

**Road Safety Awareness Campaign in Bangladesh**  
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**Research Report**

*Heavy Vehicle Drivers in Bangladesh:  
An Ethnography*

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Mobility is a precondition of human existence and inclination to change location is an innate quality of human being. Shortly after birth, a baby starts making an effort to move from one place to another and within a short while acquires the quality. Not only that they learn to move themselves physically but also move objects from one place to another. Without the mobility function of the society will cease to exist. Instead of placing arguments in support for this statement, as it is unanimously accepted, we may paraphrase the statement – continuation of society depends upon physical mobility of human being and objects.

With the advancement of society, in course of time, the people became more efficient with mobility. In simple society people without any alternative traveled on foot and carried loads on their body or hand. Over time they learned to domesticate animals and started carrying themselves and their loads on the backs of some of these animals. Next they invented wheel and cart. The carts were pulled by the animals and they started traveling on carts and same they did with their loads. These changes in the process of mobility made people more efficient in terms of number of people and amount of load carried and time required for the same. Revolution in transportation took place with the invention of the process of rotating wheel with the help of steam power. Same was done at a later stage with the help of motor run by burning gasoline.

With these inventions different types of motorized vehicles were invented and introduced for mobility. Buses for carrying large number of people and trucks for carrying large quantity of goods were two types of vehicles which are widely used now in any parts of the world including Bangladesh. With the advancement of transports roads were also developed, which complemented in the efficient mobility across land.

**Growth of vehicles and road network:** Road transport is increasingly playing an important role in Bangladesh. The number of registered motor vehicles on road increased steadily by 85 percent within the last decade from 3,39,448 in 1990 to 6,29,488 in 2000 (Hoque 2004). The composition of motor vehicle on road is characterized by 46 percent motorcycle, 14 percent motorcars, 12 percent truck, 12 percent baby taxi, nine percent bus/minibus, and seven percent other vehicles (Hoque 2004). To cater for the growing demand of road transport the major road network (national highways, regional roads and feeder roads) increased from 15,670 km in 1994 to 22,378 km in 2001 (RHD website, BBS). National and regional highways form the primary road network of Bangladesh and are carrying 38 percent of freight and 60 percent of passenger traffic with overall modal share of about 60 percent freight and 70 percent passenger (Hoque, et al., n.d.).

**Striking characteristics of road accident in Bangladesh:** As because of locomotion transports are likely to hit one another and other inanimate and animate objects, which in cases can result damage/fatality; situation referred to as accident. Number of accidents has increased by 43% between 1982 and 2000 (Muniruzzaman and Mitra 2005). Number of fatalities due to accidents increased from 1,597 in 1994 to 3,334 in 2003, nearly 2.5 times in 10 years period. The statistics indicate that Bangladesh has one of the highest fatality rates in road accident, over 100 deaths per 10,000 motor vehicles (Hoque 2004). Together with the social impact in terms of pain, grief, and suffering, there is a serious economic burden. In current prices, road accident in Bangladesh is costing community in the order to Tk.5,000 crore (US \$800 million), nearly 2 percent of GDP per annum (Hoque 2004). Between 70-80 percent of accidents occur on highways and rural roads (Hoque, Muniruzzaman and Ahmed 2005).

**Over involvement of truck and bus:** Heavy vehicles such as trucks and buses including minibuses are major contributors to road accidents. In context a study indicated

This group of vehicles is particularly over involved in pedestrian accidents accounting for about 79 percent (truck 37 percent, bus 20 percent and minibus 22 percent). At some locations trucks involvement was found to range from 43 to 50 percent. In metropolitan Dhaka, it was found that almost 90 percent of road deaths, a truck, bus or a minibus were involved. They were involved in 86 percent of pedestrian deaths, 97 percent of rickshaw pullers deaths and 100 percent of bicyclist deaths. Most recent study shows that heavy vehicles (trucks, buses and minibuses) account for nearly 64% of all fatal accidents although their share in vehicle fleet is about 15 percent. (Hoque et al, n.d..)

Besides pedestrians, frequent involvement of buses and trucks were found in ‘running-of-road’ (and hitting roadside objects), hit and run, and out-of-control type of accidents.

Economic growth in one cense means increase in mobility of people and goods; which in turn means an increased demand for trucks and buses for transportation. The drivers driving trucks and buses throughout the country form a community and also because of their job they have turned themselves to a distinct culture group – deserving an ethnographic investigation. Secondly, past studies have looked into the increase in the incidence of accident as the direct consequence of rapid growth in population, motorization, and urbanization and lack of adequate investment in road safety (**reference**). A very high rate of involvement of bus and truck made it desirable knowing the life style of drivers behind the steering wheel of the vehicle. The problem was likely to provide an insight on the causes of accident by them. And, in turn find a way out for minimizing accidents. These arguments, in fact, prompted us to conduct this study on bus and truck drivers.

The vehicles under observation can be divided into several categories. Those used in this study are:

**Heavy-truck:** Recommended to carry cargo not more than 5 tons though are capable of carrying more. These trucks usually carry inter-district freights.

**Light-truck:** Recommended to carry cargoes not more than 3 tons though are capable of carrying more. These trucks carry freights within the town and districts but in occasion travels inter-districts when required.

**Bus:** Travels inter-cities but inter-districts in cases. These buses have a capacity to carry large number of passengers. Transport companies (*paribahan*) employ large number of buses in intercity service.

**Minibus:** Travels from district to upazial towns but in cases travel inter-district towns having a shorter route. These vehicles have a capacity to carry smaller number of passengers than buses.

Occupational life of drivers hover around five basic components as presented below.

- **Drivers’ union:** It is the elected body of drivers formed to look after their interests. When drivers are in problems like running into an accident union gets involved into the matter to save the driver. Another important work of the union is to fix the trip schedule of buses and trucks. Clients approach union to provide them trucks to transport goods; to which union responds by assigning trucks registered under them. In the case of bus union assigns them to different routes to passengers’ surprise. It also arranges replacement for the bus scheduled to a route but failed to operate. Union also provides bus to clients who want to rent it for private use. Out of schedule trips are made available to drivers in a short notice. These trips are also assigned to the drivers on first come first service basis or by following some other policy.

Union has an office located at the terminal or close to it. These offices have TV and indoor sports for the members to enjoy. Arbitrations (*shalish*) on disputes are also held at this office.

- Terminal: It is the place where vehicles are kept when not running. There are separate terminals for bus and truck and are located by the side of main roads in district towns. In the case of cities where trucks and buses are allowed to enter at a fixed time the terminals are located in the outskirts of the cities. In the terminal drivers associates with fellow drivers, entertain themselves, take rest, do job related work, and remain in lookout for trips which are not scheduled.
- Owner: The word ‘owner’ refers to person who employs the drivers to drive their vehicles – employer. Drivers get into a verbal or written contract with the owner in order to drive their vehicles. Employer monitors and supervises the worker of the driver and his associates. Employer could own few vehicles or a fleet of vehicles running under a transport company.
- Colleague: They are the fellow drivers associated for being in the same profession and sharing the same terminal in most cases. As they associate over a period they form a community. Though they come to each others help they also compete with each other for allocation of trips available in the route. Colleagues also include helpers, who are apprentice learning how to drive, and supervisors collecting tickets in the bus. Helpers address their driver-boss as *ostads*.
- Customer: Refers to person to whom drivers provide service by letting them ride in or carry goods in the vehicle the drivers are driving. In the case of bus it is the passengers who aboard the bus and in the case of truck it is the person/organization who rents the truck.

### **Methodology**

An approach integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods was taken for this study. Former focused on providing numeric description and association among parameters, whereas the latter besides providing qualitative description of the variables helped in explaining the association between them. In order to serve these objectives data were collected from drivers, helpers, transport owners, and traffic police. Variety of research techniques were used to collect data from these sources – survey, case studies, focus-group discussion, in-depth interview, and participation observation. Data derived by using these techniques complemented and supplemented each other in the analysis conducted in the study

**Sample size:** Although it was not the objective of the study to derive a statistically representative findings rather capture the variations that the driver might have in different aspects of their life, accordingly the sample size was estimated. In response to this objective the study planned to observe drivers in six divisional towns and two district towns from each of these divisions. As it became difficult to get drivers fulfilling the condition for to be selection in any of the district town within Sylhet division one district (*sadar*) was selected from the division, instead an additional district town was selected conveniently from Rajshahi division for data collection.

Twenty-four terminals one for truck and another for bus from each of the district and division towns were selected. The drivers union associated with the terminals provided the list of drivers registered for the union. The drivers, i.e., respondents, were randomly selected from the list for interviews. In reality many of the drivers selected for interview were not available as they were out of station on trips. After repeated failure in getting hold of them substitutes available in the terminals were interviewed.

Altogether 416 drivers were interviewed, with 33-36 from each cities and towns selected. As considerable number of substitutes had to be selected for interview and also because the lists

provided by the union were not comprehensive the drivers selected were not proportional in terms of type of vehicle associated with the terminals or unions.

**Case-study:** Twelve case-studies were conducted. The cases were purposively selected from among the respondents interviewed for survey after believing that they would be most informative for the study. The cases equally represented the types of vehicles considered in the study. Data from the cases were collected in three sessions in consecutive days.

**Focus-group discussion:** Twelve focus group discussions were organized with the owners of the vehicles in order to know about their opinions and to crosscheck the information provided by the drivers. The sessions were arranged at the union offices in most cases.

**In-depth interview:** An in-depth interview was conducted with a traffic police. The interview mainly focused on the dynamics how bribes were taken by the police from the drivers. The study intended to interview more police but their cooperation in this respect was not available.

**Participation observation:** Study observed 111 drivers to find out their quality of driving out of those interviewed in survey. Field workers traveled with these drivers while they were driving for about three hours sitting at a strategic location in the vehicle from where drivers could be observed as was required. In the case of vehicles under *paribhan* it became a bit difficult to observe the drivers as seats were allotted to the passengers but problem was managed in all instances.

### **Analysis**

Both qualitative and quantitative modes of analysis were resorted to in the study. The survey provided cross-sectional data based on which bivariate and multivariate tables were developed. The association between variables whether statistically significant were verified by using t-tests. Different variables related to drivers' life were cross-tabulated with types of vehicles driven and number of years they were driving. Of course descriptive analysis of different issues relating to drivers' life has been done in quite an extent. Qualitative information was used to support quantitative findings but in occasions they represented themselves independently. Data derived from different sources on an issue or parameter provided a scope for corroboration of data collected.

### **Presentation of findings**

Both qualitative and quantitative information were mashed together in the presentation. The findings were grouped under number of short chapters. Major issues the chapters covered are: demographic, social, economic, and health profiles; distribution of time on work and leisure; addictions, knowledge on driving and standard of driving; relationship with the owner; association with union and political parties; social status; problems in the profession; and job satisfaction. As because overwhelming number of respondents were not owning the vehicles but driving for somebody owning the same most of the presentations in the following sections were on those respondents. The findings were followed by a section on discussion, conclusion and recommendation. Numeric findings presented in the text in cases are supported by tables but in others only in text.



## Chapter 2

### Profiles of Respondent and their Families

The chapter starts with the description of the processes how respondents get into the driving profession. Next, a profile covering demographic, social, economic, and health condition of the respondents and their families have been presented to provide readers with some basic ideas on them.

### Why and How Became a Driver

Becoming a driver followed a gradual and systematic process. It was reported that 96.4 percent (401) of the respondents learnt driving from *ostads*, i.e., they became helper in order to learn driving. The rest (3.1 percent) became driver by attending driving schools and by paying professional drivers. A negligible number (.2 percent) of respondents' family owned vehicles so they had an opportunity to learn driving in a more informal setup from the family member. Majority of respondents who started as helper believed that, that was the available entry point in driving profession for them and they held the ultimate objective of becoming driver in course of time.

### Getting into Driving Profession

In most cases respondents got into driving profession as helper at a young age, around 12-13, when they were expected to be in school. Obviously at this stage they did not have any skill or educational prerequisite necessary to enter into a job. Recruitment of the respondents as helper provided them an opportunity to have on the job training in an informal setup. Respondents in cases approached the driver that they would like to work as helpers under these drivers and thereby managed the position by themselves. But in other cases, respondents were introduced to their *ostads* by somebody who knew both of them. In a few cases respondents started their career as helper of automobile mechanics. While in this job they felt that driving profession would be more lucrative and at the same time came across drivers who were willing to take them as their helpers and thus they moved to driving profession.

To most respondents pursuing education was expected to be the prime objective before they got into the profession. They discontinued school as they were not interested in it or were not smart enough to pass the exams. So they willingly decided to become helpers as per advice of others or by seeing someone whom they knew doing the same. Their parents were not happy with the decision of these respondents. In the case of others they were forced to discontinue education with the premature death of earning member within the family. With the death of earning member the responsibility of earning and running family came upon the respondents. Again in cases of some respondents their families were not in a position to bear the educational expenses of these respondents so they had to discontinue education.

In above instances respondents were forced to become helpers. But for some though their families were not poverty stricken, they became helpers as the profession ran in the family; as their fathers or other close relatives were drivers thus their families had a culture of pursuing the profession. These respondents were expected, advised, and encouraged by their elders to take up the job. Thus by following the steps of elders within the family they got into the profession willingly at a school going age. Some of the respondents selected the profession after being fascinated by its nature. The respondents were thrilled by fantasizing that the job would provide them an opportunity to travel throughout the country thus they would view and experience different things

not possible in other jobs. The job was considered to be an easy one which was also a factor for them to take up the profession.

**Table 2.1: Reasons Respondents Chose to Becoming Helper (n = 416)**

Reason	Percentage
Did not get any other job	31.3
Failing to continue education	45.9
Influence of others or previous jobs	26.2
Liked driving profession	25.2
High income and easy money in driving profession	20.7

Of course, higher income was an attraction in becoming a driver. The respondents saw that the job was paying more than the others available they could get into. A higher income of the drivers was a major reason for all the efforts they made in promoting themselves from helper to driver in earlier stage of their carriers.

In cases multiple factors have influenced respondents to become helpers. Failing to continue education followed by not getting any other job appeared to be most important reasons for becoming helper (Table 2.1). Number of respondents with other reasons for becoming helper had small variations. Not getting any other job as reason for becoming helper indicates that the entry to the position was not of much interest to these respondents.

There was no set prerequisite for the respondents to get selected as helpers. In most cases it was the discretion of the *ostads* whom they would select as their helpers. In some cases *ostads* believed that the respondents would be obedient or was strong enough to do work needed thus selected the respondents as their helpers. Of course the helper was appointed after being permitted by the owner of the vehicle.

### Process of becoming driver

The process of becoming driver, i.e., learning how to drive, followed a distinct pattern in most cases. Although the objective of the helper was to learn how to drive provides some services to the driver and for this he receives a small remuneration from the owner. In few cases the helper paid his *ostad* for the training he provided.

The process of learning started with assisting the driver in number of ways. When the vehicle was on road helper helped the driver in overtaking other vehicles by making certain noise that those might give right of way to the respondents speeding vehicle, help the vehicle to park by moving the pedestrians and light vehicles from the place to parke on, helping the driver in driving back wards by signaling from the rear of the vehicle. Responsibility of the helper also included cleaning and helping in fixing the vehicle in the case of problem. As helper respondents sat by the

#### Box 2.1

Mutalleb remarked, “As a helper I watched how *ostad* drove on road. Besides, when *ostad* gave me the key to park the truck by roadside, move the truck to another location for a wash, garage the truck after unloading the goods, place the truck in pump station I managed to learn how to drive from there.”

#### Box 2.2

Nurnobi became helper of a truck driver when he was only 11 years old. His *ostad* taught him well and finally allowed him to drive on the highway. After working with the driver for two years he believed that he had gained enough skill and knowledge in driving. He wanted to take over the charge as full driver. As was refused he left his *ostad* and became helper of a bus driver. After being with this *ostad* for eight months he was again refused to take up the charge of the vehicle. The rejection frustrated him very much so he returned back home and started working as cook. This job did not help him in getting rid of frustration. So he again became helper of a truck driver who belonged to his village. He spent a year with him and finally became the driver of a light-truck.

side of their *ostads* so that they could observe how the vehicles were being driven and traffic rules were followed. Often the *ostad* explained their actions related to driving but in some cases the respondents asked for that.

Over time *ostads* introduced the respondents with driving the vehicle. Driving usually started by parking the vehicle by the side of the road and by moving it for a short distance within the town when traffic was not heavy. With the development of the skill the helper was allowed to drive in part of the route considered to be safe to drive by a learner and with further development of the skill they were given the scope for driving the whole route (Box 2.1). This was how respondents graduated as driver from helper. The judgment whether the respondents graduated as driver lied with the *ostad* and/or helper (Box 2.2).

The relationship between driver and helper was structured where helpers had to follow the instruction of *ostads* without questioning but the relationship was not necessarily formal. In some cases the *ostads* misbehaved and physically abused their helpers. Helpers could lose their jobs in an instant unless it was the owner of the vehicle who appointed them.

As helpers respondents observed and learnt driving from their *ostads*. In cases while working as helpers they managed to develop connection with vehicle owners who were willing to hire them as the driver of their vehicles in future. Respondents possessing the skill of mechanics had a higher demand in the job market of drivers because they could fix the vehicle in many instances when it broke down on the highway.

### Demographic Profile

**Respondent:** Respondents were not evenly distributed among the type of vehicles they were driving (Table 2.2). Majority of the respondents (40.9 percent) were driving heavy-trucks and smallest number (9.6 percent) were driving light-trucks. In the case of years driving majority (50 percent) were driving for 1-9 years. On an average respondents were of 36.3 years of age. Respondents driving heavy-truck and bus were slightly older than their counterparts. It was quite natural that the respondents driving for a longer time were older in age compared to those driving for a shorter period. Five percent (21) of the respondents were driving own vehicle whereas the rest were driving for some other owners.

On an average respondents had 4.6 years of schooling. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents were married. Distribution of these married drivers in terms of type of vehicle and year driving did not present any significant variation. Even then it may be noted that slightly more number of respondents driving bus were married. Naturally proportion of married respondents increased with age and number of years they were driving.

