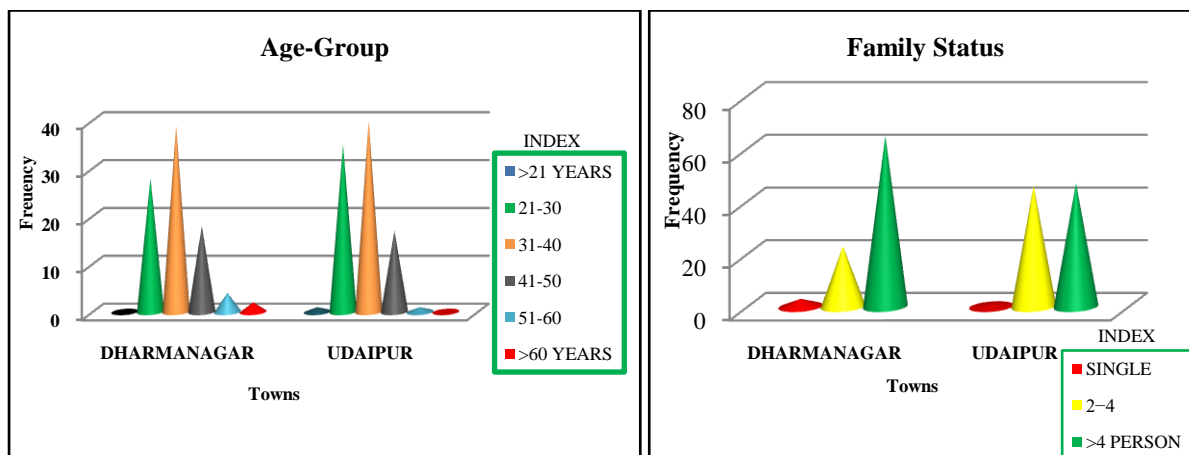
#### **5. RESULTS**

Tripura is a state where with rapid growth of population and increasing number of vehicular transportation is taking part simultaneously. In this context, Auto-Rickshaw had also played a mass role in providing and contributing its major role in the field of transportation. Auto-Rickshaw Services, integrated as feeder modes providing first and last mile connectivity for public transport services, help ensure that public transport is accessible to all parts of the city. In this role, Auto Rickshaws will also ensure accessibility to public transport for commuters with special needs, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. Thus the present field study that are done under two different station of Tripura, are based on two different prolonged approaches of Auto Rickshaw Transport Services in Dharmanagar and Udaipur Town area.

It was found from the field survey that age group from 21-30 and 31-40 is found to be highest in both the auto rickshaw stands of Dharmanagar and Udaipur town. It is due to the factor of unemployment that bounds the youth age groups to be engaged in this driving profession for sustenance, bread and butter for their livelihood. This age group has the potentiality to work more because of the physical strength in their body. More than 60 years is found to be less because with a growing age they start to lose their physical strength to work for a long hour. On the other hand, most of the auto rickshaw service providers have their own house and none of the responders are found to live in rent houses in both the towns of the present study area. They earn money for satisfying and fulfilling their basic needs of livelihood and demands of their family members. Out of the total 185 auto rickshaw service providers of two towns of the study area, it has been found that 102 numbers of auto rickshaw service providers had responsibilities to look after more than 4 persons of their family members out which 65 per cent constitute from Dharmanagar auto rickshaw stand and 44.68 per cent comprises from Udaipur auto rickshaw stands.

