

Post Pandemic Lockdown Effect of COVID-19 on Financial Status and Mental Health of Auto Rickshaw Drivers with Special Reference to Indore city

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 pandemic has created chaos all around the globe. It has adversely affected the financial status and mental health of people. Auto drivers are dependent on the daily wages for their sustenance. During lockdown, they faced many challenges for their livelihood. This study was performed on 130 auto drivers of Indore city. A statistical analysis was performed on the basis of primary and secondary data obtained from the responses collected from the auto drivers. Our study shows that financial status of auto drivers at Indore city is affected by the numbers of driving years and the financial status also affects their mental health.

Keywords: *Auto drivers, financial status, mental health, covid-19, post-pandemic lockdown.*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic had disrupted the normal life of people all over the world. Corona virus disease is an infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus. The first official case was reported in Wuhan city of China in 2019. The virus is mainly transmitted through the droplets generated from an infected person. The disease had briskly spread all over the world and is still an ongoing pandemic. (1)

Due to novel species of corona virus, the symptoms and response in human beings all over the world are variable. The lack of specific effective medicines

and limited testing resources, the disease soon became a global crisis. The only way to prevent the spread of this contagious disease was social distancing. As a result, government of many countries decided to put lock down in all the activities and took strict actions to make people stay at home. (2)

India also experienced lockdown during covid-19 pandemic for many months due to which many people faced financial problems. The outbreak of COVID-19 has changed the social and economic life of the people to a great extent. People working in different sectors had experienced a financial turmoil but daily wagers are affected extremely.

India is home for the three quarters of the world's auto-rickshaws, that is three-wheeled motor vehicles which are hired to move people and goods from one place to another place.(Mani and Pant, 2011). Autorickshaw play a very important role in the transportation of the nation as this is being used for trip purposes, practically other types of public transport cannot be used for trips and also less costlier than incurred in a taxi(4).

Auto rickshaw drivers earn wages on the daily basis. Auto rickshaw is the crucial part of mobility in urban India. It is one of the most preferred and economic modes of transportation by the middle class people. Shut down in the country suspended the earning of drivers making them stay at home which affected them financially and psychologically. Financial insecurities often creates psychological problems in individual and living person. So the auto rickshaw drivers faced two challenges at a time during Covid-19 pandemic .Many auto drivers carped that they are forcefully forced by the financiers to pay the instalments of loans or otherwise threatening them to confiscate their auto rickshaws. Even at the personal risk of catching Covid-19 infection, drivers are willing to work but this is their mishap that they are not being able to earn enough money to pay rent and feed their family members.(5,6)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out with following objectives-

- To study the Post Pandemic lockdown, financial status of auto drivers at Indore City.
- To study the Post –Pandemic lockdown, mental health of auto drivers at Indore City.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

COVID-19 pandemic, and lockdown, has impacted the health and livelihood of people in every sectors. The sudden spread of the coronavirus has societally and economically disrupted the lives of all the people but especially to the lives poor and vulnerable communities.

Shri Prakash et al (2020) in their study stated that the mobility sector is seriously affected due to the strict lockdown in all over the country. Autorickshaw plays an imperative role in the transportation also have observable impact on the people working in this area.

Study of Monika Chaudhary et al. (2020) observed that COVID-19 pandemic has stirred the manufacturing and the services sectors a lot .There was reduction in production sector because of lockdown and social distancing ,thus cause a decline in the demand of goods and services by the consumers in the market ,which will ultimately lead to disruption in economic activity

Falguni Acharya and co-workers (2020) stated in their study that in this predicament financial and psychological support is the dire need of auto drivers. They have also not received sufficient aid from government. Their study has thrown light on economic and emotional challenges of auto drivers.

Chakraborty, K. and Chatterje, M. (2020) inferred that this pandemic has negatively affected to the mental health of the respondents to the great amount (14). Study of Luo,M., Guo,L., Yu, M. Jiang W. and Wang ,H.(2020) concluded Covid- 19 damaged seriously not only to the psychological health of medical workers but to the general public also .

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive study was conducted to analyse the post pandemic lockdown effect on financial and mental status of auto drivers at Indore city through survey model.

Convenience sampling method was used to collect data from auto drivers of Indore from almost all major areas of the city. The sample size comprises of responses obtained from 130 auto drivers. The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Structured questionnaire (comprising of demographic and dichotomous questions) was used to collect primary data while research journals and media updates on internet etc. were used for the secondary data collection.

The primary data was analysed with chi-square test conducted to study the following hypotheses.

Hypotheses: On the basis of the objectives, following hypothesis were framed-

Null Hypothesis H₀1: - There is no association between driving years and financial status of auto drivers in post pandemic lockdown.

Alternate Hypothesis H₁1: - There is an association between driving years and financial status of auto drivers in post pandemic lockdown.

Null Hypothesis H₀2: - There is no association between age and financial status of auto drivers in post pandemic lockdown.

Alternate Hypothesis H₁2: - There is an association between age and financial status of auto drivers in post pandemic lockdown.