**Table 2.2: Types of Vehicle and Years Driving by Respondents' Age (n=416)**

Parameters	Number	Percentage	Mean age
<b>Type of vehicle</b>			
Heavy-truck	170	40.9	36.6
Light-truck	40	9.6	33.2
Bus	121	29.1	38.3
Minibus	85	20.4	34.4
<b>Years driving</b>			
1-9	208	50.0	31.2
10-19	129	31.0	39.3
20 years or more	79	18.0	44.9
Total	416	100.0	36.3

**Family:** On an average respondents' family had 5.3 members. This was higher than the national standard, i.e., 4.5 according to 1991 census (BBS 2001). Of these families 96.6 percent were nuclear families and the rest (3.4 percent) were joint families, meaning that the families had respondents, their wives and children. Respondent were household heads in 80.2 percent of the instances and in others elder brother, son or wife were the household heads. With aging of the respondents their family sizes had become bigger (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3: Demographic Parameters of Respondents' Family (n=416)**

Parameter	Family size (%)	Sex ratio	Demographic dependency ratio	Marital Status (%)	IGA involvement (%)	NGO participation (%)
<b>Type of vehicle</b>						
Heavy-truck	5.3	92.9	16.0	84.7	42.9	37.6
Light-truck	5.3	89.3	15.5	82.5	50.0	50.0
Bus	4.9	104.2	18.2	93.4	25.6	40.5
Minibus	5.7	103.6	17.8	84.7	37.6	58.8
<b>Years driving</b>						
1-9	5.2	92.6	18.0	76.0	44.7	47.6
10-19	5.4	107.7	16.7	97.7	28.7	41.1
20 years or more	5.5	103.7	14.9	98.7	32.9	39.2
Total	5.3	96.3	17.0	87.0	37.5	44.0

**Sex ratio:** In general there were less number of male compared to female in respondents' households, i.e., there were 96.3 male for 100 female. But this ratio was not uniform amongst the groups. Proportion of male was smaller than female for the respondents driving trucks but for those driving bus followed a reverse trend. Again there was lesser number of males compared to females in the family of respondents driving for 1-9 years but the trend reversed for driving for a long period. The change in the ratio of male and female within the family was likely to have a bearing on the families.

**Education of children:** Of the children 5-7 years of age present at home 67.7 percent were attending school. At age 5 when children were expected to start school only 3.4 percent were attending school. Similarly at age six and seven 34.1 percent and 75.0 percent were attending school respectively. Although with age the attendance of children to school had become higher but late starting and low attendance indicted that the respondents' families were not very serious in educating their children

**Income Generating Activities:** Thirty-seven-point-five percent (156) of respondents' families had members other than themselves involved in income generating activities. In 46.8 percent of these households, respondents were driving heavy-truck, 12.8 percent driving small truck, 19.9 percent driving bus, and 20.5 percent driving minibus. Although considerable number of members from respondents' families were involved in income generating activities, only 2.9% (12) of the respondents' wives were from nuclear families. In nuclear families other than wife grownup children were likely to be involved in income generating activities. Considerable number of respondents from joint families had members other than their wives involved in income generating activities.

**NGO participation:** Forty-four percent of the respondents' families had at least a member associated with development activities of the NGO. Such families were highest in the case of the respondents driving minibus. In most cases they received credit from the NGOs. Not necessarily the credit was used in IGAs in all instances or the person receiving the credit was involved in its use (Table 2.3).

## Empowerment Status

Empowerment of members from respondents family was viewed in terms of participation in the decision making and their execution within the family. Incidence of violence within the family also gave an idea of the status of respondents family and members within.

## Decision Making Within Family

Nature of decision making in the respondents' family was assessed by observing the process followed in buying selected items within the family. Process of buying items included three stages. First, expressing the need of buying a commodity – indicating the persons' position felt the need within the family. Second, visiting shop physically and buying commodity – indicating the scope of and physical mobility of the person buying within the family. Finally, person paying for the commodity for which need was felt – indicated the economic capacity of the person within the family. Members involved with the process were considered not only more into the decision making but also being more important and empowered within the family.

**Table 2.4: Processes of Buying Selected Commodities by Respondents' Family Members**

Commodity	Who felt need of buying				Who bought the items				Who paid for the item			
	Res. <sup>1</sup>	R&W <sup>2</sup>	W <sup>3</sup>	Oth <sup>4</sup>	Res. <sup>1</sup>	R&W <sup>2</sup>	W <sup>3</sup>	Oth <sup>4</sup>	Res. <sup>1</sup>	R&W <sup>2</sup>	W <sup>3</sup>	Oth <sup>4</sup>
Clothes: Respondent	89.4 (227)	9.4 (24)	.4 (1)	.8 (2)	89.8 (228)	5.5 (14)	3.1 (8)	1.6 (4)	99.2 (252)	-	-	.8 (2)
Clothes: Wife	43.2 (165)	41.6 (159)	11.3 (43)	3.9 (15)	66.0 (252)	22.8 (87)	6.8 (26)	4.5 (17)	97.9 (374)	.5 (2)	.5 (2)	.8 (3)
Clothes: children	21.8 (78)	46.5 (166)	19.9 (71)	11.8 (42)	58.0 (207)	24.9 (89)	7.3 (26)	9.8 (35)	94.4 (337)	.6 (2)	1.4 (5)	3.6 (13)
Clothes: Relative	63.4 (71)	8.9 (10)	2.7 (3)	25.0 (28)	73.2 (82)	4.5 (5)	2.7 (3)	19.6 (22)	82.1 (92)	-	-	17.9 (20)
Ornament	31.3 (5)	31.3 (5)	25.0 (4)	12.5 (2)	56.3 (9)	18.8 (3)	12.5 (2)	12.5 (2)	93.8 (15)	-	-	6.3 (1)
Furniture	20.0 (3)	40.0 (6)	26.7 (4)	13.3 (2)	53.8 (8)	26.7 (4)	20.0 (3)	-	93.3 (14)	-	6.7 (1)	-
Electronics	36.8 (7)	10.5 (2)	36.8 (7)	15.8 (3)	73.7 (14)	-	15.8 (3)	10.5 (2)	84.2 (16)	-	5.3 (1)	10.5 (2)
Cattle	50.0 (14)	17.9 (5)	14.3 (4)	17.9 (5)	75.0 (21)	14.3 (4)	3.6 (1)	7.1 (2)	75.0 (21)	7.1 (2)	3.6 (1)	7.1 (2)
Valuable items	70.0 (14)	10.0 (2)	5.0 (1)	15.0 (3)	90.0 (18)	-	5.0 (1)	5.0 (1)	85.0 (17)	-	5.0 (1)	5.0 (1)

<sup>1</sup>Respondent himself; <sup>2</sup>Jointly by respondent and wife; <sup>3</sup>Wife only; <sup>4</sup>Relatives

Items taken into consideration and purchased included clothes and ornaments individually used, furniture and electronics collectively but in cases individually used, cattle likely to bring revenue for the family, and expensive items like land, house, house building materials, tractors, and vehicle.

Table 2.4 in general indicates that majority of respondents played a role in deciding, buying, and paying for the items consumed in the family. Even in the case of clothes used by wives respondents decided on their purchase in most cases. Contrary to this trend, in the case of children's clothes the need was felt jointly by respondents and their wives in quite a good number of families. In the case of cattle and valuable items it was almost the sole responsibility of respondents to decide on the purchase. In the case of electronics a sizable number of wives had felt the need of buying these items. In the case of buying wives' and children's clothes and furniture a sizable number of wives accompanied respondents in the purchases. In general, for

most of the items majority of respondents had a role in deciding which commodities were to be purchased, participation in their purchases, and also paying for their purchases. The processes followed in purchasing the commodities indicate that the respondents not only had played a major role probably an authoritarian one in the family particularly when we saw that respondents had felt the need of buying items exclusively used by the family members and others had a very small contribution in paying for the items.

As a sizable number of respondents had to stay a good number of days in a month out of home obviously question arises who managed the family when they were away. When respondents were away from home obviously their wives were in charge of their home particularly in nuclear family (Box 2.3). Wife never had problem in running day to day affairs of the family which were more or less set. Respondents had full confidence on their wives' capability in doing that. In spite of this, respondents always kept contact with the family to make sure that family was functioning smoothly. In the case of a situation arising not fully within the set routine when respondent was away from home he advised wife how to handle the situation mostly on cell-phone.

**Box 2.3**

It was remarked, "As I have to remain outside home for 15 or more days in a month, my wife takes care of every thing such as marketing, sending kids to school, and employing house teacher, etc. She knows best what things are necessary for the family. He just handed over his income to his wife."

Again there were respondents who were not even interested in keeping things updated how the family was managed during their absence. They just hand over the money earned from a trip to their wives after returning home. They were happy with the ways things were managed, had confidence that their wives had the capacity to manage it well, or did not care about it.

Obvious question arises who sets the course of action for routine activities to be followed by the family and who takes decision on issues which did not fall within the routine activities. Who should be the decision maker depends upon the attitude of the head of the family, i.e., respondents attitude on their wives and other members of the family. They believed that women were less knowledgeable to take decision. In context a respondent remarked – *Wife does not understand much, as they stay at home. What she knows about the outside world. I take decision on what should be and what should not be done.* Respondents were the main decision maker in the family. Before leaving home for a trip respondent advised their wives what they were supposed to do, where they should go and necessary decisions were given in advance for situation likely to arise. After returning home and even while on trip respondents made sure that the things were done as advised.

In some cases respondents discussed with their wives on different issues but the privilege of giving ultimate decision remained with the respondent. Wives hardly had any influence on respondents decision making. While taking decision on major issue, like making house, marrying daughter, respondent often discussed with relatives and in these cases the opinion of male relatives were valued more than that of wife or even mother.

## **Violence**

There were respondents who praised their wives for the ways they managed their families. As because of this and for having a good understanding with wives respondents never thought of violating them. Respondents in the group believed that couples could have disagreement on many trifling matters but that should not lead to violence. Respondent believed that women should be understood with patience and when understood they could be convinced to do anything. So there was no need of forcing them to do something for the family. Against such an attitude there were

respondents who believed that quarrel with wife was a normal incidence so also beating wife during quarrel.

In fact 33.4 percent of the respondents mentioned that they did not violate their wife or any body within last one year (Table 2.5). Of course, rest did it within the same period and it was inflicted in three forms. Most common was psychological violence. It was a verbal attack using hostile language psychologically traumatizing the victims. Next was physical violence, including offensive physical contact or bodily harm, done on the victim. Finally a small number of action related violence were done, where victims were impeded from taking rightful action as desired or victims were unlawfully forced to take an action s/he did not intended to take. Of those violating, most was done on wives (84.0 percent), 11.5 percent was done on daughter or other relatives, and 9 percent on somebody not related (Table 2.6).

**Table 2.5: Types of Violence Committed by Respondents in Last Year (n = 416)**

Violence	Percentage
Psychological	61.8
Action related	4.6
Physical	19.2
Did not commit any	33.4

**Table 2.6: Types of Violence Respondents Committed by Types of Victims (n = 277)**

Violence	Victim		
	Wife	Daughter/relative	Outside family
Psychological	84.0	79.9	96.0
Action related	7.4	7.7	.0
Physical	27.9	48.7	32.

Sometime each type of violence was done exclusively in an incidence but in other instances they came in combination one following the other or simultaneously. Usually physical violence was preceded by argument and quarrel. Respondents had different attitude about these violence and the extent they would like to go in doing these. Some did not assault their wives as it was not required. If required probably they would not hesitate in doing that. In contrast others did hit their wives rarely in the past and was sorry about it. But, in cases others so often they beat their wives and believed that it was very normal as everybody did it. Some of the respondents did not violate in front of children as they believed that it would set a bad example to them but others did this without taking this into account or having argument in absence of children was not possible. Some of these wives were aware of the limit of the argument beyond which their husbands would assault them physically, in these cases wives complied with husband's desire before the limit was crossed.

**Box 2.4**

Previously Babul's wife would visit her father's home three/four times a year and she never returned back unless Babul went personally to bring her back. Because of the visit to bring her back Babul could not drive for three/four days during each visit. It affected his income and created a scope for the employer to hire a replacement for him. As because of these Babul does not allow his wife to visit her father's home more than once in a year although she expresses her desire to make more frequent visits.

In cases when wives failed to carryout activities as was expected or did something not desired respondents threatened wife to do the activities with a note of caution what would be the consequences if the instruction was not carried out. The threats were often that they would be beaten, sent to fathers home, or would be deprived of something that they cherished. Through this process respondents controlled wives' action. Again in cases, respondents applied force to limited wives activities. Respondents also restricted wives action by not cooperating with them in doing something they would and were not capable of doing that by themselves, e.g., visit fathers home (Box 2.4). Assaulting physically with differential severity was the most extreme form of violence on the wives. More angry the respondents were more severe were these assaults.

### **Box 2.5**

Other day Kamrul made a trip in a remote village where his truck got stuck in mud. He wanted to have lunch in a local hotel but could not as the rice served was stale. Finding no option around 3 pm being very hungry he went back home to take lunch after keeping behind his helper to look after the truck. As soon as he entered the house his wife without realizing his state of mind started complaining for not giving any money to her. He tired to convince her by mentioning that he did not know that she was in need of money but his wife was not convinced and kept on complaining. Very soon the argument turned to a quarrel. At one point Kamrul lost temper and hit her.

There was variety of reasons for violating wives. Most of the violence took place when wife made a demand, e.g., provide money, buy some commodity, or take her out, just after respondents returned back from work and she was persistent with her demand in spite of respondent not willing to listen to it and meet the demand. Such a situation often led to an argument where raised complain against him and the incidence finally ended with a physical assault on her (Box 2.5). Respondent reacted most when wife did not carry out her responsibilities deliberately and if that was noticed immediately after returning home.

Respondents assaulted their wives physically in most cases when they failed to carryout household responsibilities. Or did something not desired like developing extramarital relationship by taking advantage of respondents' absence from home during trip. Again respondents violated their wives in order to make their father-in-law to provide dowry, which was promised in marriage.

Respondent unanimously agreed that their violence on wives had a bad effect. Most importantly it disrupted peace in the family. Respondents could make their wives do something as desired but that was always with a reaction from her after not like by the respondents. For example, a respondent managed to make her wife bring their daughter from school by biting her once but after that she did not talk to him for about a month. In cases where violence was frequent wife returned back to their parents. In most of the instances she returned back to respondent after a request but in few cases they divorced and got remarried.

Some of the respondents were very much aware of the down side of extreme violence and did not want to cross a limit while doing it. In cases respondent would leave home at certain point of the argument, believing that situation might get out of control and return back very late which was not liked by their wives. In the mean time she cooled down and got the things done as was desired by the respondents. In cases respondents managed to convince their wives that they were wrong and got the things straightened as desired.

## **Economic Profile**

Economic profile of the respondents was observed in term of selected economic indicators related to respondents' family – income from driving, expenditure, landholding, nonland asset, saving, and loan.



**Income from driving related sources:** There are three components in the remuneration offered differentially and in different combinations to the respondents (Box 2.6)

1. Monthly salary: In some cases respondents were paid a fixed monthly salary which was very nominal particularly in the case of those driving local bus.
2. Commission: Respondents received a commission on the income from the service of the vehicle. The commission was given either on the total income received from the service of the vehicle at end of the day or on each trip. In these cases respondents did not receive the commission when the vehicle was not in service.

**Box 2.6**

Nurnobi driving for a transport company remarked – I am paid Tk.700 after a up and down trips. The owner gives me a food allowance of Tk.100 for each meal and Tk.50 as night halt for staying in a hotel. There is no problem of getting salary from the company. After each trip the supervisor gives me the salary, allowance and meal and boarding charges. Besides, there is extra income if there are a few empty seats. The income from these sources is Tk.800-1,000 per trip which is divided among the driver, helper, and supervisor running the bus.”

3. Allowance: Respondents received food allowance, night-holtage, and tips. Food allowance provided varied among the respondents. In some cases a fixed amount was given to the respondents for each trip but for others it was adjusted depending upon number of meals taken in the trip. Again, particularly in the case of respondents driving bus, an arrangement was made with a restaurant on the road side where they could have food free of charge. Such a deal was agreed upon as stopping of bus in front of the restaurant made food from the same available also to the passengers aboard. In cases where the owner of the bus did not have an agreement with the restaurant the respondents managed to make such an agreement with a restaurant so that they might take meals free of charge there. Respondent driving trucks were provided with a night-holtage to cover the hotel charge. In some cases they received tips besides commission which was on additional income mainly from caring more passengers, more goods, or from additional trips. About 65 percent of the respondents were receiving tips of different amount for good services.

Besides remuneration packages based on combination of above components, particularly in the case of inter district trucks, owners made an agreement that the driver would pay them a fixed amount at the end of the day and any additional income what ever from the services of the vehicle would remain with the driver. In this case the driver paid for fuel and for other items required for running the vehicle.

Respondents admitted that they hide a part of their income from running the vehicle from the owner. Thus they had an additional earning for themselves or to make up the loss from earlier trip when the income was less than expected. When such an income was handed over to owner respondents had to face a serious doubt of the owner that full income was not given. In such a situation respondents were likely to be sacked if they failed to defend themselves convincingly. In order to avoid such a doubt being raised respondents always kept aside a part of the income from trips to make up less income from a future one.

**Box 2.7**

There was agreement between a truck owner and Humayun that he would get Tk.1,000 per month and 10 percent commission of the total income from a trip but no meal allowance when driving within the Khulna district. But when driving outside the district he would get a fixed allowance from meal in addition to the remuneration received for driving within the district.

In some cases the condition of payment varied depending upon where the vehicle was running and time required for that (Box 2.7). Again some owners personally monitored income from their

vehicles and paid a salary from that to the respondents. In the case of companies the responsibility of paying salary to the drivers was entrusted to the supervisors in charge.

**Income from driving:** On an average respondents earned Tk.9,302 a month from driving. Truck drivers were paid more compared to bus drivers (Table 2.7). Again heavy-truck and bus drivers got paid a little more than their counterparts. With the increase in number of years driving respondents' income increased slightly. On an average respondents received Tk.1,582 per month as salary.

**Table 2.7: Average Monthly Income of Respondents from Driving by Types of Vehicle and Years Driving**

Parameters	Income	
	Number	Amount (Tk.)
<b>Type of vehicle</b>		
Heavy-truck	170	9,538.5
Light-truck	40	9,285.0
Bus	121	8,753.8
Minibus	85	8,196.5
<b>Years driving</b>		
1-9	208	9,107.5
10-19	129	9,321.7
20 years or more	79	9,784.8
Total	416	9,302.5

**Table 2.8: Respondents' Monthly Income from Driving by Types of Contract (n=416)**

Type of Vehicle	Type of Contract		Years Driving	Type of Contract	
	Daily	Per trip		Daily	Per trip
Heavy-truck	6,002.3 (151)	10,042 (159)	1-9	6,119.3 (174)	8,753.6 (195)
Light-truck	7,085.7 (28)	9,716 (36)	10-19	6,727.4 (113)	8,923.4 (113)
Bus	6,977.1 (100)	8,552.4 (110)	20 and above	6,330.3 (66)	9,962.8 (70)
Minibus	5,950.0 (74)	7,197.3 (73)	-	-	-

Respondents received payment based on trips had more income than those who received payment on daily basis for all types of vehicle (Table 2.8). On an average the difference between payments of two types of contracts was Tk.2373.8. Similarly respondents driving on contract had Tk.2820.7 more income than those on daily contract for all age groups. The difference was highest in the case of respondents driving heavy-trucks and have been driving for 20 or more years.