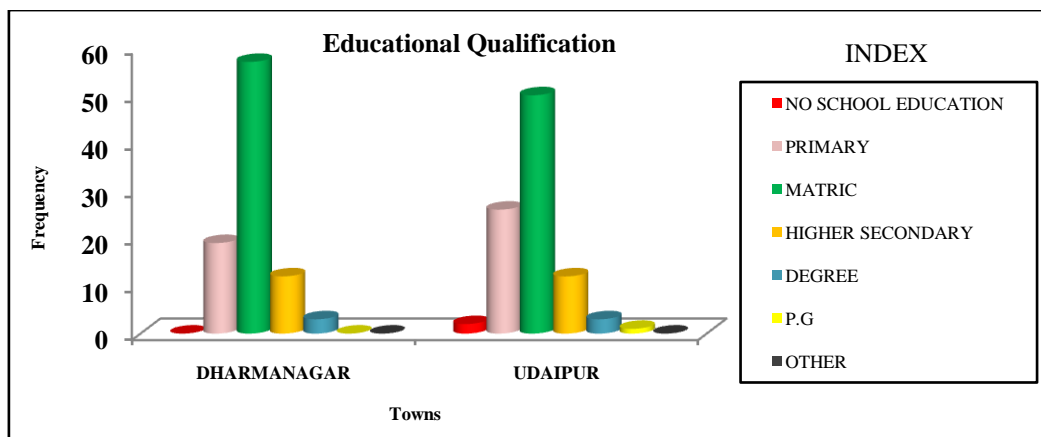


Figure no. 2: Age Group & Family Status of the Auto rickshaw service providers



Source: Field Survey 2016-2017

Figure no. 3: Educational status of the Auto rickshaw service providers

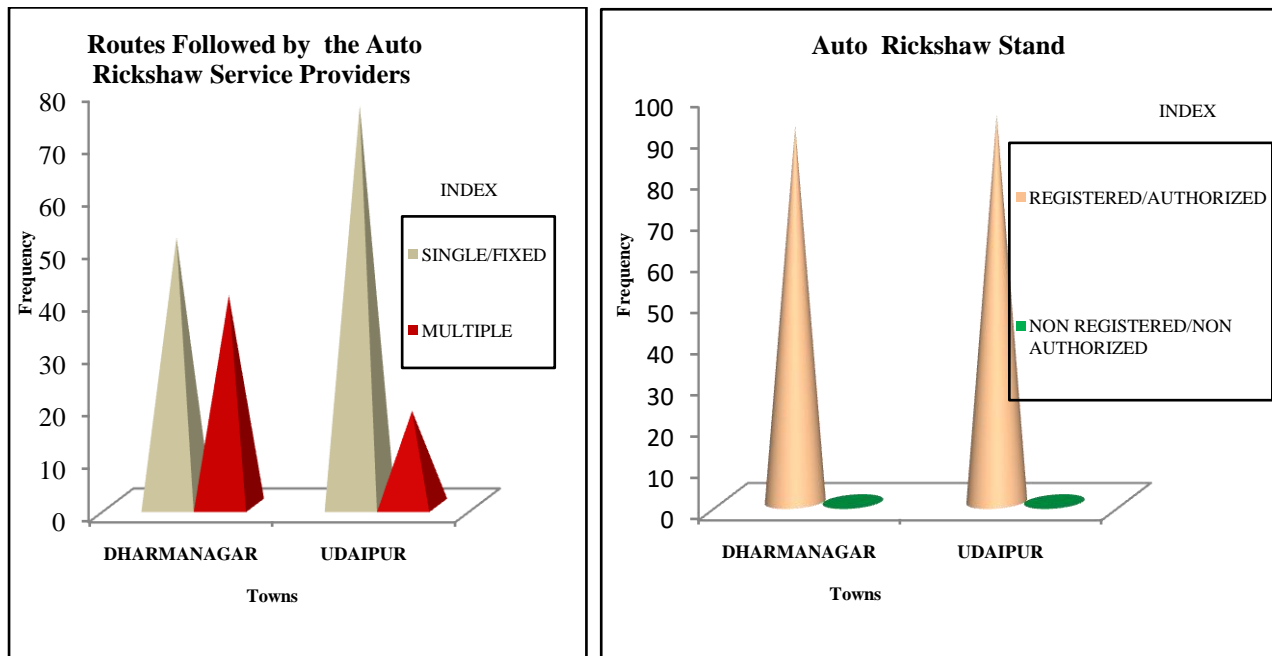


Source: Field Survey 2016-2017

Education is very important for livelihood because it gives the knowledge to the people to manage their life style easily in different places. Basically to drive an auto rickshaw a person should know some rules and regulations which are provided by the transport department. Moreover minimum knowledge must be acquired by a driver to be eligible for licensing and identifying the traffic signs, rules and regulation. From the present study area it has been found that 62.63 per cent from Dharmnagar and 50 per cent from Udaipur obtained the educational qualification of matric pass. On the other hand 16.48 per cent from Dharmnagar and 26.59 per cent from Udaipur had studied till primary level. 10.98 per cent of Higher Secondary, 4.39 per cent of graduation and 2.19 per cent of post graduation are found taking the profession of auto rickshaw driving. Moreover, 10.63 per cent of Higher education, 4.25 per cent of graduates and 2.12 per cent of post graduates are involved in this profession. All these engagement are due to the problem of unemployment. Although Tripura is one of those Indian States where the literacy rate is highest in comparison to other regions of the country but it cannot be deniable that large amount