Null Hypothesis H₀3: - There is no association between financial status and fight in the family of auto drivers in post pandemic lockdown.

Alternate Hypothesis H₁3- There is an association between financial status and fights in the family of auto drivers in post pandemic lockdown.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Hypothesis testing: The above hypotheses are tested using Chi Square test and the results are given in Table1.

Table 1. Chi Square Test

HYPOTHESIS TESTING	VALUE OF CHI SQUARE	TABLE VALUE	P VALUE	NULL HYPOTHESIS
H01	4.707	3.841	.030	NOT ACCEPTED
H02	3.624	3.841	.057	ACCEPTED
H03	3.921	3.841	.048	NOT ACCEPTED

Table 2. Number of Driving Years & Finance Cross tabulation

		FINANCE		
			SAVING	DEBT
driving	less than 10 years	Observed count	9	63
		expected count	13.8	58.2
	more than 10 years	Observed count	16	42
		expected count	11.2	46.8
TOTAL		Observed count	25	105
		expected count	25.0	105.0

From the table Number 1 and 2 the Hypothesis H_{01} is being analysed as following:

H_{01} : The Chi-square value is significant as the p value is **.030 (Table 1)**, since the level of significance is assessed at 5% level, thus the Alternate Hypothesis (H_{11}) is accepted. Therefore, there is enough evidence that there is an association of number of driving years and financial status of auto drivers in the post -pandemic lockdown duration.

The study stated that the auto drivers, who have been driving for more than 10 years, were in less debt as compared to the auto drivers driving for less than 10 years. The savings aspect was also more in favour of auto drivers driving for more than 10 years. Study of Anitha Ramachader et al (2020) contradicts our study and found that with an increase in the experience of a person, ability to save has not increased (16)

The study of Sayooj kumar K.P. (2021) concludes that the socio-economic issues of auto rickshaw drivers need to be addressed immediately to promote their wellbeing.

Table 3. Age & Finance Cross tabulation

			FINANCE	
			SAVING	DEBT
Age	lessthan40 years	Observed Count	9	60
		Expected Count	13.3	55.7
	morethan40 years	Observed Count	16	45
		Expected Count	11.7	49.3
Total		Observed Count	25	105
		Expected Count	25.0	105.0

With reference to Table Number 1 and 3 the Hypothesis H_{02} is being analysed as following:

H_{02} : The Chi-square value is not significant as the p value is .057 (Table 1) at 5 % level of significance. Thus, the Null Hypothesis will be accepted in this case. Therefore, there is enough evidence that there is no association between age and financial status of auto drivers in post-pandemic lockdown duration.

The study of Raman RR (2018) on auto rickshaw drivers stated that there is an association between the age and financial status of auto rickshaw drivers in Chennai city of India, which contradicts our findings

Table 4. Finance and Fight Cross tabulation

			FIGHT	
			YES	NO
Finance	Saving	Observed Count	6	19
		Expected Count	10.4	14.6
	Debt	Observed Count	48	57
		Expected Count	43.6	61.4
Total		Observed Count	54	76
		Expected Count	54.0	76.0

The above table shows that there is significant association between age ($p= 0.000$ less than 0.05) and income ($p= 0.000$ less than 0.05) with the opinion of auto drivers. The mean value of auto drivers (33.6154) shows that the respondents who are having 6-10 years of experience are facing huge problems than any other group. The study of Rangarajan Raman stated that an analysis of Socio-economic life style and Professional satisfaction of Auto-rickshaw drivers in Chennai city.

With reference to Table Number 1 and 4 the Hypothesis H_03 is being analysed as following:

In the third hypotheses (H_03) analysis, the null hypothesis is not accepted, the calculated p value of chi -square is .048 which is assessed at 5 percent level of significance.

In the study it was found that there was a significant effect of financial status on the fights in the family and mental health of auto drivers, regardless of the finances being from savings or debt.

Study of Sayooj Kumar KP concludes that health issues of auto drivers need to be addressed immediately, to protect their health and preserve their generation.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the Auto rickshaw drivers faced financial instability during post pandemic lockdown. On the basis of the study, it is concluded that there is an association between driving years and financial status of auto drivers during post-pandemic lockdown. During covid-19 lockdown there was hardly any source of income for auto drivers, they had to survive on their savings and debt. The study also concludes that there is no association between financial status and age of auto drivers. The elder auto drivers faced the financial challenges similar to the young ones.

The analysis of the study also concludes that the mental health (fights) is associated with the financial status of auto drivers. During lockdown, financial status has affected their mental health and fights in the family.

SUGGESTIONS

- Banks should provide loans at lower rate of interest for longer period so that the auto drivers do not have a financial burden during the pandemic or other natural disaster situations.
- Auto drivers should be trained or counselled to form a self-help group or cooperative society to save the funds and help each other to establish a steady financial status during the time of crisis. Governments or NGO can step forward to train the auto drivers for the same.
- Easily accessible Help line numbers should be generated by Government or Non-Government Organisations where auto drivers are counselled to cope up with their mental health.

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