**Table 2.9: Monthly Expenditure of Respondents Family by Types of Vehicle and Number of Years Driving (n=416)**

Parameter	Expenditure (Tk.)	
	Family	Self
<b>Type of vehicle</b>		
Heavy-truck	8,764.7	3,333.4
Light-truck	8,694.5	3,207.0
Bus	9,045.0	3,158.9
Minibus	7,510.3	2,626.1
<b>Number of years driving</b>		
1-9	7,710.5	2,937.4
10-19	9,389.5	3,417.9
20 years or more	9,568.5	3,146.2
Total	8,583.9	3,126.1

**Expenditure:** On an average respondents' families were spending Tk.8583.9 per month. Respondents driving bus were spending mostly. i.e., Tk.9,045, against respondents driving minibus, i.e., Tk.7,510.3, who were spending least amongst the respondents with different types of vehicle (Table 2.9). When respondents were grouped in terms of years driving their expenditure increased with the length of driving. A considerable portion of income was spent on personal consumption of the respondents. On an average they were spending Tk.3,126 per month for own consumption which was about 36.4 percent of total expenditure. In fact, the share of expenditure on personal consumption of respondents was higher than those shown in the table, as some of the expenditures of the respondents when they were staying at home had not been taken into consideration by separating them in the calculation. Expenditure on personal consumption was more or less same for all respondents driving any type of vehicle and number of years driving except for those driving minibus and have been driving for 1-9 years. There were some variations in amount spent on different items when consumption for self was grouped under types of vehicle driven and number of years being driven (Appendix 2.1)

**Table 2.10: Amount of Land Owned by Respondents'**

**Family (in decimal)**

<b>Land holding</b>	<b>Respondents (%)</b>
Homestead land (n = 257)	
1-5	33.1
6-10	29.6
11-15	13.6
16 or more	23.7
Cultivable land (n=79)	
3-33	41.8
34-66	20.3
67-99	7.6
100 or more	30.4

**Land:** Those who owned land in most cases inherited it from their parents. Hardly any respondent could purchased land although they expressed their desire for it. Respondents owned both homestead and cultivable lands. Sixty-one-point-five percent of the respondents own homestead land as against 19.0 percent owning cultivable land. On an average former group owned 13.9 decimals of land where as the latter group owned 75.8 decimals. Although more number of respondents owned lesser amount of land holding, there was exception in the case or small number of respondents owning 16 or more decimals of homestead land and 100 or more decimals of cultivable land (Table 2.10). When respondent were segregated by types of vehicle driven and number of years driving some variation in the amount of land owned may be observed (Appendix 2.2). Respondents driving 20 or more years on an average had 129.2 decimals of land, considerably larger than other categories.

**Other asset:** Besides land respondents' families also possessed variety of asset both collectively and individually used in the family. Most commonly mentioned were electronics, furniture, and ornaments. Respondents made these assets mainly from their income.

An inventory of assets possessed by respondents and their present value was taken based on a list provided to them and other assets not in the list possessed by the respondents. Assets owed by respondents' families worth Tk.67,451 on an average (Table 2.11). Respondents driving heavy-trucks and buses had assets valuing considerably higher than their counterparts. The value of respondents' assets increased steady with number of years they have been driving.

**Table 2.11: Amount of Asset Owned by Respondent's Family  
by Types of Vehicle and Number of Years Driving**

Parameter	Asset	
	Number	Valuation (Tk.)
Type of vehicle		
Heavy-truck	170	72,787.9
Light-truck	40	46,160.0
Bus	121	71,944.2
Minibus	85	60,403.9
Number of years driving		
1-9	208	51,299.4
10-19	129	81,918.2
20 years or more	79	86,356.0
Total	416	67,451.6

**Table 2.12 Respondents' Household Savings by Types of Vehicle and Number of Years Driving (Tk.)**

Parameter	Types of saving			
	Taka	Money lent	Grains	Mortgaged-in
Type of vehicle				
Heavy-truck	27,852.3	11,321.7	19,833.3	-
Light-truck	29,835.3	5,911.1	64,000.0	-
Bus	34,483.3	14,447.4	40,466.7	35,000.0
Minibus	24,686.8	17,435.3	4,666.7	7,000.0
Number of years driving				
1-9	24,695.5	12,275.8	20,375.0	6,000.0
10-19	34,032.7	14,666.7	51,500.0	50,000.0
20 years or more	34,297.5	12,242.9	18,600.0	50,000.0
Total	29,327.8	13,007.4	25,890.0	28,000.0

**Saving:** Table 2.12 represents the item wise distribution of saving. On an average respondents had a saving of Tk.29,327 only. Respondent driving light-truck and minibus had lent smallest and largest amount of money, i.e., Tk.5,911 and Tk.7,000 respectively among the groups driving different types of vehicle. Similarly respondents driving minibus had least amount of grains in their stocks. On the other hand respondents driving for 1-9 years mortgaged least amount of land.

Respondents believed that their savings, especially money, was supposed to be large than what it was in order it to be consistent with there income from driving. One reason for having a smaller saving was that their job was not a steady one. Often they remained unemployed and during this period they had to spend the saving made when they had a job. Consequently, at the end of year they were left with a little or non savings. Moreover drivers' lifestyle is not supportive to have a saving. As it was remarked – *Drivers earn easy and spends easy.*

**Loan:** Sixty-one percent (257) of the respondents loaned money from different sources (Table 2.13). Some of these sources were formal institutions like NGO and bank offering credit with or without collateral, on the other hand other sources, like friend, were informal in nature where the conditions of the loan were more flexible. Of different sources, 51.8 percent of the respondents borrowed money from NGOs and Grameen Bank. Loans in most cases were made by the respondent's family members. Least number of respondents borrowed money from moneylender (3.5 percent) closely followed by (3.9 percent). Respondents preferred not to go to moneylenders for loan as the interest charged by them was very high and to the bank as the procedure for

receiving loan included number of steps considered difficult to follow. Of course, bank was preferred for a larger loan and a few of the respondents received that.

**Table 2.13: Sources from Where Respondents Loaned Money (n=257)**

Source	Percentage	Amount (Tk.)
Money lender	3.5	24,811.1
Relative	30.4	28,224.4
Friend	12.8	15,900.0
Neighbor	11.3	22,351.7
Bank	3.9	118,800.0
NGO and Grameen Bank	51.8	10,950.8
Store/mortgage land/buy garage	10.1	16,219.4
Total		20,955.5

On an average respondent loaned Tk.20,955.5. Money received from bank was largest in size (Tk.118,800) and was loaned for big investment. The loan received from NGOs and Grameen Bank was smallest in size and was made in the name of investment in productive sectors.

Sixty-one-percent of the respondents borrowed money invested it in different sectors and in cases it was done in multiple sectors (Table 6.2). About 50 percent of the respondents used the loan in special family occasions like marriage of daughter. Next, 37.4 percent of the respondents invested their loan in productive sector, like buy pickup, likely to generate income. Closely followed, another 35.4 percent used the loan to buy commodities for everyday family consumption. These loans were small in size. Another 5.8 percent used the loan to help others like help brother to go abroad.

Due to nature of job respondents had a high risk of accident. When they ran into an accident they often borrowed money for treatment. Loans when taken willingly were repaid from the income derived from the job but in the case of loans which respondents were forced to take due to unexpected incidences like accident were repaid by selling assets in cases.

**Table 2.14: Self-Assessment on Round the Year Food Availability  
Status in Respondents' Household (n=416)**

Status	Percentage
Deficit for whole year	2.2
Occasional deficit	19.5
No deficit and no surplus	32.9
Some surplus	45.4

**Poverty Self Assessment:** Majority of the respondents (45.4 percent) believed to have some surplus food items stored in their household round the year as against only 2.2 percent who had had deficit throughout the year (Table 2.14). Fifty-four percent of the respondents driving heavy-truck had 'no deficit and no surplus' throughout the year (Appendix 2.3). Again 56.1 percent of the respondents driving for 1-9 years had some surplus throughout the years. In spite of having less income from driving the group had surplus as because it had less needs to meet compared to other groups. Money spent on consumption by the group was less than the others.

### Health Profile

Twenty-three-point-eight percent of the respondents reported to have some health problems, considered to be serious, within last one year (Table 2.15). Majority of these respondents (44.4 percent) suffered from gastro intestinal track problems, indicating problem in stomach, gastric ulcer, typhoid, appendix, piles, dysentery, and diarrhea. Next common health problem was non

communicable diseases (18.2 percent) closely followed by other health problems (17.2 percent). Non-communicable disease included cardiac problem, blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, tumor, and heart problem. Whereas ‘others’ diseases included problem in kidney, feeling very tired, jaundice, cough, low pressure, tooth ache, throat sore, and malaria.

**Table 2.15: Respondents with Serious Health Problems within Last One year (n=99)**

Health problem	Percentage
Gastro intestinal track problem	44.4
Non communicable diseases	18.2
Disease in genital organ	4.0
Body ache	2.0
Respiratory problem	12.1
Eye problem	10.1
Others	17.2

**Table 2.16: Respondents with Serious Health Problems within Last One Year by Types of Vehicle and Years Driving (n=99)**

Health problem	Type of vehicle				Years driving		
	Heavy-truck	Light-truck	Bus	Minibus	1-9	10-19	20 or more
GIT problem	48.9	22.2	33.3	66.7	44.2	52.0	36.4
Non communicable disease	22.2	0	16.7	20.0	11.5	12.0	40.9
Disease in genital organ	4.4	0	3.3	6.7	7.7	0	0
Body ache	0	11.1	3.3	0	1.9	0	4.5
Respiratory problem	6.7	22.2	13.3	20.0	9.6	28.0	0
Eye problem	8.9	22.2	13.3	0	13.5	0	13.6
Others	13.3	22.2	23.3	13.3	19.2	20.0	9.1
Total respondent	45	9	30	15	52.5	25.3	22.2

The health problem had some variations when respondents were grouped in terms of type of vehicle they were driving and in terms of their age (Table 2.16). Gastro intestinal problems were most common among the respondents driving minibus and heavy-truck. The problem was also more common among the young respondents. ‘Other’ health problems were most common among respondents driving bus and light-truck. The problem was also more prevalent among the younger respondents. Respiratory problems were most prevalent among the light-truck drivers and appeared to be more prevalent among the senior respondents.

**Table 2.17: Respondents with Health Problems within Last 15 Days (n=102)**

Health Problem	Percent of respondent	Days could not work	Loss of income
Cold and fever	90	2.6	873.8
Dysentery	2	2.0	583.3
Heart problem	1	2.0	300.0
Diarrhea	2	2.0	766.7
Pain in leg and back	2	4.5	1,616.7
Tooth ache	1	7.0	2,100.0
Pain in passing water	1	3.0	900.0
Pain in throat	1	2.0	800.0
Sore in leg	1	10.0	2,700.0
Malaria	1	7.0	2,500.0
No problem	75.5	-	-

About a 25 percent of the respondents (102) had some health problems within last 15 days from when they were interviewed (Table 2.17). Of these respondents overwhelming majority (90 percent) suffered from cold and fever. On an average respondents with health problems remained out of work for 2.8 days within the observed period. Small number of respondents was with other health problems distributed in each of them. Maximum income loss, which in most cases was for not being able to drive, was in the case of respondents suffered from sore in leg closely followed by malaria. In spite of being sick it was not a big problem for the employers in keeping their vehicles running on road as substitute drivers were always available.

**Table 2.18: Respondents' Perception About Own Health Condition (n=416)**

Perception	Percentage
Very good	7.2
Quite Good	18.8
Good	44.5
So-so	28.4
Bad	1.2

In spite of a good number of respondent missing work within last 15 days due to health problem about 45 percent believed that they had a good health condition (Table 2.18).

It was widely believed that drivers frequently visits prostitute and they are likely to have diseases transmitted from them. Only six percent of the respondents underwent any test on venereal disease. Overwhelming rest (94.2 percent), in spite of not going through any test, mentioned not to have any sexually transmitted diseases. They were confident of not having any sexually transmitted diseases. Against this group 1.2 percent mentioned to have had such diseases and another 1.2 percent had some other kind of diseases personal in kind relating to private organs like, semen coming out during passing water or swelling or sore in penis (Box 4.8). On the other hand, six percent did not know whether they had any sexually transmitted diseases. However it was mentioned that the drivers would not confess of having sexually transmitted diseases even if they knew that they had the disease.

**Box 4.8**

Habib always used condom during sex with sex-workers. Once, in such an occasion condom split and he was transmitted with a sexual disease. A sore developed on his penis and had pain while passing water. Later on there was a swelling penis and some kind of liquid started coming out when passing water. Finding the problem getting worst he visited doctor and was prescribed seven injections costing Tk.150 per piece. After taking the injections he was cured and did not visit brothel for three years.

A good number of the respondent heard about syphilis and gonorrhea but a majority never heard about HIV/AIDS. Those who heard about HIV/AIDS, was from NGO awareness initiatives and they remembered almost nothing about what was discussed in the initiatives. Some of the respondents remembered seeing the billboards and advertisements in TV on HIV/AIDS. Respondents were aware of the possibility of having venereal diseases in the case of sex with sex-workers or when condom was not used during sex but their knowledge on how the diseases were transmitted or symptoms of the disease were much less than sufficient to develop an attitude needed to protect themselves from the disease.

### Chapter 3 Work, Break and Overnight Stay in Trip

This chapter describes the hours respondents worked and the duration of their breaks. The chapter also provides a short gleam on how the breaks were spent and places lodged boarded overnight while at work and the factors that they took into consideration in selecting the places.

#### Work and break

Eighty-five-point-six percent of the respondents resided with their families within a commuting distance from where the vehicles were parked after work. Rest of the respondents not staying with their families were mostly residing in hotel (6.7 percent), followed by 3.8 percent in mess, and 2.9 percent staying regularly in the vehicle they were driving. Rest 1.0 percent was residing in the rented room.

**Table 3.1: Average Length of Time Spent in Driving and Sleeping within 24 Hours (n=416)**

Type of vehicle	Number of hours driving	Number of hours sleeping
Heavy-truck	10.2	6.4
Light-truck	8.9	6.8
Bus	8.7	7.2
Minibus	8.1	7.1
Total	9.2	6.8

Table 3.1 shows the average number of hours the respondents were driving and sleeping (including time on bed before, after and between a sleep) within a 24 hour schedule. Driving and rest time included exact length of time driven and spent in rest by the respondents. Rest included time spent in sleep and time spent without being involved in any productive activities as considered by the respondents when not sleeping. On an average, respondents were driving 9.2 hours and sleeping 6.8 hours within the schedule. Although the respondents with trucks were driving more and sleeping less number of hours compared to those driving buses the differences were not significant.

On an average it took 4.5 hours for the respondents to make a trip. Of course, there were considerable variations in its duration among the vehicles driven. Minibuses were making a much shorter trips same being in the case of light-trucks in most instances. The gaps between two trips varied from vehicle to vehicle. The respondents driving company busses had enough rest as their trips were scheduled on alternative days. The respondents driving minibus usually had a shorter break between trips. In the case of truck it fluctuated depending upon how often they were hired and the gaps between them. In the case of none or very shot gaps respondents hardly had a change to take rest as was required.

**Table 3.2: Opinion of Respondents on Sufficiency of Rest by Types of Vehicle Driven (n=416)**

Opinion	Heavy-truck	Light-truck	Bus	Minibus
Sufficient	73.5	77.5	88.4	90.6
Not sufficient	26.5	22.5	11.6	9.4

Eighteen-point-two percent (76) of the respondents believed that the time they got for rest, including sleep, was not sufficient. More number of respondents driving truck had insufficient rest compared to those driving bus (Table 3.2). Again within the group (vehicles carrying goods and



passengers) more number of respondents driving heavy-trucks and busses had insufficient rest compared to their counterparts.

Of these respondents with insufficient rest, about a half (53.9 percent), mentioned that their trip were scheduled as such by the union that they could not manage time for rest. But for 34.2 percent of the respondents it was employers who made them work in such a way that they could not have any rest. Closely following these respondents, 32.9 percent mentioned that it was they who worked deliberately more for money at the cost of rest.

**Table 3.3: Major Activities of Respondents after Work (n = 413)**

Activity	Percentage
Give time to family	81.4
Chat with others	83.5
Recreation (play games/enjoy TV/song/drink)	71.7
Rest (sleep/pray)	2.4
Look for trip/repair vehicle	3.4

Respondents kept them engaged in multiple activities in off period. The period included the hours after day's work, a break within a trip or between up and down trips. The duration of the recess ranged from a few hours to a few days in cases. Most of the respondents (83.5 percent) spent a portion of their break chatting with colleagues (Table 3.3). This was because drivers had a tendency to hang around in the terminal for some time after day's work was over no matter when it was over<sup>1</sup>. Giving time to family followed by recreation s were other two common activities of the respondents. A small number of respondents took rest that mainly included those who did it during a short recess within the trips.

There was not much variation in terms of length of time spent on different activities by the respondents and also not in terms of type of vehicle they were driving (Table 3.4). Slightly more time was given to families and chatting with colleagues compared to other activities. Respondent driving light-truck gave slightly more time in taking rest. These differences on allocation of time on different activities were was not significant.

**Table 3.4: Respondents' Activities after Work by Types of Vehicle Driven (n = 413)**

Activities	Heavy-truck	Light-truck	Bus	Minibus
Give time to family	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.4
Chat with others	2.2	1.8	2.2	2.1
Recreation	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.7
Rest (sleep/pray)	1.6	2.0	1.2	1.5
Look for trip/repair vehicle	1.0	3.0	1.0	1

<sup>1</sup> **Leisure time in Terminal:** Respondents had leisure time before the trip, after coming back from the trip, and between the trips when they hung around in the terminal. In cases these leisure were related to trips no matter whether scheduled or not. Respondents without a schedule hung around in the terminal with the hope that trip would be offered to them by clients through union office. There were respondents who preferred staying in the terminal rather than going back home even when they were sure that a trip would not offered. Some of them came to the stand very early in the morning and hung around, went back home for lunch and again came back without delay

Respondents spent time in the terminal in different ways depending on time available. When it was believed that the break was a shorter one respondents spent time by gossiping, drinking tea, and chatting. Some of them watched cinema or CD at nearby facilities. When the break was a longer one they gambled with cards, considered to be the most popular pass-time. Some of them gambled on carom. Again some left the terminal for a sleep at nearby relatives' house or visited sex-workers at brothel.

**Table 3.5: Respondent’s Activities during 2-4 Hours Break within a Trip (n = 404)**

Activity	Percentage
Take rest/sleep	63.4
Personal care [bath, refresh, take meal, pray]	48.5
Look for trip/load goods/take care of accounts	13.3
Maintenance of vehicle	26.5
Chat with others	59.9
Entertainment	13.6
Move around	8.4

Drivers often got a 2-4 hours break in long distance trip particularly in crossing the river by ferry, getting into metropolitan cities, or between up and down trips. Table 3.5 grouped the activities done by the respondents in trip into seven major categories. Respondents spent their time on these activities in different combinations. ‘Personal care’ included activities like bathing and taking meal, refreshing, and praying. Similarly entertainment included listening to songs, reading newspaper, playing card, and visiting sex-workers.

It appeared that taking rest or sleeping was the most common pastime during break followed by chatting with fellow drivers and others in the stand. Of course, respondents took advantage of the breaks by taking care of themselves. There were variations in ways the time was spent by the respondents driving different vehicles. But these variations did not have a big contrast nor did the variations project any trend.

### Overnight stay in trip

Eighty-nine-point-nine percent of the respondents had to stay out of home overnight when they were in long distance trips. Number of days they stayed out of home varied considerably (table 3.6).