of educated individuals also bring huge amount of competition and struggle for employment also. Thus out of the total 185 auto rickshaw service providers of two towns of the state matric pass constitute 56.21 per cent which is the highest proportion of auto rickshaw service providers in the present study area.



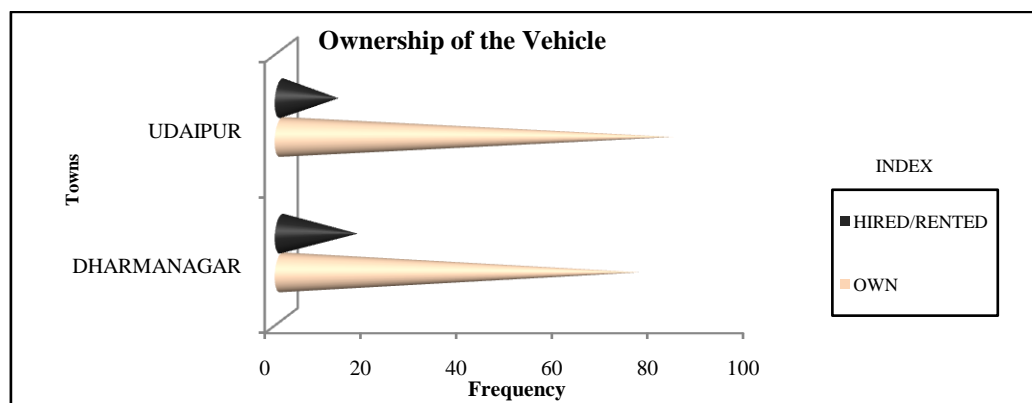
Figure no. 4: Type of route system and rickshaw stand of the Auto rickshaw service providers



Source: Field Survey 2016-2017

Fixed or single route means one point to another point. In a single route of moving in an auto rickshaw the service providers wait for the required capacity of taking passengers. When the passengers are filled, the service providers move to a fixed destination. On the other hand multiple routes defines continuous movement of taking and dropping of passengers at numerous points particularly to a preferred destination of the commuters. In the present study area, 51 numbers of auto rickshaw service providers that constitute 56.04 per cent of the total responders of Dharmnagar and 76 numbers of auto rickshaw service providers that comprises 80.85 per cent of the total responders of Udaipur auto rickshaw stands move in a single or fixed route system. Whereas 43.95 percent of Dharmnagar and 18.08 per cent of Udaipur move in a multiple route system to pick and drop more passengers and to earn more amount of wage. Although all these auto rickshaws of the present study area are moving from an authorized and registered auto rickshaw stand.

Figure no. 5: Ownership of the Auto rickshaw service providers



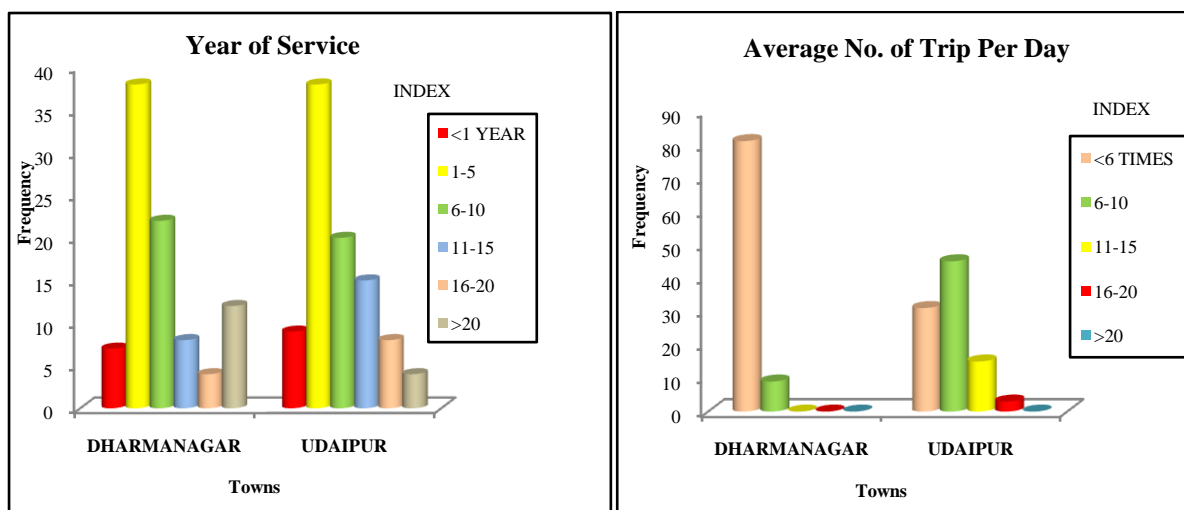
Source: Field Survey 2016-2017



Ownership is the important aspect of the auto service providers because it is the main source for generating income. The earning of an auto rickshaw service provider is more when the ownership of the vehicle belongs to him rather than of hired autos. 17.58 per cent of Dharmanagar and 12.76 per cent of Udaipur of the auto rickshaw service providers runs a hired or rented auto rickshaw and they have to pay a certain amount of wage from their daily income to the owner of the auto rickshaws which are either on per day or monthly basis. From the field survey, it is also scrutinize that out of 185 auto rickshaw driver's 75 and 82 auto rickshaw drivers of Dharmanagar and Udaipur have their own auto rickshaw and run themselves respectively.

Year of service involves the experience of driving in this sector. The auto rickshaw service provider who belongs to 1-5 years of services are found to be the highest which holds 38 (41.75 per cent) in Dharmanagar and 38 (40.42 per cent) auto rickshaw service providers of Udaipur. It constituted 41.08 per cent out of total 185 auto rickshaw service providers of both the study area. It is found because the interest in this sector are growing more due to the factor of increase in income and lots of unemployed youth are also engaged in this sector vary widely. On the hand 22 (23.40 percent) from Dharmanagar and 20 (21.27 percent) of auto rickshaw service providers of Udaipur town have been engaged in this profession for 6-10 years. Those who drive the auto rickshaws for more than 20 years constitute the lowest per cent compare to all other groups.

Figure no. 6: Year of Service and trip per day by the Auto rickshaw service providers