**Table 3.6: Number of Days Respondents Stayed Out of Home on trips in a Month (n=416)**

Days in a month	Percentage
Out of home stay not required	10.1
1-9 days	23.8
10-19 days	41.1
Twenty or more number of days	25.0

On an average respondents driving heavy-truck had to stay 14.7 days out of home followed by those driving light-truck, i.e., 12.3 days, in a month. Compared to them respondents driving bus had to stay less number of days out of home. It was, 9.6 days in the case of bus and 8.8 days in the case of minibus. Table 3.7 indicates that a good number of respondents driving trucks stayed for 20 or more days out of home in a month. On the other hand, majority of respondents driving bus staying 10-19 days out of home during the same period.

**Table 3.7: Number of Days Respondents Stayed Out of Home per Month by Types of Vehicle Driving**

Days staying out of home	Truck		Bus	
	Heavy	Light	Big	Mini
0	1.8	7.5	18.2	16.5
1-9	20.0	30.0	20.7	32.9
10-19	36.5	32.5	51.2	40.0
20 or more	41.8	30.0	9.9	10.6
Total respondents	170	40	121	85

Respondents always preferred to stay with family at home for a few days between the trips but for the respondents driving 20 or more days such an opportunity was considerably less. When driving was done on a fixed schedule respondents knew when they would have break between the trips, accordingly they could plan their activities for the break (Box 3.1). But when they had to take trips not scheduled in advance such planning could not be done or if planned it got disrupted.

In long distance trips the break was often a overnight stay at a location. In some cases the locations were hotel/boarding house, relative's house, or the vehicle itself. In some cases respondents remained fixed to an option all the times when they have a defined travel route but in others they selected the place for holtage depending upon availability and convenience. In the case of trucks selection was made also depending upon the goods in the truck. If the goods were likely to be stolen when kept unguarded respondents stayed in the truck (Box 3.2).

Of these respondents, if not driving overnight, 35.5 percent stayed in the hotel as against 64.5 in their vehicle when they were on trip. It was observed that 38.8 percent of the respondents driving heavy-truck, 44.7 percent driving light-truck, 36.5 percent driving bus, and 27.2 percent driving minibus availed hotel accommodation for overnight holtage. In contrast, 65.3 percent of the respondents driving heavy-truck, 57.9 percent driving light tuck, 64.3 percent driving bus, and 74.1 percent driving minibus slept in their vehicles.

There were various reasons which made respondents choose the place they resided when away from home. In 36.2 percent of the cases respondents selected the place as it was cheaper followed by 32.8 percent who considered the place to be safer (Table 3.8).

**Table 3.8: Reasons for Selecting the Place to Stay Overnight during a Trip**

Reasons	Percentage
Familiarity with the place	7.8
Considered safe for respondent	32.8
Feel better	16.8
Economic	36.2
Safety of the vehicle	16.8

Of those respondents who stayed in hotel 41.8 percent did so as they enjoyed being there followed by 40.3 percent for whom the place was safe to reside and in the case of 28.4 percent the place was familiar thus they felt at home at the hotel. Against this group those who stayed overnight in the vehicle it was the economic consideration (46.9 percent) followed by personal safety (31.9 percent) and safety of the vehicle (21.3 percent) which made them select the location.

When causes for selecting the locations for staying overnight was grouped by the respondents driving different types of vehicles economic consideration appeared to be most important (26.7 percent respondents driving heavy-truck, 25.7 percent driving light-truck, 27.4 percent driving bus, and 26.7 percent driving minibus) followed by personal safety of the respondent (26.7

**Box 3.1**

Apu drives on Sylhet Dhaka rout. Usually he can make 18/20 trips per month. He normally comes to Dhaka in the morning and goes back to Sylhet in the evening. He gets 4-5 hours break in between. During this time he takes rest at a boarding or in a mess. If he is compelled to stay at Dhaka overnight he sleeps at boarding. He has no tension about trip.

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**Box 3.2**

Azam travels throughout the country and stays 20-25 days in a month out of home. During trip he sleeps in truck, boarding, petrol pump which ever was available and convenient. If his truck had goods still left to be unloaded he would sleep on it. Again if the goods were unloaded in the late evening he would not sleep as the responsibilities of unloading goods lied with the driver.

percent respondents driving heavy-truck, 22.9 percent driving light-truck, 22.6 percent driving bus, and 22.7 percent driving minibus).

Respondents have emphasized upon the advantages and disadvantages of staying in boarding, hotel, and in vehicle; and accordingly selected the place for staying overnight.

**Vehicle:** It was very hot to sleep in the vehicle and mosquitoes bite when asleep. There were also problems in taking bath and meal, and using toilet when staying overnight in the vehicle. In most cases respondents had to use the toilets in the terminal. On the other hand it was safe to sleep in the vehicle as there was a less chance of money being stolen. In the case unscheduled trips it became easier to avail the same when they stayed in the vehicle.

**Boarding/hotel:** To stay in the boarding one had to pay. Usually it was Tk.150 per night which was considered quite high by many respondents. In the case of some respondents the company they worked for had a contract with hotels where the respondents could stay without paying from their pockets. These were decent hotels without any illegal/antisocial activities. But some of the hotels that respondents selected themselves provided a scope for hiring sex-workers. They could be hired by paying Tk.500 for whole night.

According to some respondents driving truck there was a risk in staying at hotels as that would keep the goods in the truck unattended, increasing the chance for the goods get stolen. Staying at hotel gave others a chance to believe that the respondents stayed there in order to enjoy sex-workers. As drivers staying at hotel often hired girls to have sex in their room. Such an act involves the ran into a risk of being harassed and arrested by the police.

In spite of decided to stay overnight whether in boarding, hotel, or vehicle respondents had lot of complains about the place selected. The place was considered to be unhealthy by 84.6 percent of the respondents. In contrast 13.0 percent of the respondents considered the place they availed not very safe for them to stay overnight. While staying in these places 7.1 percent of the respondents did become victim of theft, hijacking, or had to pay money to the police. And, 5.2 percent had problem in sleeping because of disturbance. Respondents driving heavy-truck and bus complained more about unhealthy environment and lack of personal safety compared to those driving light-truck and minibus. Again the respondents driving bus complained more about problem in sleeping than those driving truck.

While on trip respondents were always concerned for their families. Family members needed money to meet their expenses. But sending money to them was always a problem as the respondents were in constant move during the trip. In spite of inconvenience majority of the respondents (91.9 percent) managed to bring money to their families by themselves. Six-point-six percent of the respondents sent the money through reliable sources like colleague, and only 1.6 percent did the same by using money order services.

## Chapter 4

### Addictions

Previous chapter has indicated that the respondents had breaks when they were in duty, either as short recess when driving or as night-holtage. Moreover respondents when not driving had the tendency to hang around in the terminal. The chapter describes how they spent these pastimes. As it is a popular belief that drivers indulge heavily into different addictions the chapter made an effort to look into the issue in depth in relation to their addictions – gambling, drug abuses, and visit to sex-workers.

#### Gambling

Most popularly gambling was done on card games but also on chess, carrom and ludo. In games other than on cards the party losing had to pay an amount agreed upon per game.

In most cases when respondents started their career as helpers they had an attitude that they would not get into gambling but over course of time they started playing these games without money and very soon they did that with money. There were respondents who would gamble only when they were out of home but there were others who did it no matter where they had been.

Although respondents believed that 39.6 percent of the drivers gambled, 27.2 percent of them confessed to have gambled one or more times during their career. Only 11.5 percent of the respondents confessed to have been gambling at present. Of the addicts, 41.6 percent were driving heavy-truck and 26.5 percent were driving bus compared to 16.8 percent driving minibus and 15 percent driving light-truck.

There were number of reasons that influenced drivers to pick up gambling.

- Most important of these was that the drivers had a long break of 2-4 hours between trips they would take. Although the break was long but in many cases respondents were not sure about when next trip would be. So they were compelled to stay at the terminal to take advantage of the trip that would be available. Besides this uncertainty, the duration of the break, in most cases where not long enough for them to involve themselves in other activities or go back home, and in many cases they preferred to hang around in the terminal (Box 4.1).
- Presence of a gambling environment provided an opportunity to the respondent for gambling. Example of fellow drivers winning in gambling tended some respondents to gamble by believing that they might also have similar luck.
- Drivers have a tendency to differentiate their additional income like stealing, tips, and any other sources from the one derived as per agreement between them and their employers. They tended to keep this additional income for personal use and spent it for pleasure. So they did not feel bad or had no sense of obligation resisting them in spending this money in gambling.

#### Box 4.1

Habib gambled to pass leisure time. He became addicted to gambling gradually. Now he gambles 4/5 days in a month and in each sitting he would continue for 4-5 hours but sometimes he would even continue for 13-14 hours when trip was not available. When his legs were broken from an accident he was on rest for one-and-half months. During this time he gambled every day and earned Tk. one lakh by gambling during the period.

According to 59 percent of the respondents drivers gambled as because they were addicted to it. They could not resist themselves from it. They could not live without it and felt uncomfortable. But in the case of others (41 percent) they did that just to pass time or in rare occasion.

**Consequence of gambling:** Respondents were very much aware of the consequences of gambling and candidly expressed their impression about it.

- Gambling always had a negative impact on the family. Family members, particularly wife, never wanted their husbands to gambling in any situation. In the case of respondents they were requested to give up the habit. Due to gambling respondents were always late in returning home after work. When asked for the reason for being late they always mentioned that they had to make additional trips. Very soon the excuse was not accepted any more and the real reason got revealed to family members. They, particularly wife, started complaining that for gambling respondents were not giving enough time to family and spending a part of income on the addiction. Such a complaint often turned to altercation between the respondents and their wife leading to unhappiness within the family.
- Gambling degraded the social status of the respondents both in their communities, and among their colleagues and union members. People looked down on them and also did not trust them any more. Such a bad personal reputation spilled over to family members. Family members were also looked down upon. The families were addressed as gamblers' family. Son of such a father had difficulties in getting married as girl's guardian believed that gambler's son was likely to be a gambler or would soon take up gambling.
- In gambling respondents did not win all the times. In the case of loss, particularly if it was a big amount the memory of loss lingered in their mind. While driving after the loss they kept on thinking what were the mistakes made in the game for which money was lost, what they would have to do to make up the loss, and most importantly they remained depressed for losing the money. The tension due to the loss was very deep particularly when respondent invested the income from the trip in gambling and as a result he was not in a position to hand over the income to the owner. Such a state of mind always distracted respondent's attention from driving and increasing the chances of meeting an accident.
- It was observed that time spent on gambling usually increased in course of time. In the case of respondents who won were tempted to give more time in gambling by believing that they would gain more by giving additional time in it. Again those who lost also spent more time in it with a hope of making up the loss by wining. Either of these instances compelled respondents to cut their driving hours and in extreme cases event quit driving. Although respondents tried to gamble based on their additional income in the case of loss they had to pull money from their real income.
- When owners found that the gambling was affecting respondents' duty along with lesser of income in a period they were always sacked.

Respondents have emphasized differentially on the consequences resulting from gambling. Overwhelming majority of the respondents (93.1 percent) believed that it creates economic problem for the gamblers and their families (Table 4.1)

**Table 4.1: Problems Respondents Faced Due to Gambling (n = 376)**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Quarrel with wife/family	59.0
Economic deficiencies	93.1
Society looks down	24.5
Tension during driving	15.2

Gambling respondents had a feeling of guilt for their habit and made an effort to get rid of it. They promised to their wives that they would stop gambling but in most case it was broken.

## Drug Use

When respondents started their career as helpers a few were already smoking but none had experienced other drugs. It was here they were exposed to drugs. Many respondents as helpers found their *ostads* and other drivers in the terminal addicted to drugs. Respondents started drinking occasionally by seeing their *ostads* drinking, but some by the time graduated as drivers became addicted to drugs. In some cases *ostads* encouraged them to take drugs. As in the case of a respondent his *ostad* mentioned to him – *You may try different drugs but I would like you to take alcohol*. Others did not take drugs when they were helpers but picked up the habit after being influenced by the fellow drivers when they themselves became drivers.

Seventy-five-point-seven percent of the drivers were habituated in smoking tobacco. Of these respondents about 79 percent were truck drivers against 72 percent driving bus. Respondents believed that 68.7 percent of the drivers were addicted to drugs whereas in their cases 25.7 percent confessed that they had been addicted to it.

**Table 4.2: Types of Drug Consumed by Respondents (n=107)**

Type	Percentage
Alcohol	60.7
Hashish ( <i>gaza</i> )	55.1
<i>Tari</i>	2.8
Phensidil	.9

Alcohol was the most widely consumed drug amongst the addicts (Table 4.2). Of the addicts 75.7 percent of the respondents driving minibus and 70.7 percent driving heavy-truck were addicted to alcohol compared to a smaller number of respondents driving other vehicles. Eighty-one-point-three percent of the addicts purchased drugs from specific store, 29 percent from slum, and 1.9 percent from factory or stand.

Many respondents were taking drugs regularly. Some of them developed the habit of taking drugs just before driving as without doing they were not at home in driving. Respondents believed that about 32.7 percent of the addicted drivers took drugs before driving but when it came to their case only 4.1 confessed to have been taking drugs before driving.

And one of them even takes alcohol while driving. They were very much confident that it was not going to affect their driving as they have been doing it for some time. Others were in the habit of taking drugs just after a trip no matter when it ended or at the end of the day.

No matter from which part of the country the drugs were purchased it was always in their reach. Unlike before some restrictions were imposed on selling drugs by Rapid Action Battalion now. But, that did not become a problem in buying drugs by the addicts as drivers had connections with who could make it available to them safe and sound. In some cases all kinds of drugs were available in the terminal or nearby shop but in case of others there were specific shops for different drugs.

**Causes of taking drugs:** Addiction was a cause of taking drugs by 47.1 percent of these respondents again in case of 41.2 percent of the respondents consumption of drugs reduced tension, drowsiness and made them feel fresh. But to 23.5 percent of the respondents taking alcohol before driving did not make any difference.

It was pointed out that respondents had variety of tensions while driving on the road. Tension resulting from uncertainty in driving leading to accident, failure to make sufficient income to

handover to the owner, uncertainty in getting trips, longing for being with the family members, problem which they could not handle by themselves. These problems not only created tension but also developed frustrations in them. According to some respondents one of the most effective way of handling these tension and frustration while driving was to take some alcohol before driving. Not only that, it was also believed that such consumption helped them to keep attention concentrated on driving.

To some respondents taking drugs helped them to have a sound sleep. To others, especially driving trucks, jerking of the vehicle developed sore in their body. Such a sore could be removed by taking some drugs before sleep, which in turn helped them to have a sound sleep.

Due to oversupply of drivers in many cases respondent remained unemployed for a long period or could not make sufficient trips as the trips available were booked to the drivers by the union. Lack of work not only cut down their income but also developed frustration in them. It was observed that good number of respondents started drinking at a later stage of their career to relieve themselves from frustration generated from unemployment.

**Consequences of drinking:** Biggest danger of driving under the influence was that it increased the probability of causing accident. When under the influence the senses of the driver did not remain fully active/alert. Often they failed to make proper use of break and accelerator. Use of drugs taxed respondents physically so much that they were skinny, weak, and sleepy all the time.

**Box 4.2**

Zahir drives bus for a company which prohibits taking of drugs by the drivers particularly before taking a trip. Zahir drinks 8/10 times a month but not before driving. If company comes to know about his addiction the vehicle he was driving would be taken away from his charge and he would be sacked. He drinks secretly so that the company might not know about his addiction.

Drinking had far reaching consequences on the respondents. Some of the transport companies had a policy of hiring drivers not addicted to any drug. Respondents working for such companies if found drinking particularly before driving and driving under the influence were sacked instantly. Respondents with the habit of taking drugs and working for such companies tried their best to keep their habit secret to the employer (Box 4.2).

**Consequence of addiction:** Respondents believed that like gambling taking drugs also had a negative implication on respondents family. The habit was condemned by the society besides the habit was economically draining as lots of money had to be spent to maintain the habit. As because of these factors some respondents wanted to hide about their addiction from the family (Box 4.3). But that was not possible in all cases and in some respondents

**Box 4.3**

Few of his friends knew that Zahri was drinking alcohol. He takes alcohol in off days and after driving he would not return back home after work so that his wife in no way could detect that he drank before coming home. As he was not a frequent drinker his habit did not have any visible impact on his family. Zahir's father was a Hazi and his family had honor in the community. Zahir believed that if his community would come to know about his addiction his family would lose face and high honor that his family was enjoying would be lost.

did not care about it. When the incidence became known to the family members obviously they objected to such an addiction by the respondent. Every time when respondents returned back home after taking drugs and if got detected by grownup members of their families reacted harsh. When got detected by wife, they complained about respondents' habits, which often ended into an argument followed by a quarrel amongst them. Some of the respondents became violent when under influence. They damaged things within the house and assaulted their wives and other family



members in some cases. After such repeated incidences wives often left respondents for their father's home. Sooner or later member of the community came to know about the addiction of the respondents. They lost honor in the community and brought shame to the family.

Of these addict 52.9 percent (9) felt like getting rid of the addiction. That was because they realized that driving became dangerous under the influence, people looked down on them, they did not want to become bad example before their growing children, it was an expensive addiction to maintain, and finally the habit led to frequent quarrel with wife.

Although a good number of drivers were addicted to drugs but a similar number also managed to resist themselves from taking it. It was because of their determination not to touch drugs. They could do it by thinking about the bad effect of alcohol, economic hardship that their family would undergo if they spent on drugs, they would be reproached by their families and society would look down upon them.

### Visit Sex-worker

In many cases respondents got introduced to sex-workers by their *ostads*. They often proposed their helpers to have sex with the workers after they had sex with them. Sometimes when helpers started having sex, being influenced by their *ostads*, an understanding developed between them and they jointly hired sex-workers and enjoyed them (Box 4.4). In cases respondents started visiting them under peer pressure. Finding colleagues visiting sex-workers and talking about their pleasant experience with them the respondents also got tempted in visiting them. Along with this they were also influenced by the colleagues to visit the workers. This demonstration effect along with peer pressure was always complemented by the easy access to sex-workers which in turn made the respondents have sex with them.

#### Box 4.4

Nazrul had sex with girls before marriage and now he is having extramarital relationship with a girl from his village. Before marriage he and his *ostad* used to have sex together with sex-workers. In one of these memorable occasions his *ostad* hired a prostitute for Tk.300 and they had sex with her in turn for whole night.

Visit to sex-workers in case or respondent followed number of patterns. Respondents visiting sex-workers when they started working as helpers were not unmarried in all cases. Once they got married they either stopped visiting sex-workers completely or cut down number of visits to them. In cases respondents visited brothels before marriage but started having sex with girls in hotel after marriage. Again, in case of others they did not visit sex-workers before marriage but started having sex with girls, either relatives or friends, under mutual understanding after marriage.