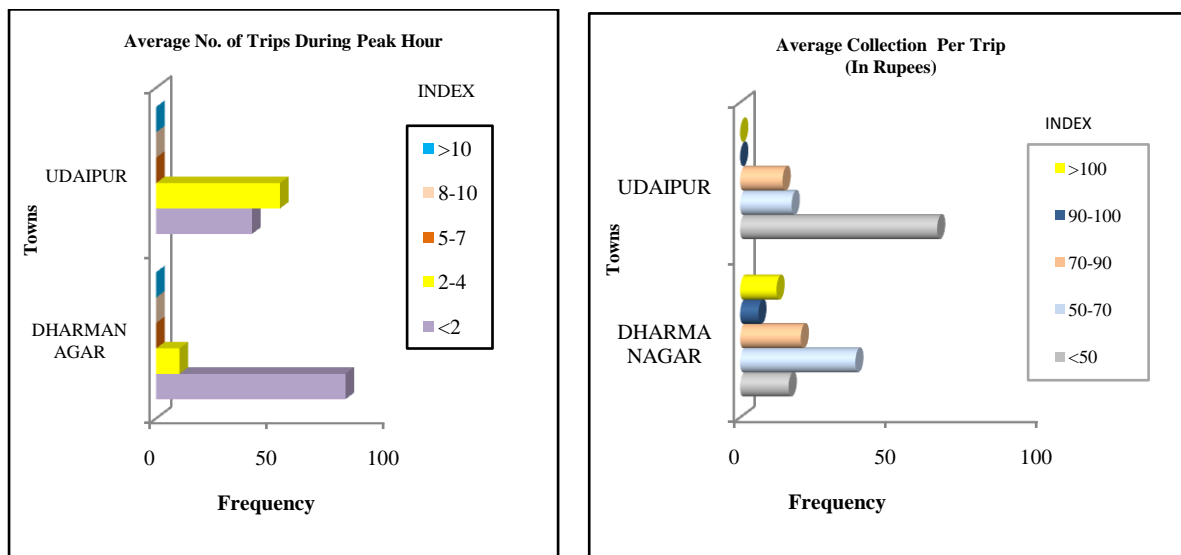


Source: Field Survey 2016-2017

Although due to increase of various modes of transportation, most of the auto rickshaw service providers could not get adequate number of trips for which they could hardly earn a sustainable amount of wage. In the present field survey, it was found that 89.01 percent from Dharmanagar whereas 32 per cent of Udaipur gets more than 6 times of trips per day. It is due to the increase in the diverse choice of various modes of transportation. It is interesting fact that in Dharmanagar town the 6-10 times of a trip comprises of only 9 service providers whereas in Udaipur town 41 out of 94 numbers of auto rickshaw service providers are getting 6-10 times of the trips per day and the maximum average trips they get during the peak hours of the day which is from 09.00 to 11.00 a.m and 05.00 to 7.00 p.m. Trips provided by the auto rickshaw drivers during peak hours are very difficult because it falls under busy schedule for the official workers and school students. At this time traffic congestion remains very high. 92 per cent of auto rickshaw service providers gets less than two times of trips in the peak hour of the day whereas 15.95 per cent are getting 2-4 times of trips at the peak hour of the day. In Udaipur town the scenario is different. Average 50 per cent of the auto rickshaw service providers share both less than 2 and 2-4 numbers of trips at the peak hour of the day.



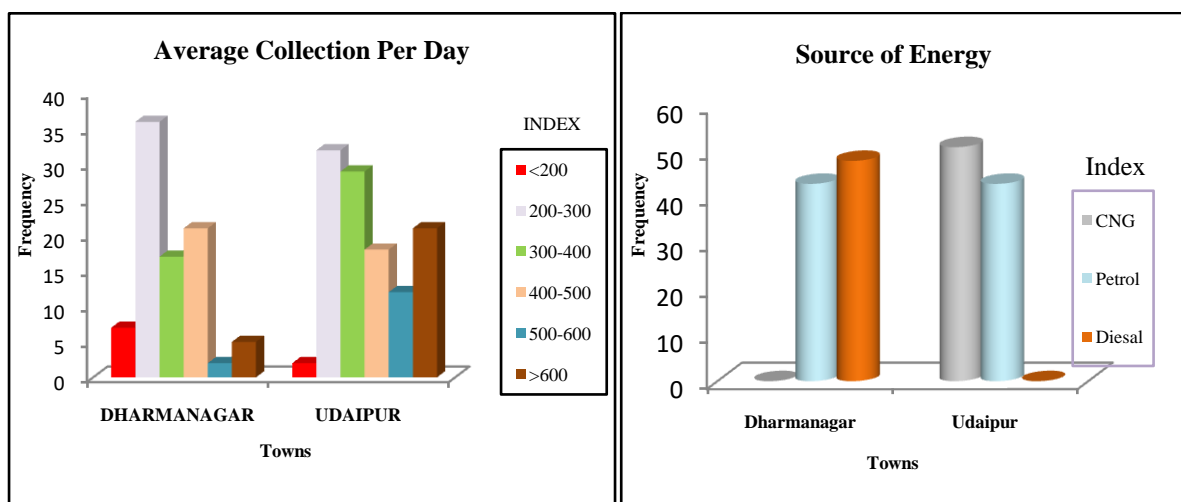
Figure no. 7: Average trip per day during peak hour by the Auto rickshaw service providers



Source: Field Survey 2016-2017

Although due to the affect of new rule taken by the administration auto rickshaws are to take only three passengers at a time in a single trip. But in both the locations the situation is different. In both the towns’ passengers are mostly carried five to six passengers at a time for more income. Thus most of the auto rickshaw service providers earn 200-300 rupees in a single day that constitute 39.56 percent and 35.16 per cent of Dharmanagar and Udaipur followed by 300-400 rupees that constitute 18.68 per cent of Dharmanagar and 30.85 per cent in Udaipur, 400-500 group and 500 to 600 wage they earn daily for their livelihood. The least collection of wage is less than 200 rupees that is collected by 7.69 per cent and 2.12 per cent of Dharmanagar and Udaipur auto rickshaw service providers.

Figure no. 8: Average fare collection of fare per day and source of energy used to run an auto rickshaw by the Auto rickshaw service providers



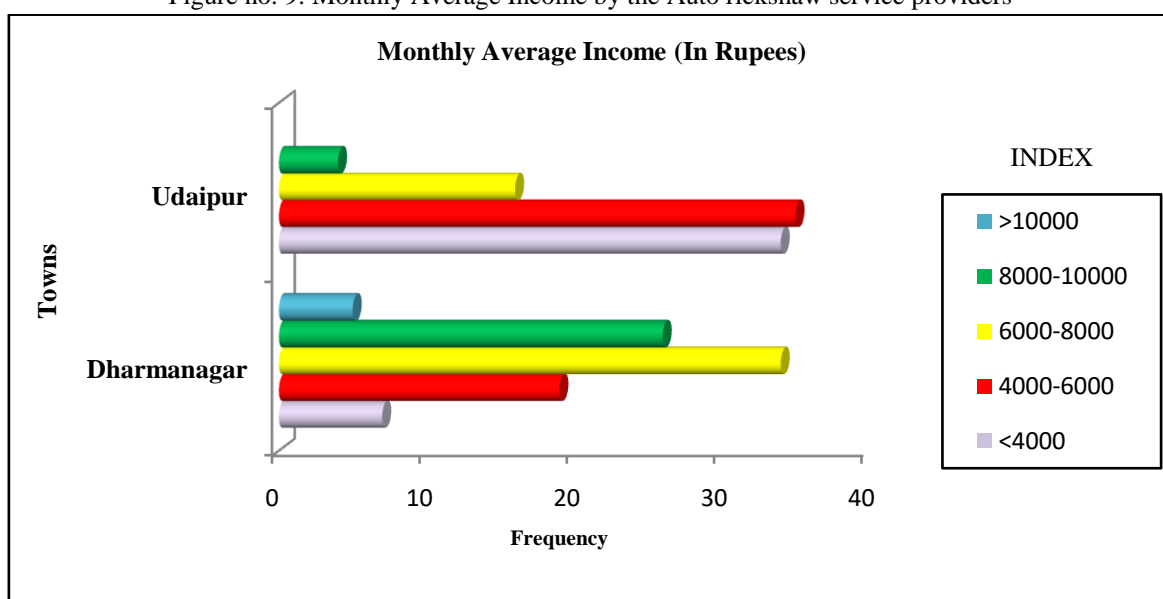
Source: Field Survey 2016-2017

Moreover 39.96 per cent from Dharmanagar and 45.74 per cent from Udaipur Auto rickshaw stands provide their commuting services for 10-12 hours which is highest and maximum working hours of a day whereas auto services for more than 12 hours constitute 39.56