In cases extra marital sexual relations continued even after marriage or started after it. As the respondents in most cases followed a specific driving route they had a fixed spot whether brothel or hotel where they picked up girls for sex. Similarly respondents had girlfriends at spots on their routes whom they visited regularly for sex during trip. These sex partners were relatives or maidservant in some cases.

Access to sex-workers was done either by visiting brothels or by getting hold of floating sex-workers hanging around the terminal or attending hotels for clients. In latter cases respondents had sex in the vehicle they were driving or in the rooms they rented for overnight stay as was considered convenient. Generally respondents had sex with females but in some instances they had it with male partners – homosexuality. In these cases 12-13 year old boys hanging around the terminal themselves approached or were approached for a body massage. The massage gradually turned to sex with the boys.

According to respondents 34.8 percent of the drivers visit sex-workers but in their case 24.5 percent confessed to have visited sex-workers. Of these respondents confessing, 53.7 percent were heavy-truck driver, 15.7 percent big and minibus drivers each, and 14.7 percent driving small truck. On an average they visit sex-workers 3.6 times a month.

In 91.2 percent of cases respondents used condom in extramarital sex. Of them, 71 percent used condom to protect themselves from venereal diseases. In the case of 49.5 percent respondents it was to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. Some of them started using condoms at the recent time only after becoming aware or taking seriously that they might have communicable diseases if condoms were not used. In the case of 2.2 percent of the respondents it was the sex-worker who forced them to use condoms. About 8.9 percent of the respondents visiting sex-workers were not using condom. Some in the group did not use condom and did not have any plan of using as they were confident of not having any chance of communicable diseases being transmitted to them from the sex-workers. So they did not want to compromise with the pleasure of having sex by using condoms. Eleven-point-one percent of the respondents had no reason for using it. Some of the respondents did not use condom when having sex with young girls otherwise they used condoms. None of the respondents confessed to have extramarital sexual relationship with partners were using condoms when having sex with their partners.

#### **Box 4.5**

Babu had sex before marriage and even now after marriage. At the beginning he used to go to brothels two times a month then it increased to 7/8 times a month. He remarked – *H who never visited brothel is not aware of the pleasure in the visit. He who goes to brothel once will be bound to visit there again and again.* He said that most of the driver are used to having sex with sex-workers at boarding.

#### **Reasons for visiting sex-workers**

Respondents not only confessed that the drivers had a higher rate of visit to sex workers but also rationalized the visits.

- Drivers had to stay out of home for days. For being away from family or because of job related hazards respondents were in bad mood. Visiting sex-workers refreshed them and cooled their temper. Also for being out of home for a long period it was not possible for respondents to meet their sexual desires from wives so they visited sex-workers to meet such a need. And this is why truckers visit sex-workers more than the bus drivers as the former have to stay out of home more and for a longer period than the latter (Box 4.5).
- As the drivers have rich food like beef regularly sexual urge was much stronger in them. The respondents were confident of not having any sexually transmitted diseases than those not having such diet. So they need to have sex frequently which was not possible in the trip other than by visiting the sex-workers.
- Sometimes respondents came across girls who invited them for sex. In case of a respondent a girl whom he met during a trip invited him to come to her house at night. He did visit and had sex with her. In this way he had sex with many girls in his driving career.

#### **Reasons for not visiting sex-workers or giving up the practice**

It was observed that a number of respondents refrained themselves from visiting sex-workers or engaged in other types of extramarital sexual relationships. This group also had reasons which stopped them from such practices.

- Visiting sex-workers can be expensive particularly if the visit is frequent. Thus in some cases as it taxed family budget too much respondents stopped visiting sex-workers. But in other cases they have cut down number of visits to sex-workers in order to reduce the expense.
- In some cases respondents stopped visiting sex-workers as they promised their wives that they would give up the practice.
- Some respondents used to visit sex-workers in sacred. They have given up the practice by thinking that if they keep on visiting one day the sacred would be liked out and in that case they would lose status in their society. Junior drivers would not respect them anymore. Family members would be hurt by knowing it and there would be unhappiness within the family.
- Some of the respondents were convinced to believe that there was not good side in visiting sex-workers so they never visited them or gave up the practice when they came to this realization.
- Respondents did not visit sex-workers as they have wives thus their sexual needs were fulfilled within the family. A few within the group got married at a younger age so they were not being influenced by their colleagues and *ostads* in visiting sex-workers. Some respondents learnt driving from their fathers or some other close relatives. So they also did not have much chance of being influenced by *ostads* or colleagues in visiting sex-workers.
- Some of the respondents did not visit sex-workers just in order to remain faithful to their wives. In some cases they helped their friends to visit sex-workers but they themselves refrained from visiting by thinking that if they would visit sex-worker while in the trip their wives could do the same thing by visiting other men at home. It was very likely that wives would do the same thing if respondents' visit to the sex-workers became known to them.
- Due to prevalence of HIV/AIDS the respondent felt that it became necessary to use condom while having sex with sex-workers. But they found that there was not much pleasure in having sex with condom so they stopped visiting sex-workers.
- Again some respondents never visited sex-workers by believing or stopped by taking seriously that having extramarital sex was prohibited in the religion and they would commit sin by indulging in such an act.
- Some respondents believed that the sex-workers were likely to have venereal diseases so the respondents refrained from visiting sex-workers believing that the disease might be transmitted in them.
- Respondents coming from driver's home have seen extramarital sex related problem within the family. In order to avoid similar problems in their own cases they refrained themselves from extramarital sexual relationship.

Respondents believed that the drivers were blamed for visiting sex-workers more than they actually should be. They also believed that prostitution should not be banned as a measure to prevent drivers visiting sex-workers as the drivers had to stay out of home for 15-20 days a month. They believed that if it was banned the incidence of rape would increase. Rather it should be ensured that the sex-workers visited were free from any communicable diseases. They believed that sexual activities should be and can be stopped by awareness building campaign.

## Chapter 5

### Knowledge and Following of Traffic Rules and Accident

Capacity to avoid accident to a great extent is subjected to the safe driving by the drivers. Such driving in turn is not only dependent on drivers' knowledge on traffic rules but also on following those rules. This section tries to fathom the knowledge of the respondents on traffic rules and extent to which those were followed. An assessment was also made on the extent the respondents were running into accident and how they handle the situation. How respondents receive the driving license, an issue, very much pertinent to the knowledge and skill in driving have also been looked into.

### Getting a Driving License

Respondents' career as driver started with driving vehicle occasionally as helpers, which overtime became more frequently and then finally led to their graduating as drivers. Respondents in many cases continued as helpers even after believing that they had graduated till they were hired as drivers. At times the respondents started driving on a regular basis when they were helpers. At this stage the respondents were considered that they have started driving.

Legally one is not supposed to drive vehicle without a driving license but driving vehicle was not contingent upon the receipt of license in the case of many respondents. Thirty-four-point-six percent of the drivers received license before they started driving. On an average they received license 2.6 years before they started driving on a regular basis – at a time when they were still helpers. Twenty-eight-point-one percent of the respondent received license in the same year they started driving but 37.3 percent started doing the same on a regular basis before they received driver's license. On an average they received license 1.8 years after they have been driving regularly. Rest of the respondents driving without license did that with invalid documents or simply without any document by bribing authority when ever it was needed.

**Table: 5.1: Time Lag between Receipt of License and Starting of Driving by Education (n= )**

Education (in years)	Received license before driving	Received license after driving
Illiterate	3.3	2.5
1-5	2.6	1.4
6 and above	2.2	1.7
Sample size	144	272

In the case of respondents who received license before they started driving the time lag became smaller with the years of education they received (Table 5.1). Similarly for those who received license after they started driving the time lag was higher for the illiterate respondents compared to those with years of education.

**Table 5.2: Organization/individual Faced for Driving License/permit (n= )**

Process	Percent
BRTA	28.7
Broker	60.3
Driver's union	10.4
District Commissioner's office	.6

Variety of strategies were followed in order to receive license. Table 5.2 indicates that about 29 percent of the respondents received license by appearing test conducted by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) independent of any help or influence in receiving the same. Majority of these respondents have received license years immediately after liberation of Bangladesh. Respondents in this group in some cases had to appear driving test more than once in order to pass. Although this group considered as senior drivers, did not bribe in receiving license. Of course a good number from the group mentioned that they offered small tips to BRTA staff in order to expedite the license issuing process.

Because of going through a rigorous test to receive license some of the respondents in the group believed that they knew ins-and-outs of driving which the junior drivers who, did not have to go through such a test were not aware of. In context a senior driver remarked – *Just placing leg on the accelerator and turning the steering wheel is not driving*. Senior respondents believed that their junior counterparts did more accidents because of lack of skill and knowledge in driving.

It appears that majority of respondents received license through broker (60.4 percent). In these case respondents paid Tk.4,000-5,500 to brokers to get a license. Of these respondents 37.9% did not appear in driving test, rest appeared just to maintain the formality. As the brokers shared a portion of the money received from the respondents with examiners they were passed in all cases. Respondents believed that as the brokers were organized, influential and had an understanding with the BRTA officials, so it was impossible for people like them to apply for a license and passing the driving test without the help of broker (Box 5.1). One common process for the helper was to apply for license through driver's union they were attached to.

**Box 5.1**

After working as helper for about four years Kafil Ahmed believed that he had learnt a lot on driving so he planned to get a driving license. Seeing others got license through brokers he also decided to have one with their help. In one of these days one of his friends informed him that a senior BRTA officer would take a transfer from the local office shortly and before that he would issue some licenses to make money. Kafil felt that this was a chance to get the license done easily. He gave Tk.2,200 to the officer through a middleman in 1986 and got a license without going through any procedure but filling out the form. He got issued another drivers license in 1995 through broker because the previous one was very old.

As there was no apparent difference between the license received illegally from the brokers and one by following the legal procedure, police sergeants had difficulties in differentiating fake license from the original one when former was shown to them on the road. Respondents thus questioned why they should have gone for a license through a legal procedure when it was easier to get a fake one through broker. Respondents valued the fake license same as the original one. In cases they even loaned money in order to pay the same to the brokers rather than made an effort to get one by following legal procedure. In some cases influential union member arranged license for the respondents. Respondents paid these members for license where they played the same role as brokers.

Some of the respondents were driving in shorter routes in the locality with some kind of driving certificate received from the driver's union or local union parishad chairman. In both the cases the certificate was not a legal substitute for the driver license and in the latter case respondents paid these chairmen to get a license, thus they played the same role as the broker. Small number of respondents belonging to other groups received some kind of certificate from the district commissioners' office which was also not considered to be a legal permit for driving.

## Knowledge on Traffic Rules

It is well accepted that following traffic rules is important in minimizing the chance of accident. Respondents' knowledge on traffic rules was tested on set of randomly selected rules grouped under speeding and overtaking, lane, line, signs and symbols, and on other rules that the driver need to know and follow (Appendix 5.1). Respondents received one point for correctly answering the question on a rule and zero for failing to or providing an incorrect answer. The highest possible score could have been received for speed and overtake was 6, for lane three, for line three, for signs and symbols seven, and for others it was three. Highest possible score in the test when respondents managed to answer all the questions correctly was 22.

In order to follow rules in driving first of all respondents had to know the rules to be followed in driving. The *ostads* from whom the respondents learnt to drive were the source of their knowledge on traffic rules in most cases. As helpers, the respondents keenly observed the driving of their *ostads*, i.e., following of traffic rules. In cases, *ostads* explained them about the rules it was also up to the respondents to ask about their driving related to following of rules and meaning of the traffic signs and symbols posted on the roads. Thus the knowledge of the respondents on traffic rules was contingent upon the presence of knowledge of the *ostads* but most importantly on following of those rules by them. Besides *ostads*, a small number of respondents (6.7 percent) underwent training where they learnt how to drive and/or about traffic rules. Again a small number of respondents learnt about the meaning of the signs and symbols from the posters fixed on the walls of union office. Of course the poster covered only a part of the traffic rules.

**Table 5.3: Respondents' Knowledge Score on Traffic Rules (n=416)**

Group	Maximum Score	Score Received	
		Actual	Percentage
Speed	4	.37	9.3
Overtake	2	.58	29.0
Lane <sup>1</sup>	3	1.4	46.7
Line <sup>2</sup>	3	.7	23.3
Sign and symbol	7	4.0	57.1
Others	3	1.7	56.7
Total	22	9.2	41.8

<sup>1</sup>Included rules related to change of lanes by vehicles on road.

<sup>2</sup>Included meaning of white and yellow lines on road.

On an average respondents scored 9.2 points out of 22, i.e., they scored 42 percent. In other words the score indicates that the respondents knew around 42 percent of the basic traffic rules needed to be known and followed (Table 5.3). Respondents were most knowledgeable on rules on signs and symbols and least on speed.

Only 28 respondents received training on driving from formal institution/organization. Their mean score (11.3) was slightly more than those without training, i.e., 9.1. It may be noted that respondent received training from NGO scored highest with 17 points. But, nothing conclusive can be said about the effectiveness of the training from NGO as only a respondent received training from there. Besides NGO, respondents received training from other institutions (BRTA, Trade Union, Social Welfare Department, District Commissioner's office, and Communication Ministry) scored 11.2, meaning that they were knowledgeable on 50.7 percent of the traffic rules. Eighteen respondents attended the training offered by BRTA.

Respondent knowledge was positively associated with number of years respondents were driving but the association (0.23) was not a strong one. On the other hand respondents' education was inversely associated with their knowledge on traffic rules; association in this case was not a strong one either. Of those who received training proportionally more number of them with higher education received it, similar trend was also observed among those who did not receive any training.

### **Following the Traffic Rules**

Ultimate objective of gaining knowledge on traffic rules by the drivers is to follow them while driving. Following the rules by the drivers was absolutely imperative in minimizing accidents on the road. In order to know the extent the rules were followed 100 respondents were randomly selected from 416 respondents already selected in order to observe their driving behavior. As mentioned before field researchers accompanied these respondents in their vehicle for 1-3 hours while they were driving by sitting at a place in the vehicle from where driving could be observed comfortably. The field workers kept a note of following selected traffic rules on a structured schedule.

The highest score for following all the rules was 10 in the case of speed limit and overtaking, three in the case of lane, five in the case of signs and symbols, and four in the case of following others rules. Adjusted knowledge scores had to be assigned to traffic rules that was observed to find out the extent those were followed by the field workers in order to maintain comparability between knowledge and practice.

**Table 5.4: Respondent's Scores on Knowledge on Traffic Rules and their Application in Driving**

Traffic Rule	Maximum score	Score		
		Knowledge	Practice	Practice score in %
Speed	4	.38	.48	12.0
Overtake	8	2.7	2.7	33.9
Lane	3	1.4	1.3	43.3
Sign and symbol	5	4.3	0.9	18.0
Getting into highway	4	1.8	3.7	92.5
Total	22	8.9	9.1	41.4

n=416 (knowledge); n=111 (practice)

In some instances a traffic rule were followed but in others same were violated. This was because when in some of these cases following of rules depended on convenience although respondents were informed about relevant traffic rule but, in others driving matched with following of rules not done with the intention of abiding the same.

The respondents, whose driving were observed on an average received 41 points out of hundred for following the rules (Table 5.4). When the score was split by groups, respondents received highest score for following rules related to getting into highways (92.5 percent) against only 18 percent the lowest in the case of signs and symbols. It may be pointed out that the respondents received higher score for following rules on 'speed' and 'getting into highway' compared to their knowledge score on the same. This was probably because of natural instinct rather than conscious effort based on knowledge prompting them to follow the rules.

In the case of ‘speed’ it was very likely that the condition of the road in some cases forced them to drive at a lower speed than what was instrumental in the signs posted. Again driver might have naturally reduced speed, to make sure that no vehicle was approaching from opposite direction and used signal while overtaking a standing vehicle. Similarly they might have refrained from overtaking vehicles on turns, narrow bridges, interceptions, zebra crossings, and spots where overtaking was prohibited in order to keep themselves safe. While getting into highway from a narrow road the respondent might have stopped at the intersection, got into highway when the highway was free of passing traffic and gave right of way to the vehicles on the highway. The drivers might have followed these rules from a natural instinct to keep themselves safe as violating these would increase the chance of accident rather than due to presence of knowing on these rules and form a conviction to follow them.

Respondents’ knowledge was weakly correlated with following of traffic rules (.27). But, following of traffic rules was not associated with drivers committing accident and their knowledge in driving.

A good number of respondents believed that the drivers did not possess required knowledge on traffic rules. According to them 90 percent of the drivers were driving recklessly. This was because they did not know the traffic rules and most importantly they felt that when rules were followed driving became difficult. So, even if they knew the rules they were not serious in following them. They had an understanding where the rules to be followed to avoid danger and where it could be ignored. As a respondent remarked – *At part of the route with lighter traffic I drive at the speed 80 km per hour even while passing by schools and colleges but at a much reduced speed in those parts of the road where the traffic usually remains heavy.*

**Box 5.2**

Nurunobi compared driving with playing football, where the objective of a player is to take the ball to the opponents’ goalpost by surpassing all the opponents. Likewise while driving a bus he plays with steering wheel and surpasses all vehicles on the road by speeding and overtaking them. He gets a sense of accomplishment by driving fast and overtaking others.

### **Speeding: Major Reason for Traffic Violations**

Violation of most of the traffic rules boils down to a single cause – convenience in maintaining high speed. There was a tendency in speeding as because there was a reward in maintaining and punishment for not maintaining high speed. As mentioned, following traffic rules compel the drivers to slow down thus in order to be rewarded or to avoid being punished they maintain a higher speed by violating the rules. The factors that were behind reward and punishment were as the following.

**Box 5.3**

Babu carries stones for the road under construction in Bholagonj. There were plenty of trips available for carrying stone and there were a number of trucks carrying stones. Trucks carrying stones compete with each other in making maximum trips. So Babu rushed to Broker’s office after a trip in order to get another. He ensured more trips by speeding and overtaking other trucks on the road by taking a great risk. He does not mind taking the risk as more trips meant more income.

- **Satisfaction in fast driving:** It was satisfying to some respondents to drive at a high speed. They took it as a sport and got thrilled by overtaking vehicle after vehicle while driving (Box 5.2). Some of the respondents took pride by thinking and mentioning that there was no driver in the district who could drive faster than them. Besides smooth multilane highways, constructed at the recent time, tempted them to drive at a high speed. It was observed that the



young drivers with hot blood have a tendency to drive fast. Thus remarked that young drivers driving at high speed feels very proud of running faster than other driver.