percent from Dharmanagar and 32.97 per cent from Udaipur of the total auto rickshaw service providers of the present study area. On the other hand very few auto drivers provide their services for less than 8 hours of a day. It constitutes 6.59 percent from Dharmanagar and 8.51 percent from Udaipur. They provide less time of services because they are being hired for reserve trips for a particular time of a day. These hired trips are for either school students or for commuting passengers to their work places. However, the auto rickshaw from Udaipur mainly uses Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as their source of fuel for running an auto rickshaw. It constitutes 54.25 per cent of the users who run their auto rickshaw by CNG whereas 45.74 per cent of the auto rickshaws are running their auto by petrol. In Dharmanagar 47.25 percent of the auto rickshaw service providers uses petrol and 52.74 per cent of the service providers' uses diesel as a fuel for running the auto rickshaws in the present study area. It is an interesting fact that CNG auto rickshaws are still on the way to be introduced in Dharmanagar because of lack of any CNG refilling stations.

Figure no. 9: Monthly Average Income by the Auto rickshaw service providers



Source: Field Survey 2016-2017

An auto rickshaw service provider earns money by driving an auto rickshaw that helps him to be self sustenance. It is found from the field survey that 37.36 per cent of the auto rickshaw service providers from Dharmanagar and 17.02 per cent of the auto rickshaw service providers from Udaipur earn 6000-8000 rupees per month. 20.87 per cent of the auto rickshaw service providers from Dharmanagar earn 4000-6000 rupees monthly by running an auto rickshaw whereas the same amount is also earned by the auto rickshaw service providers of Udaipur town area. On the other hand, 26.37 percent of the auto rickshaw service providers are earning 8000-10000 rupees monthly. They belong from the Dharmanagar town area whereas only 4.25 per cent of the service providers belong from Udaipur. 7.69 per cent of the auto rickshaw service providers are from Dharmanagar earning less than Rs. 4000 whereas and large number of auto rickshaw service providers of 36.17 per cent from Udaipur are earning less than Rs. 4000 monthly which shows the difference of earning between two different towns of Tripura.

## 6. DISCUSSION

From the intensive field study it is identified that the auto rickshaw service providers had played an important role for not only improving their social organization of the auto rickshaw drivers and also helped in the social as well as economic up-liftment of the Auto Rickshaw drivers and concerning their basic benefits for their socio-economic up-liftment. Moreover the Organization of Auto Rickshaws is also concern with freight and fair of the passengers so that both service provider and service taker could sustainably live in the present economic condition of the state. Although the present field study area relates to the problems and constrains that are being faced by the auto service provider in perspective of their socio-economic conditions. Along with it, the problems that are also being faced by the passengers in the present status of economy are also being identified. Frequent traffic jam in the road in specific time and specific area of both Dharmanagar & Udaipur town area. No proper infrastructural facilities in the motor stand such as: No dustbin facilities, No proper passenger shed, No proper drainage condition, No proper parking zone, Lack of sanitation facilities, Lack





of proper rest house for both passengers and drivers, No proper drinking facilities. Road Condition is not well maintained and the width of the road is too narrow to pass through safely. Due to lack of CNG pump station within the city in Udaipur town area, too much congestion to be faced during the refilling of CNG gas. Excess number of auto rickshaw within the city creating congestion and air pollution contributing to over growth of other vehicles within the city region. Conflict with other vehicular mode of transportation especially in the Dharmanagar town area where massive collision occurs by the auto rickshaw drivers and the battery operated rickshaw drivers in taking passengers. Increase of price rise of both petrol and CNG gas, effecting on the price rise of other commodities in the market had been one of the important

## 7. CONCLUSION

Auto rickshaw of Dharmanagar & Udaipur town area had faced a lot of challenges and problems since time being. But today, leaving behind all such constrains, this service of transportation are playing much more beneficial role in the society in different aspects and features in comparison to any other vehicular movements of transportation. Although, at present the Auto rickshaw service system of both the town area are facing variety of hazardous social problems within which the economy of both phenomena (Auto rickshaw drivers and service taker as Passengers) are being affected in an injurious manner. It is because of the absence of social awareness among the common people of the concern study area but maximum numbers of participation could erase such problems. Thus social awareness must be the main purpose of planning so that the proposals of developmental approach could flow in a better way.

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## SOURCE OF FUNDING

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