- **Following the flow of traffic:** When all drivers on the road were speeding the respondents as because of demonstration effect also got into speeding. Besides they were also forced to keep up with the flow of traffic in order to avoid being hit by the speeding vehicle at the rear and to avoid development of traffic congestion behind them or compel others to overtake them, if driven at a slow speed.
- **Maintain schedule:** Respondents in all cases were given a strict schedule to be maintained. In most cases the schedules were set without much consideration to the time that would be needed to make a trip by following traffic rules by the vehicle and any interruption that might delay the driver. The schedule got further pressed for truck when carrying perishable items like vegetable and fish. Being pressed for time in maintaining schedule respondents were forced to speed. There were several other factors encouraged respondents to speed. Vehicles are allowed to enter some of the metropolitan cities only at a fixed time. Missing that schedule would cause the vehicle to enter the city in next tern. In some of the routes they had to take ferry to cross the rivers. Missing the ferry was likely to delay them considerably in arriving at the destination. Missing the schedule would mean loss of income by the owner of the vehicle as they would have to pay a demurrage for the delay, something not liked by the owner. In most cases the owners have a fining system for the drivers when they miss the schedule. In the case of some respondent it was Tk.20 for reaching the destination a minute late. In the case of missing the schedule for several times employer fired the respondents and hired new driver.
- **Speeding avoids accident:** A few respondents remarked that when vehicle was driven at a high speed they were compelled to remain in high alert and keep themselves fully concentrated on driving which in turn reduced the chance of committing accident. In contrast when driving at a lower speed they were not with similar concentration on driving; thoughts other than driving came into their minds thus increased the possibility of committing accident.
- **Save gasoline:** Particularly for older vehicles when driven at a higher speed it saved gasoline, it encourages respondents to drive at a higher speed.
- **Economically benefiting:** As because additional trip meant an additional income for drivers and for the employers respondents were always encouraged to reach destination before time if such arrival provided them a scope for making additional trip;. Respondents could return back to the terminal before time for additional trip only by speeding during the scheduled one (Box 5.3). Taking off after returning back from the trip was also an encouragement for the respondents to drive at a higher speed as by arriving at the terminal earlier they could take off earlier.
- **Desired by the passengers:** Passengers preferred that the vehicle they traveled be driven at a higher speed even though they often viewed accidents while on roads. When driven at a lower speed passengers often proposes whether the vehicle could be driven at a higher speed so that they might maintain their appointments at the destination. Sarcastic comments were passed by the passengers to the respondents driving at a slower speed – *Driving at the speed of a bullock-cart. Honda is overtaking you.* To avoid hearing such comments or to refrain passengers from making a complaint to the employer against the respondents they were often provoked to speed up.
- **Preferred by the owner:** Speeding at time was encouraged by the employer as there was a competition among the employer in the transport sector. The reputation of companies to a

great extent lies on the shortest possible time in which they can reach the passengers to their destinations. If the vehicle of a company can reach destination an hour before the one from other company the goodwill of the former would be enhanced. In other words, there are some benefits for maintaining higher speed by the vehicle:

1. Reputation of the company is enhanced;
2. Occupancy in transport increases;
3. Owner make more profit; and
4. Companies can survive in the competitive transport market.

In context it was remarked – *Drivers' job is evaluated based on their performance and their performance in turn is based on the speed they drive.* So when driving a bus respondent always thought about how he would overtake the vehicles of other companies.

**Demerits of speeding:** A respondent remarked that there were speed limits both for local roads and highways but drivers had to maintain their own speed ignoring the set limit and there was no rule for driving vehicle on the road. The statement reflects an attitude of disrespect and defiance to traffic rule but respondents were very much aware of the down side of speeding. It was mentioned that speeding created uncertainty and reduced control of the driver on the vehicle. While speeding drivers had to remain extremely careful as a small mistake could cause fatal accident. If there was no accident everything was good but in cases of accident driver needs to bear the responsibility of personal loss alone. In addition to these, speeding exerts mental and physical pressure on drivers. Speed keeps the driver tense which often cause headache. As was remarked speeding brought benefit to everybody but drivers. High speed makes the vehicle jerk vigorously as a result drivers were likely to have body sore, chest pain during sleep, and weakened heart.

### **Why Overload**

Overloading is one of the traffic violations often done by the drivers. Buses were overloaded with passengers as trucks were with goods. Bus was considered to be overloaded when it was carrying more passengers beyond its sitting capacity. Overloaded busses carried passenger on the rooftop, between the seats, hanging on the doors, standing on the rear bumper, and even some sitting on the engine cover in the front. In the case of truck when goods were carried beyond the weight recommended for it was considered overloaded. Normally the trucks running in the local roads and those in the highways were recommended for carrying three or five tons maximum depending upon capacity of the vehicle but they rarely carry goods within these limits. There were specific reasons for overloading which in cases were economic but in others was situational.

More passenger in the bus meant more income from the trip benefiting both the employer and the driving crew in the bus. Some respondents had to pay a fixed amount for a trip to the employer. If the income from the trip was less than that amount it was natural that the employer would not like it. Therefore respondents often overloaded their buses deliberately in order to make up less income from the earlier trips or such a trip in future. Some passengers prefer to travel on the rooftop as it was cheaper. Again when there were more passengers than the seats that the buses in the route could provide the passengers themselves overloaded the bus even if it was not intended by the respondents. Such overloading usually took place at certain time of the day or year when there was more passenger than usual.

The incentive for carrying excess goods was also monetary. Overloading was often done without the consent of the employer. In these cases the charge for additional freight beyond the capacity of the truck always remained with the respondent. So respondents were always eager to overload their trucks. These overloads were often small in weight. In other instances employer recommended the respondents to overload the truck so that the employer might have an additional income. In one instance an employer asked a respondent to overload the truck in all trips so that there was an additional income to pay the installment against the loan he took from the bank in order to purchase the truck. In the cases where it was the policy of the employer to overload the truck additional income from overloading in most cases were shared with the respondents. If the respondents were reluctant to overload the truck they were forced to do so or replaced. In cases where the lessee renting the truck ended up with a little more cargo left to be loaded beyond the capacity of the truck they often requested the respondents to load excess freight in the truck to avoid hiring another truck for the cargo. The respondents often honored the request by overloading the truck for an additional charge.

Obviously it is a traffic violation and government had inspectors posted to detect and fine overloaded vehicles on the roads. But respondents could easily get by the inspectors by telling that the people sitting on the rooftop were their people or by bribing traffic sergeant in charge, which was around Tk.60 in each instance.

**Demerits of overloading:** Although overloading was economically benefiting it was considered to have variety of drawbacks both in the case of bus and truck. In the case of bus when passengers were sitting on the engine cover the view of the driver was impaired. Again when additional passengers were sitting or standing on the sides of the driver their view was not only impaired but it caused problem in smooth shifting of the gear and in turning the steering wheel as the leg or body of the passengers were on the way of operating those. Again overloaded passenger on the bus roof or hanging on the door created a problem for the bus to take a turn. All these hindrances definitely increased the chance of making accidents. When busses, particularly the local ones, were overloaded passengers sitting often complained about it, they also complain about the delay in arriving the destination as the bus had to be driven at a slower speed due to overloading. As the passengers had to cram themselves inside they often got into quarrel with each other and ticket collector. Beside the incidence being undesirable it distracted the attention of the driver from driving.

For trucks, overloading created other types of problem. Overloading created additional pressure on the vehicle. It damaged the joints of the truck, loosened the nuts and bolts, and stiffened the steering in turning. But, serious downside of overloading was that it increased the chance of bearings in the wheel to breakdown, brake failure, and even the exploding of the engine. Staking up of good high on the overloaded truck could cause it to overturn during hard brake or in taking a turn. Also due to overloading the truck had to be driven at a lower gear for a longer period, overheating the engine and taking a longer time to cover a distance.

### **Accident**

The respondents believed that all drivers ran into accident at least once in their career, and according to some getting into accident was a must to become a driver. They were under the impression that the drivers become a better one after accident as they take learning from the

accident and apply that in their driving after the accident. The accident that the respondents ran into was because of their mistakes in driving, mistake done by other drivers, their vehicle failure, or because of hazardous climatic condition.

**Table 5.5: Number of Accidents Respondents Ran Into (n=416)**

Years driving	Accident per year
1-9	.15
10-19	.11
20 and above	.05

Accidents included all types with casualties ranging from very serious to one lightly inflicted upon any of the parties involved in the incidence. Forty-two-point-three percent of the respondents did not run into any accident against 29.1 percent ran into one time, 15.9 percent two times, and 12.7 percent ran into three or more times since they started driving. Number of accidents done was positively correlated with years of driving although Pearson correlation does not project a very strong association (i.e., .24). The association was obvious as more number of years the respondents were driving more they were exposed to the probability of running into accidents. Calculation on number of accident done per year<sup>2</sup> indicates that the respondents with lesser number of years in driving did more accidents compared to those with more number of years in the same (Table 5.5). Chi-square test indicates that respondents without training were more prone to accident compared to those without training.

**Cause of accident:** Pedestrians including human and cattle were often the cause of accident as all on a sudden without any hint they came on the middle of the road before the moving vehicle. Paddle vehicles like rickshaws and vans also have the similar tendency besides their movement in a slower speed on the road increases the chance for them being hit by

fast moving motorized vehicles. In such a situation respondents tried to save them by making an effort to stop or slow down their vehicles, or by bi-passing the victims without reducing the speed.

**Box 5.4**

Kabir was speeding with an overloaded truck. Very unexpectedly he noticed a patch of water from the last rain at the turn he had to take. He had to slow down by making a hard brake in order to make a safe turn in such a situation. He could not do so as that was likely to make the truck slip and run onto the people standing on other side of the road. As he could not turn the steering wheel as was needed at that speed the truck went off the road and hit a tree. After breaking two trees the truck was stopped by the third one.

Nobody was hurt other than Kabir had a cut. He was taken to the hospital when helper remained in guard of the truck. The union office was informed, leaders from the office promptly came and removed the truck from the spot before police could take charge of the vehicle. The leaders and others were given Tk.2,500 as tips for getting the truck on the road. The front glass of the truck was broken. Owner paid for it.

**Box 5.5**

Azad was carrying sand for the construction of Bholagonj road. As the partner driver was ill he had to drive two days and two nights continuously. He had to do this as a required amount of sand had to be transported to the site within a given time. Failure in doing that would make the owner loose the contract. Azad was too tired to drive but he and his owner were determined not to give any chance to other truck-owner to take up the contract. At one stage of driving Azad released his grip on the steering wheel as he fell asleep while driving. The truck went like this for few kilometers before a turn ahead. At the turn owner sitting beside cautioned him about the accident that the truck was getting into. But it was too late and the truck went off the road in to the roadside

<sup>2</sup> Number of accident done divided by number of years driving.

Reckless driving was considered to be an important cause for accident. In addition to this improper overtaking, overloading, and using wrong signs were often causes for accident. When trucks were overloaded by stacking goods high on the top respondents had to be extra cautious in taking turn and had to drive at a slower speed. In some of these cases respondents forgot about the overloaded condition of their vehicles and run into serious accident (Box 5.4). It was observed that the fault in driving' as a cause for accident decreased with the increase in the number of years of driving, indicating that with time respondents' skill in driving improved.

Mechanical problem of the vehicle was often a cause for accident. They also observed that braking of the wheel or bursting of the tire were major mechanical failures causing accidents. Respondents observed that if the tire of front wheel bursts the vehicle even at a lower speed would go out of control and in no way the vehicle could be saved from an accident. Accident also becomes inevitable when brake of the vehicle fails. When brake oil starts leaking from the plastic bucket holding it brakes does not work. In such a situation respondents could not stop the vehicle. Accidents in these cases were both a minor one like hitting and damaging the rear bumper of the vehicle in front or a serious one with destruction of the vehicle and human life, depends on the speed of the vehicle when break malfunctioned. In cases when other vehicle was not hit the vehicle with malfunctioning brake got out of the road particularly at the curb of the road.

Hazardous road condition due to heavy rain and fog impairing vision of the respondent or slippery soil on the road surface causing vehicle to lose balance were other reasons for accident.

Health condition of the respondents particularly fatigue was another important cause quoted for accident. When respondents were on duty for three or four days without a break (i.e., being away from home) the chance for them to cause accident was likely to be very high (Box 5.5).

Driving under the influence was another major cause of accident mentioned. It was more true in the case of novice when they took drugs immediately before driving. This was because the veterans consuming drugs before driving got used to it so they could keep themselves in full senses while driving but same was not in the case for recent addicts.

The reasons for running into accidents, in the case of respondents, were grouped into nine categories (Table 5.6). In 20 percent of the incidences of accident, i.e., hit by other vehicle, respondents believed that they were in no way responsible for the incidence. Coming of pedestrian/van/rickshaw all on a sudden on the way of the respondents' vehicles was the major cause of accident (23 percent), followed by respondents losing control of the vehicle (18.8 percent). Respondents lost control of the vehicle due to some of the causes mentioned in the table or for some reasons not specified. Braking or loosening of the wheel and livestock coming on the way of the vehicle were other major causes for running into cross accidents by the respondents.

**Table 5.6: Causes for Running into Accidents (n=240)**

Cause	Percent
Hit by other vehicle	20.3
Pedestrian/van/rickshaw came on the way	23.0
Livestock came on the way	9.1
Fault in driving	8.9
Wheel broke/loosened or tire burst	9.7
Problem with engine/brake	4.2
Hazardous road condition	2.1
Mental/physical disorder	4.0
Lost control over vehicle	18.8
Total	100.0

**After an accident:** Respondents were candid in expressing the reactions they had immediately after the accident they ran into. Some of the accidents were quite serious, where respondents were not in a position to take any action for becoming unconscious or were injured bad enough for that. Their vehicles were also seriously damaged. But in most cases the casualty from the accident was not a serious one both for the respondents and their vehicles to make them non functional.

Where respondents were not or slightly insured personal safety became the priority for the driver immediately after the accident. The respondents considered themselves to be in fault in accident always tried avoid being caught by the crowd. Such respondents and even their helpers left the vehicle and fled away. So, hit and run was most preferred action immediately after the accident by the respondents. In number of instances respondents did nothing after the accident or helped the injured from the accident by taking them to hospital. In last two instances the casualty from accident was not a serious one.

In some of the cases it was not possible for the respondents to escape from the accident spot with the vehicle because the passage to do that was not available. The passage got blocked or the vehicle was damaged so bad that it was not functional any more. In either of these instances people crowded and surrounded the vehicle; they also took care of the injured. The crowd invariably took side of lighter vehicle got involved in post accident situation. In instances where respondents could not escape after accident crowd took law in own hand by beating the respondents considered guilty or by making them to pay fine to the victim. Crowd also handed over respondents involved in accident to police. When the damage from the accident was a minor one, respondents in fault were also willing to settle the incidence by paying a demurrage for the losses negotiated by public, police and/or union. In other cases crowd handed the respondents over to police.

After physical safety was ensured respondents always preferred to inform the incidence to the union and the union promptly got themselves involved in the matter. Respondents always believed that the union would take care of driver's interest. Involvement of police in the matter was least desired as their involvement would mean that respondents would have to bribe them and/or it could become the starting of a lengthy official procedure involving court to settle the case.

## Chapter 6

### Relationship with Owner, and Involvement with Association/Organizations

This chapter deals with three loosely connected issues – respondent’s relationship with their employer (i.e., owner of the vehicle or transport company), and their involvement with driver’s trade union and political parties.

#### Respondent’s Relationship with Owner

The terms and conditions of employment of the respondent remained verbal even when they were hired by large transport companies in most cases. Due to oversupply of drivers they were hardly in a position to influence the agreement in their favor by bargaining with the employer. If respondents were not satisfied with the agreement they were asked to quit their jobs. But in few cases union had an influence on the terms and conditions of the agreement in the form of recommendation.

In the case of owners having a few vehicles they directly supervised the work of respondents; as part of it in some cases employer even accompanied respondents in the trips. In these cases the interaction between these owners and respondents were direct and informal. But in the case of companies where employer had a good number of vehicles supervisor or foremen interacted with the respondent as per set policy on behalf of the employer and his/her company. In this case the nature of relationship between the respondents and the owner depended on the policy of the company and process of their implementation by the representatives. Of course, in the case of accident employer called the respondents to have a firsthand knowledge about the incidence and accordingly took action.

A good number of respondents believed to have a good relationship with the employer (Box 6.1). Respondents having good relationship had respect for the employer as their livelihood depended on them even though it was earned in exchange of the services provided to the employer. This attitude was present in all the respondents irrespective of number of vehicles the employer had running on road. Respondents also felt happy by thinking that their employer had trusted them by keeping vehicles costing no less than Tk.12 lac solely in their disposal. Of course, good behavior from the employer did not come without a reason. It was noted that good relationship between employer and respondent developed when they drove safe, made no accident, had to pay no fine for traffic violation and could handover handsome amount of income to the owner (Box 6.1).

Most of the employers became unhappy (39 percent) with the respondent when they brought less income than expected from the trip closely followed by when they failed to take good care of the vehicle including running into accident (38 percent) (Table 6.1). About 22 percent of the employer became unhappy when work was not done properly other than not maintaining schedule, received complaint from the lease, etc. (situations specifically mentioned in the table).

#### Box 6.1

Habib mentioned that his owner liked him not because he was good looking and behaved well but he drove safely, did not make any damage to the vehicle till then, and was never fined. He was liked so much that he was not fired even when he remained absent from the job in support to the strike called by the driver’s association to protest to a fine of Tk.700 levied on a fellow driver by his employer.

**Table 6.1: Reasons why Employers Rebuked Respondents (n = 397)**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never rebukes	39.0
Proper care of vehicle not taken	38.3
Get involved with police	10.3
Account mismanaged/less income	39.0
Work not properly done	21.7

In 80.9 percent (n=297) of the instances where respondents were absent from work, for what ever reason and for any length of time, employer always found their replacements to keep the vehicle running. In 42.3 percent of the instances respondents missed work were allowed to resume work after their return but the rest were terminated. Such a high rate of replacement whether permanent or temporary indicates about easy availability of drivers, making the conditions of relationship between employer and driver more favorable for the former.

The relationship between employer and driver became bad when employer had to bear the expenses for the incidences like running into an accident, got involved into litigation, had to bribe police for some violation or pay additional extortion when respondents were found guilty. Employer also become unhappy with the income from the trip that was not up to their expectations. In such an instance owners doubts that the respondents were hiding a portion of the income from them, or not making sufficient effort to make an income as desired. As a result employer started complaining, reproaching, and misbehaving with the respondents. In such a situation respondents were bound to quit job or were sacked (Box 6.2). When respondents worked for an employer for a long time trust and understanding develops between them. Even in such a situation, for some reasons, when respondents failed to draw sufficient income employer become unhappy about it. If a high income flow could not be maintained for a longer time the relationship between employer and respondents were bound to get sour. In fact, very few respondents could continue to driving vehicle of same an employer for a long time. Only 5 percent of the respondents were driving 5-7 years for same employer. So respondents believed that no relationship other than business could develop between the driver and the employer.

**Box 6.2**

An agreement was made between a lessee and driver Sharif that he would transport lessee's goods to Syedpur. But he was unable to get into Saydpur as because of some problem on the road. So he unloaded the goods at Goala Bazar, close to Saidpur, and received fare lesser than what was decided. When Sahrif informed all these to the owner he did not take it easily. He doubted that the Sharif must have hiding a part of the income from the trip so rebuked him bad. At this Sahrif got mad and threw the key to the owner and quit the job.

Accident was another major cause for the development of a bad relationship between employer and driver. Although in many cases respondents paid for the accident employer did not want to see that their vehicle got damaged in accident. The issue was taken seriously by the employer as in these instances they rebuked the respondents bad, panelized them monetarily, and in cases sacked them. In case of accidents respondents did not become happy about the behavior of the owner thus a bad relationship developed between them.

### **Participation in Driver's Trade Union**

Usually a driver's union was located in bus and truck terminals. Besides drivers the helpers and supervisors were also members of the union. The union had a committee participated by the elected drivers. Only members of the union had the right to vote and contest in the election held



annually. The union received a fee of Tk.3,000 for registering the members in the union. Drivers also had to pay a monthly fee of Tk.10-20 to the union in order to keep their membership valid. Besides these sources union had other incomes like, receive a monthly tax from each vehicles for keeping those in the terminal, and a charge for scheduling trips of the vehicle and for handling accident related problems between driver, owner, and police.

Union leaders does not drive vehicles after they got elected. They are paid from the income of the union. In few cases they had illegal income from different sources, e.g., toll collected from the ferry station (*ghats*) located close to their bus or truck terminal. Income from these sources often let union have a good capital and in cases it became a source of contention among the members.

The objective of the union was to provide services to its members. The services although varying from union to union included:

1. Union arranges trip schedule for vehicles under them by rotation of the vehicles for trip thus chances for availing trips is made same for all the drivers and the competition among the drivers for trip is avoided. An order is maintained among the drivers. The schedule is usually fixed for 45 days.
2. When a driver is physically injured due to an accident union provides monitory help to the driver for treatment in order to make up the loss and pay court fees for cases associated with the accident. Besides there were other benefits/allowance offered by the union to driver's family in different instances like, death and disability of the member due to accident, unemployment of the member, children' marriage, etc. (Box 6.3).
3. In case of dispute between driver and employer union comes forward to solve the problem. It helps the drivers injured in the accident to receive compensation from owner.
4. Bargains with the police to save the drive from being arrested or run into any type of harassment.
5. Settle disputes amongst the drivers and other parties like customers by arranging arbitration.
6. When a vehicle is taken in police custody after an accident the union leaders get the vehicle released by using their influence. In these cases the owner of the vehicle offers money to the union leader by themselves for their service. The leader divides the money among themselves.

**Box 6.3**

The truck driver's union in Rajshahi is well known for it being very active. It has 5,500 members of whom on an average 3,000 pay Tk.20 per month. It has a capital of Tk.24 lac in bank and has a petrol pump on land owned by the union. The union as a policy pays Tk.50,000 in case of a member's death in accident, Tk.10,000 for their children appearing SSC examination and Tk.15,000 when they marry their children. For accident and disability a handsome amount is also paid to the victim.

Two-point-two percent (9) of the respondents were not member of the labor union. In most cases these responds were young have been in the driving profession for a few years. They did not have enough funds to pay the registration fee. Of these respondents who were members 55.5% (226) did not contribute to the union activities in any way as against the rest who had given time to union activities in different capacities.

Fifty-five-point-three percent of the respondents being member had some roles in union activities. Same number of respondents driving bus and tuck were involved in union activities (Table 6.2).

Respondents driving light-trucks were mostly involved in union activities closely followed by those driving buses. Most common role was interacting with members at the union office regularly. Participation in the activities of the union was done willingly or when asked for.

**Table 6.2: Respondents' Involvement in Union Activities by Type of Vehicles Driven (%)**

Involvement	Truck		Bus	
	Heavy	Light	Large	Mini
Not involved	57.6	50.0	51.7	58.5
Involved	42.4	50.0	48.3	41.5
Total respondent	165	42	118	82

**Table 6.3: Type of Help Respondent Received from Union by Years Driving (n=397)**

Type of help received from Union	Years driving (%)		
	1-9	10-19	20 and above
No help provided	13.4	12.5	14.7
Helped with money	61.3	66.4	61.3
Helped with advice	68.6	65.6	60.0
Legal Help	8.2	12.5	10.7
Provided driving serial	7.2	4.7	6.7
Total respondents	194	128	75

Overwhelming number of the member respondents (97.5 percent) received help from the unions they were affiliated with. In cases help in multiple forms and times were availed. Help with money and with advices were most common form of help extended to members when they were in problems like accident, sickness, etc. Number of help received did not appear to have increased with the increase in the number of years the respondents were driving (Table 6.3). Drivers driving heavy-truck and bus received more help from the union compared to those driving light-truck and small bus.

Respondents including those who were not members unanimously believed that it was absolutely imperative for them to become member of the union in order to continue in the driving profession. Becoming one can receive the services provided by the union only by becoming its member and such services were very much needed by the drivers. In context it was remarked – *As a member of the union I can drive a vehicle of any owner. When I have a problem with owner or passenger union office helps by solving the problem. If I have a card (i.e., ID card provided to members of the union) I can travel free by bus.*

Respondents did not see any down side of the union. They have full confidence in the union that it would serve their interest. Of course, it was mentioned that because of large scale registration of drivers in the union in many instances it could not provide services uniformly to all and that in times created discontentment among the members. Union often failed in upholding the interest of the drivers. For example, some of the respondents were of the opinion that there should be a uniform salary policy for drivers throughout the country. In spite of it being in demand for sometimes the union could not do anything about it.

Occasionally bad relationship flairs up following tension developed among the union members based on supporting different candidates participating in union election. But such a relationship was always temporary as union returned back to its normalcy soon after the election was over. Previously drivers' unions were supported and worked for communist/socialist political parties

but at presently unions have come out of such an influence and have taken up the policy of always supporting the party in power. The policy helped the union to meet its objectives by getting the support of political and administrative machineries in case of need.

Parallel to driver’s union there were vehicle owner’s union in number of towns. These unions look after the interest of the owners. In case of any dispute between the driver and the owner the driver’s and owner’s unions sat together and tried to settle the problem. The practice although reduces the owners choice in taking any action related to driver and in context driver commented – *Owners are the master and employer of the driver, and therefore he cannot conflict with them.*

### Political Affiliation

Respondents were politically conscious as they kept themselves updated with the activities and happenings of different political parties. All of them were supporters of some political parties (Table 6.4). Almost same number of respondents was supporter of Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) followed by Jatio Party (JP).

**Table 6.4: Respondent’s Affiliation with Political Parties (n=416)**

Political Party	Percentage
Bangladesh National Party	42.3
Bangladesh Awami League	43.5
Jamaat-e-Islam	2.6
Jatiya Party	10.8
Other	.8

Others include Community party and Krishok Sramic Janata Party

Although respondents supported political parties, 76.8 percent of the respondents did not have contribution of any sought to the party they supported. Of these respondents, 18.2 percent in spite of having an intention to contribute could not because they were pressed for time. Only 11.7 percent of the respondents were active supporters of political parties by giving time to party activities like participation in the meeting and taking part in protest agitations of the party. On the other hand 1.5 percent contributed to the party by creating obstruction to the activities of rival political parties.

**Table 6.5: Respondents’ Contribution to Activities of Political Party Supported (n = 413)**

Contribution	Political Party			
	BNP	AL	Jamaat	Jatio Party
No contribution	81.3	75.1	72.7	84.4
No time for contribution	17.6	20.4	0	42.2
Make party more powerful	11.9	16.0	27.3	4.4
Prevent other party activities	1.1	2.8	0	0
Total respondent	176	181	11	45

Number of respondents giving and not giving any time to party activities have decreased with more number of years the respondents have been driving. Less number of respondents from JP and BNP contributed to party activities compared to Jamaat-e-Islami and AL (Table 6.5). About 42 percent of the respondents from JP did not have any time to contribute to party as against none

from Jamaat. More number of respondents supporting Jamaat had worked to make their party more powerful followed by AL.

**Table 6.6: Respondents contribution to Political Activities by Types of Vehicle Driven (n = 413)**

Contribution	Truck		Bus	
	Heavy	Light	Large	Small
No contribution	84.1	67.5	77.7	74.1
No time for contribution	15.3	42.5	28.1	11.8
Make party more powerful	10.0	7.5	15.7	20.0
Prevent other party activities	1.8	2.5	1.7	1.2
Total respondent	170	40	118	85

Slightly more number of respondents driving light-truck and minibus were giving time to political activities compared to their counterparts (Table 6.6). More number of respondents driving light-truck followed by driving large bus did not have any time for the party they were supporting. Again, about 90 percent of the respondents did not receive any help from the political party they were supporting. Those who received help in all cases there were facilitated by the drivers union which they belonged to.

Although respondents were supporters of different political parties almost all of them mentioned that the unions they were attached to did not have any political affiliation. But, a few members differed from the comment by mentioning that the driver's union always had to support the political party in power. This was because union needed the cooperation of the government in order to achieve its objectives. For example, in the case of an accident union needed the support of the party in power to save the driver in fault from being arrested. This cooperation is received by supporting the party in power. Besides receiving help, if the union does not show their support to the political party in power it was likely to receive obstruction in its activities and drivers were likely to be harassed. The union supporting the political party in power by helping them to get transport during their rallies. Respondents believed that the unions must support and keep a good relationship with the ruling party to gain benefit from the government. With the change in political party in power the allegiance of the union also changes to that forming the government. It was the policy of the unions to support the party in power.

Unions were directly and indirectly influenced by the government. Although the unions support the government they remained careful not to get involved in the political activities of the party in power. During national election the unions try to play neutral although the members in most cases were active supporter of political parties they did not vote with a level of the union they belonged to. The divide is strictly maintained as because if they get leveled as supporter of a political party by their activities the union might be in problem if the government was formed by the party rival to party supported.

## Chapter 7

### Social Status, Job Related Problems and Job Satisfaction

The chapter deals with three not necessarily connected issues. Job satisfaction may or may not be dependent upon social status that the drivers have in the society or the problems that they face in their job. Low status and problems in the job can be neutralized by remuneration that the drivers receive. Job satisfaction is a complex equation where many factors are taken into consideration both in conscious and subconscious mind. Nevertheless it may be mentioned that social status and problems/advantages in the job are some of the important factors determining job satisfaction.

### Problems

Respondents mentioned variety of problems relating to their jobs and those outside. In case the problems were interrelated. Respondents also devised variety of ways to handle these problems and get themselves going.

**Table 7.2: Job Related Problems Faced by Respondents (n=416)**

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Indisciplined traffic on road	3.4
Creates health problem	18.8
Problem with employer	37.6
Owner gives less money than agreed	7.5
Job related risk	85.8
Harassment by police	93.3
Pay extortion	34.1
Robbery/ill treatment by passenger	2.4

**On the job problem:** A respondent was of the opinion that he did not face any problem on the job. Against this, 93.3 percent of the respondents mentioned that harassment by police was a serious problem for them (Table 7.2). The problem appeared to be most acute for the truck drivers as 96.6 percent of the respondents driving trucks had experienced the problem. About 86 percent of the respondent believed that the risk involved in driving was a major problem in their profession and it was uniformly mentioned by all respondents driving for any length of time. The risk in driving generated from variety of sources. Most importantly the accident that the respondents might run into would harm them physically and others, and would demand their vehicles. There was also high risk of theft of the vehicle, its parts, or goods the truck was carrying while on the road. Paying extortion money was third most common problem reported by the respondents. Police harassment was very much linked with extortion as harassment was done in order to force the respondent to pay extortion. Number of respondents who paid extortion within last four months was 32.2 percent in the case of those driving heavy-truck, 40.0 percent for light-truck, 34.7 percent for bus, and 22.4 percent for those driving minibus. Quite a good number of respondents had problem with their employers (37.6 percent). Sometime the employers behaved rude with the respondents which they did not deserve. In cases owner did not keep the conditions of the contract decided upon when respondent started the job or added new condition which was not initially mentioned.

**Table 7.3: Strategies in Solving Job Related Problems (n=416)**

Problem	Strategies in solving problem				Total Cases
	Pay money	Arbitration	Make agreement	Others	
Owner gave less money	0	75.0	25.0	0	8
Extortion	97.9	18.3	6.3	2.1	142
Harassment by police	98.2	9.3	3.9	1.0	388
Traffic jam	85.7	57.1	0	0	14
Robbery/complain from passenger	70.0	40.0	30.0	40.0	10

Obviously respondents took different measures to solve these problems. Overwhelming majority of the respondents (96.0 percent) tried to solve the job related problems involving police with the help of money. Next mentioned method was to take help of arbitration (11.2 percent) usually resorted in the case of disputes with owner, fellow drivers, and parties got affected in the accident. Table 7.3 shows measures that the respondents took in order to solve selected problems they came across. 'Others' in the table included inform police station, try to convince passengers, and when see any police escape from him by speeding the vehicle.

Drivers being member of association could ask for the help of union when they faced any problem. In case of disputes between the respondents and other parties like owner or police, union arranged arbitration to solve the problem. In the case of police where there was an agreement with them they were contacted to have a settlement on the case. In some cases agreements were made where deciding how compensation would be made or on amount should be paid as extortion.

**Table 7.4: Mode of Payment to Police (n=416)**

Mode of payment	Percentage
Payment on daily basis	4.1
Payment on weekly/monthly basis	15.9
Payment made by the Union	19.0
Payment based on goods overloaded truck carrying	6.7
Out of agreement payment as demanded/negotiated	65.6

In the case of paying the police two modes were followed. When vehicles were driven in a fixed route an agreement was made by the owner of the vehicle or the respondents in his behalf that a fixed amount would be paid for a period, that could be for a day, week or month. In some cases union made the deal with the police and the payment was made by them after receipt of the amount from the owner. Overloaded trucks were often charged based on type of goods it was carrying or additional weight it was carrying. In other cases when respondents did not follow a fixed route or made a trip not scheduled they had to pay to the police, e.g., when a truck enters Dhaka city when it was not supposed to. The amount was negotiated or had to be paid as demanded.

**Of the job problem:** Besides, not being able to give enough time to the family and own self was considered to be a problem by 49.4 percent of the respondents. Number of respondents considered it to be a problem was highest for those who had been in the profession for 10-19 years, i.e., 60.2 percent. In the case of respondents driving for 1-9 years and 20 or more number of years it was 40.4 percent and 55.5 percent respectively. It was considered to be a problem by the group driving

for 10-19 years because at this stage of lifecycle they needed to give more time to their family and take care of growing children.

Payment made with prior agreement was the most common form of transaction to the police (65.5 percent) made by the respondents followed by payment made by the union on their behalf (19.0). Latter type of payment was preferred by owners as it reduced hassle for them.

**Table 7.5: Cause of Pressure while Driving**

Source of pressure	Percentage
Traffic jam	30.6
Noise made by passenger	31.9
High temperature in drivers seat and breakdown of vehicle	22.6
Demand made by passenger	13.9
Maintain schedule	32.9
Others	2.1
Total responded	389

**Table 7.6: Physical & Psychological Problems Created Due to Pressure in Driving**

Problem	Percentage
Headache	77.8
Pain in neck, back, leg, or body	73.4
Tiredness or insomnia	4.2
High/ low pressure and respiratory problem	2.8
Gastric ulcer	6.2
Frustration/depression	53.4
Become angry/bad mood	2.5
Total responded	356

As mentioned, respondents had to drive in uncomfortable situations because of the conditions prevailing on road and within the vehicle (Table 7.5). These conditions had an adverse effect on the mental and physical state of the respondents (Table 7.6). These health problems had negative effect on respondents’ behavior both at job and at home. These health problems kept 81.3 percent (338) of the respondents in a bad mood, often with its reflection in their behavior. In 7.1 percent of the cases they behaved badly with their colleagues but 47.0 percent of the respondents confessed to have ill treated family members after coming home which they believed was because of health problem and bad mood that they carried home from work.

### Social Status of Drivers

Although the respondents had a status considered not to be demeaning in their family and their middle class driver’s community, but they were very much aware that it was not the same across the society particularly to the upper-class and even in classes considered to be lower to theirs. Respondents believed that they were looked down upon by these classes.

Common impression about drivers in the society was that they did not have any manner, misbehaved with everybody, addicted to drugs and often got drunk, visited prostitutes, and when married invariably would have more than one wives. Not only that, as drivers had to be out of home frequently in a long distant trips thus could not sleep with their wives regularly they also did not have a good character. Drivers often had marital disputes and had a habit of violating their wives and could not keep up a good relationship with family members. No matter what was the proportion of drivers for whom they could be blamed for having these vices whole of their community stigmatized as such.

**Box 7.1**

Nazrul remarked, “Now a days there is no respect for drivers. When I was driving in the past wherever I went all walks of people in the society addressed me ‘driver shab’ and asked about my socioeconomic condition with respect and offered me tea. I was given salam but nowadays nobody asked me anything, rather everybody ignored me by knowing that I drove vehicle.”

As because of such a belief the owners although hiring respondents, in fact, did not like them. When respondents visited owners' house they were not allowed to take a seat in their house, except in the driver's room if there was one, otherwise they had to remain standing in front of their house. Even if the relationship with the owner was good respondents had to talk with him and his family members in standing. Such a behavior made respondents believe that they were looked down upon by the owner as if they had come from a lower-class. It was noted that when drivers had visited a marriage ceremony they were often served food after all guest have feasted or at a separate place. Such an observation made respondents believe that not only owners but also others had a tendency to maintain a distance with them. It was believed that the society at large maintained a hostile attitude towards them. The hostility is best expressed in the case of accident as public always find a fault in drivers even if they were not responsible for the accident. In the case of an argument between a bus driver and a passenger the co-passengers would often take the side of the passenger involved in argument. The passengers always found fault with the drivers for their being of a lower-class, same like servant.

**Table 7.1: Respondents' Perception on how they were being treated in the Society (n = 416)**

<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very Good	12.0
Good	74.8
Bad	11.8
Very bad	1.4

With the spread and deepening of the beliefs on the vices of the drivers their status in the society had gone down further at the recent time (Box 7.1). About 75 percent of the respondents believed that in the past they were treated good in the society (Table 7.1). The findings indicate that the low status assigned to drivers by the society did not transform to a bad treatment by the society towards the respondents. In context it should be mentioned that the respondents' society, i.e., with whom they interacted, mainly included fellow drivers and others associated with their jobs who did not behave bad with the respondents to make them grade otherwise in the table.

**Causes for having a low status:** Respondents were not only conscious about their low status particularly a declining one but also gave a considerable thought about the reasons behind it. They came up with variety of explanations which could be categorized broadly in terms of years they have been driving.

Respondents looked at the cause of low status of drivers in the easy availability of the drivers by the employers. Previously there was less number of drivers compared to vehicles available for driving. As a result owners used to come and approach drivers to drive their vehicles. The drivers were offered a higher salary. Higher demand associated with a higher salary provided them with higher status in the society. Things are not same at present, as mentioned, if a driver handover the key of the vehicle he was in charge another driver would in no time come to the employer to receive the key to drive that vehicle. The situation was like this as there were more drivers than vehicles available to drive. As a result some drivers always remained unemployed or partially unemployed. Such a situation frustrated the driver which in turn made them indulge in variety of bad practices like gambling. Unemployment also made it possible to hire drivers at a lower salary, meaning lesser income along with lowering of standard of living of the drivers. Above this, and most importantly, drivers in many cases, as seen before, spent their earning on socially undesired consumptions like alcohol and sex-workers which invariably brought bad name to them.



Some, particularly the senior respondents, looked for the cause of low status in the quality of drivers. They observed that the drivers at the present were not committed to driving. They failed to sense the amount of responsibility they were entrusted with when they were behind the steering wheel. They often misbehaved with the passengers and others on the road while driving and passed bad remarks to girls. Such behavior became an example to the victim and onlookers to generalize about the drivers. Their skill in driving was quite low. Moreover they were not quite knowledgeable about the traffic rules. It became so as the driving license could be purchased. Below standard performance in driving not only increased the risk of running into accidents but also brought a bad name to the driver's community.

**Box 7.2**

Once Faruque went to a marriage ceremony of his friend's sister who was a rich businessman. When Faruque was talking to some of the invitees they asked about his profession. Faruque mentioned that he was a driver working for the Hanif bus company. At this all the invitees gave a surprised look at him and mentioned that they could not guess by looking at his appearance and dress that he was a driver. Then one of them asked, whether he could drive bus without drinking alcohol or *gaza*.

**Consequence:** As because respondents were very much conscious about their low status as driver in the society it had a bearing on their attitudes and behaviors. When they were with non-drivers and if the latter happened to know about the profession of the respondents the respondents always felt uncomfortable being with them by thinking that they were in a profession of lower status or feared that the acquaints might pass a remark or would neglect the respondents. In reality unpleasant comments were always passed or they actually neglected the respondents which had hurt their feeling (Box 7.2). In many cases respondents did not mention about their profession particularly if the person happened to be a non-driver. There were other respondents who remained very particular while mixing with non-drivers so that the latter could not find any fault in their conversation or behavior. Again a good number of respondents never mixed with people other than drivers or would mix with people outside their community only when they would become sure that they would not be discriminated or demeaned for being driver or would not have to hear an unpleasant remark on their profession.

**Table 7.3**

Habib's neighbor Dulal, who also happened to be a driver, wanted to marry a girl. But her parents were not willing to marry her to him. After he being pursued for some time her parents agreed to the proposition but with the condition that he would have to quit his profession and would have to go abroad. Of course they would help Dulal in going abroad. After agreeing to the condition the marriage was solemnized

The guardians often got discouraged in marrying their daughter to drivers by thinking that the profession involved a high risk of running into accident. It was commented that – *one leg of drivers always stays in the grave*. So guardians thought that if they marry their daughter to a driver might soon become a widow. Because of job drivers need to stay out of home for a long time so they failed to take care of their families. In context, guardians had an impression that the drivers did not have any station they would sleep at any place during trips. Guardians also saw problem in ways they spent money, as remarked – *They earn easy and spend easy*. Such a spending habit was not supportive to having a sound economic base for the family. As because of these considerations by the guardians in addition to the stigmas attached to driver profession it was always difficult for the respondents to get married (Box 7.3).

Low status of the reputation had a far reaching implication in the social life of the respondents particularly in getting themselves married. They have seen that in the case of their colleagues and even in some of their own cases how difficult it became to convince parents to marry their daughter with them. Not only respondents, their children also had problems in getting themselves married. Guardians did not want to marry their son to driver's daughter for such a father having a low social status. And, in the case of girls their guardians avoided them marrying driver's son by thinking that the son might have same vices like father for growing up under his influence. Because of low social status it had also become difficult to keep family intact for the respondents. In context Selim Bepari remarked – *Both of my wives have disserted me for being a driver, so my colleagues at the terminal passed bad comments about and people in my neighborhood looked down upon me.*

### Job Satisfaction

Forty-nine-point-four percent (206) of the respondents have been driving vehicle for the same employer for a considerable length of time as against 45.9 percent (191) frequently changing owner. The judgment on 'length of time' was left on the discretion of the respondents. Rest of the respondents, 4.6 percent (19) were driving own vehicles. 'Good relation with the employer' appeared to be the main reason for not changing the employer against 'less income/scope for driving' being the main reason for doing the same (Table 7.7). It must be noted that respondents were always looking for a job with higher salary. In the case of an offer with higher salary in most case they instantly availed the offer.

**Table 7.7: Reasons for Not Changing and Changing Employers (%)**

Reason for not changing	Percentage	Reason for changing	Percentage
Good relationship with owner	83.3	Bad relationship with owner	12.1
More income	10.7	Less income/scope for driving	87.9
No reason	6.0		
Total respondents	216	Total respondents	224

Fifty-one-point-nine percent and 42.5 percent of the respondents were somewhat satisfied and somewhat dissatisfied with the income they were deriving from their present job respectively. Only 4.6 percent of the respondents were satisfied with their income against 1.0 percent unsatisfied.

Liking and disliking of associates could be important factors for satisfaction of the respondents with their job. It appeared that majority of respondents were somewhat satisfied with owner, helper, customers, and other drivers they had to associate with in their jobs (Table 7.8)

**Table 7.8: Respondent's Level of Satisfaction with Associates**

Associate	Satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Slightly unsatisfied	Unsatisfied
Employer	20.7	59.4	18.5	1.4
Helper	42.8	48.3	7.7	1.2
Other driver	45.0	53.4	1.4	.2
Customer	24.0	68.3	6.0	1.7

Job satisfaction of the respondents were observed in terms of liking and disliking of certain aspects of their jobs as was expressed. It appeared that the respondents driving for large transport companies, e.g., S. Alom, both in the case of bus and truck were more satisfied than those driving for employer having a fewer vehicles. In the case of companies with large number of vehicles the conditions of job is streamlined compared to employers with a few vehicles.

The reasons for being satisfied or not with jobs were not uniform for all respondents. That is, a factor, say income, was a cause for liking to some respondents but for disliking to others. Again respondents had emphasized upon number of factors for liking or disliking the profession.

**Box 7.4**

Nurnobi remarked, 'When I look at the present situation in the job market I am convinced to believe that I would not have any job if I did not have this one. I cannot do other job as I do not know how to cultivate land and do business. About income I get Tk. 800-1000 per trip. After meeting my family expense I can save some money. What more I can expect?'

**Reasons for being satisfied:** Number of respondents satisfied with their job emphasized on the income they were drawing. Some within the group were simply happy with their earning as it was sufficient to meet family expenses and in some cases they were left with some savings at the end of the year. Some viewed income they were drawing in comparison to one that they could have commanded if they were in other jobs. They believed that they did not have any skill other than driving to compete in the job market and manage one with more income than what they were getting. Also they did not have any capital to invest in business. Considering this reality the group was satisfied with their job and income. Some were happy with their job as because it provided an income in addition to their salary. The respondents had an extra income from overloading the vehicles about which the employer or the company was not important. Again some emphasized on the tips they were getting to meet personal expenses on items like cigarettes, rickshaw fare, tea, gambling, etc. Some employers provided allowance to the respondents for food, making extra trips, and overloading their trucks. The allowance kept the respondents satisfied. It was also mentioned that driving vehicle involved huge risks but respondents were ready to take the risk when they could draw an income what they were getting.

Respondents were also satisfied with job as the owners of the vehicle behaved well. The respondents working for the companies were mostly satisfied with their job as it reduced job related uncertainties for them. When working for these companies respondents did not have to deal with money themselves as the owner took care of it. At the month's end they were sure of getting a salary and their trips were scheduled so they did not have to compete with other drivers for trips. Such planning also gave them a chance to organize their personal life better. Most importantly, the relationship between them and their superiors in most cases had been standardized through the policy of the company.

**Reasons for not being satisfied:** Low income was a serious cause for dissatisfaction for some of the respondents. Their income went down due to increase in the number of transports in line. Previously they could earn Tk.800-1000 per trip/day. But now the number of trips available to them was much less than before so also was their income. Some of the respondents were receiving 20 percent commission of total income from a trip but that was not sufficient to meet the expenses. Again number of trips that was available varied during different parts of the year. In winter the drivers who were paid on trips could save some money but they had to make up their

less in income during lean rainy season from the saving made in winter months. So they were not left with any saving at the end of the year.

Again some respondents driving heavy-trucks earned Tk.15,000-16,000 per month, sounding like a big income, but they had to pay for their boarding and lodging while on trip. So real income they were left with was much smaller and considered insufficient to run their families. Moreover the owner in some cases did not pay them regularly or on time.

Low income not only kept the respondents unhappy but also compelled them to adopt unfair means to make up the shortage. That is they always overloaded truck and buss to have an extra income. The practice although brought additional income for them but they did not like the hassle they had to take for it. The respondents often had to bribe the police for breaking the rules. When extra passengers were boarded in the bus passengers already on board had a scope to complain about it to the owner. When it was done respondents were in problems. So, carrying extra passenger illegally always kept the respondents in tension.

Some of the respondents paid by trips agreed that they had a good income at the end of the month but emphasized upon the fact that the contract they had with the owner did not ensure certainty of income. If the driver was not able to drive the vehicle for any reason, e.g., sickness or *hartal*, they would not be paid, thus put on economic hardship.

The state of uncertainty negatively affecting the respondents was very high. The jobs would not bring any benefit after retirement no matter for how long the respondents would work for the owner. Thus the concern for how they would run themselves at the old age haunted them. Apart from thought about the future respondents were also bothered about the informal contract they had with the employer. Respondents did not receive any appointment letter when joined the job. The employers were at liberty to change the terms of contract as it was done verbally and they were in the position of dictating the terms of contract. Respondents could be sacked without any notice by the employer for no reason. In context one of the respondents remarked – *If company says that he is not my driver then he is not, because there is no appointment letter or identity card issued by the company. He does not have any security of job if he falls in danger.*

When income from a trip was less than expected employer often suspected that respondents had kept aside a part of the income from the employer. Based on this suspicion respondents were sacked or hinted that the employer would prefer to have a driver who could bring more income from a trip. In order to avoid being sacked in cases respondent had to borrow money to show it as an income from the trip.

**Risk of driving:** In cases the owner compelled respondents to overload the truck. But they did not share the risk involved with overloading. In the case when goods get damaged due to such loading or truck running into an accident owner made the respondents to pay for the compensation.

Some of the respondents were not satisfied as driving strained them physically. Due to keeping vision focused constantly on the road respondents had, burning sensation in eyes, headache, and feeling weak after every trip. Also for keeping hand on the steering wheel for a long time they had pain in their wrist and on their shoulder. Moreover respondents were compelled to take untimely meals in restaurants on a regular basis; which invariably developed gastric ulcer in many of them.

Due to development of these health problems some of the respondents were worried that they might run into an accident anytime.

Uncertainty also lies with work schedule. In most cases there was no fixed schedule for trips as a result some respondents did not have enough time themselves and for their families. Again sometime the drivers had to quarrel among themselves to get a trip. The risk of life in the job was considered high. The respondents could never be sure before a trip that they would return back home safe. Above these respondents were not happy with their job as socially it was considered of a low status. Issue dealt in quite a length in earlier section.

**Table 7.9: Respondents’ Intention that their Male Children Should Join Driving Profession (n =416)**

<b>Intention</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Must join	3.1
Should join	1.2
Should not join	10.3
Must not join	85.3

It appears that the responds had more reasons with higher intensity for not to be satisfied than otherwise with driving profession. Such a state of mind was best expressed in their desire not to have their children get into the driving profession – About 85 percent of the respondents definitely did not want to have their children in driving profession (Table 7.9). Number of respondents with such an opinion had a positive association with number of years they have been driving.

## Chapter 8

### Discussion and Conclusion

Mobility is indispensable for the continuation of human society thus for human existence. Motorized vehicles are used considerably for moving living beings and objects across land both in developing and developed worlds. Use of motorized vehicles has increase by many folds at the recent decades. Besides contributing to socioeconomic viability of the society this means of transportation also results casualties due to accidents that they run into. The share of heavy vehicles, i.e., bus and truck, in the case of such viability and running into accident appears to be considerably high amongst all means of transportations including those on land, air, and water. The group driving heavy vehicles is an occupational group considerably large in size with distinct cultural patterns. To best of our knowledge a systematic ethnographic study is yet to be done on this group in Bangladesh. Such a need has prompted us to conduct this study.

The objective of the study was to describe selected aspects of occupational and nonoccupational life of the heavy vehicle drivers, including those driving heavy-truck, light-truck, bus, and minibus. In this pursuit the study have interviewed drivers, case studied, and conducted focus-group discussions with them and related others. The sample size of these groups was selected as such to capture different aspects of drivers' life rather than make the findings representative. Analysis was conducted on selected variables in terms of respondents driving different types of vehicles. In most cases the differences observed in variables were not statistically significant. This section has engaged in a discussion on how the condition of the drivers can be improved in the light of the findings in the previous chapters and in context have pointed out to selected findings.

**Becoming a Driver:** Respondents got themselves recruited as helpers in cases willingly but in others they were forced to do same either because they failed in exams in school or to earn for their families. For the latter two groups it was likely that they joined the profession with a discontent. Not necessarily the discontent remained with them throughout their carrier. Certain aspects of the profession, e.g., higher income, might have changed their level of satisfaction with the profession over time. Similarly those who joined the profession willingly might also had a change in the level of satisfaction after experiencing certain aspect of the profession they disliked. Irrespective of what was the level of satisfaction in the job and how it changed over time the respondents started with the profession at an age, i.e., 12-13, when they were expected to attend school. Lower education limited the job market of the respondents, as a result those dissatisfied with the job had no choice but to continue with driving profession.

### Social Life

**Social Life:** On an average, respondents were 36 year of age, at the prime of their physical fitness very much needed for best performance in driving. Demographically respondents' families projected three characteristics – the families were larger than the national standard, in general there were more females compared to males in the family, and most of the families were nuclear (BBS 2001). As because of these characteristics frequent and lengthy absence of respondents from home on trips created additional problem for their wives in running the family particularly in cases where support of grownup male members when needed.

**Schooling of children:** A very small proportion of respondents' children (3.4%) started school at right age. Although with aging children enrollment to school rapidly increased those with late start were not likely to be able to makeup the loss in most cases. Most alarming, delayed enrollment of children to school projects an indifference in part of the respondents in facilitating proper education to their children. It was expected that the driver would ill become more serious about their children's education so that they might grow up to compete effectively in the job market but, most importantly became better citizen of Bangladesh.

**IGA of wife:** A very small number of respondents' wives were involved in income generating activities outside home. Given that majority of the respondents maintained nuclear families and almost all of them received loan for income generating activities from NGO, it could be assumed that quite a good number of these wives were involved in income generating activities within home. Smaller number of respondents' wives were involved in income generating activities outside home as because lower education did not provide them with an option of engaging themselves in any high income/status employment outside home. Moreover a high income of their husband did not place them in a pressing need of taking outside home jobs or taking care of babies did not allow them to take up any outside home employment.

**Empowerment of Members:** It is true that the empowerment of members within the family follows a complex dynamics only can be assessed by taking multiple parameters into consideration but such an assessment was beyond the scope of this study. Of course a quick assessment of the state of empowerment of the members within the family can be done by observing members role and their nature in purchasing commodities. By following this logic state of empowerment of members in respondents' families was viewed in terms of members' participation in decision making in purchasing selected commodities individually or jointly consumed. More involved the members are in the process of purchasing commodities higher is their status in the family. The assessment based on this assumption indicated that the respondents maintained a full control in deciding, purchasing, and paying of items purchased in the family whether individually or collectively used by the members. A minor exception to this trend was in the case of buying children's clothes where wife played a dominant role in deciding the purchase.

**Violence:** Respondents' wives did not have much freedom in selecting their course of action. Their activities were very much controlled by the set routine both when respondents were at home and away. While away from home wives activities were regularly monitored through cell-phone. Failure to abide by the routine was always followed by reprisal. Violence by respondents on family members, particularly wife was considerably high. One of the reasons behind becoming additionally violent on the family members was when physical punishment (considered as violence) was the method of controlling behavior respondents had to apply that in a greater extent to ensure that family members would behave as desired when they were away. In spite of violence being widely prevalent majority of the respondents believed that it was not a correct thing to do, and they observed that violence on wife resulted to an undesired reaction from them with a long term negative implication on the family.

Such an attitude, i.e., being violent was wrong in respondents develops a hope that violence by them on their family member could be reduced by counseling and arranging workshop to develop antiviolence consciousness/attitude in drivers. It was expected that the respondents' wives would have more freedom of action even if they were not complaint about it.

**Income:** Economic condition of the respondents was viewed in terms of number of indicators – income, expenditure, landholding, other assets, saving, and loan. Respondents earned less than their family expenditures. On an average the income from driving was Tk.2,408 less than their expenditure per month. The difference was most in the case of bus drivers and for those driving for 10-19 years. And, it was least in the case of respondents driving minibus and well driving for 1-9 years. Obviously the shortage of income from driving compared to expenditure was adjusted from the income received from other sources. Although the respondents were not asked about how the shortage was made up; it was obvious that the involvement of the family members in income generating activities by taking loan from NGOs helped them to draw extra income to adjust the shortage in many cases.

**Expenditure:** Respondents were spending 26.7% of their income on personal consumption. The tendency to spend more on personal consumption was slightly higher among the younger drivers. This tendency to spend such a large portion of income for self consumption was justified on the ground that the respondents were not liable to use that portion of the income for family earned from any sources other than their employer as per contract during employment. It is desirable that the drivers should change such an attitude by one so that the respondents might handover all of their income irrespective of sources for equitable consumption within the family.

**Asset:** About 60 percent of the respondents owned homesteads which in most cases were used for their dwelling. Small number of respondents (19%) owned agricultural land not large enough (75.8 decimals) to produce a big return but definitely complementing the income they derived from driving. Heavy-truck and bus drivers had more assets compared to respondents driving other types of vehicle. Respondents' assets increased steadily and over the period of 20 years the valuation of the asset increased by about Tk.35 thousand from what they initially had. New assets were mostly added as household items. Landed property that the respondents had, all most in all instances, were inherited.

**Saving:** Like income, amount of money in saving, money lent, grains present in stock, and mortgaged-in are indicators of economic wellbeing. Respondents had different amount of these items in their savings and that did not follow any trend in response to variables considered in the study. Data on income, expenditure, and saving failed to provide an idea on economic variability of the respondents. Of course self assessment on availability of food within the respondents' family indicated that about 45% of them had a surplus after meeting round the year need. Majority of the responses (78.3%) were economically well-of as they considered themselves having a surplus or not having any deficit at any part of the year.

## **Health**

**Sickness:** About 24% of the respondents had health problems considered to be a serious one within last one year. Gastro intestinal track problem was common among these patients. Such a problem among the respondent was not unusual as drivers have difficulties in maintaining a fixed time for meal. Respondents often had minor health problems but again serious enough to compel them to take off from duty for a day or two. In spite of these health problems 45% of the respondents believed that they had a good health condition. Although it is widely believed that drivers frequently visits sex-workers and in fact a good number of the respondents agreed to have been involved in such a practice none of them confessed to have been infected by HIV/AIDS.



## Work and Leisure

**Work:** Respondents were driving and sleeping around nine and seven hours respectively with a 24 hours schedule. On an average a trip continued for about 4.5 hours indicating that many of the respondents had more than a trip in a schedule. In these cases they had 2-4 hours break in between the trips. Usually they spent this time taking rest, entertaining them, or doing job related works. Although bus and minibus drivers had a greater chance of staying overnight at home truck drivers had to stay almost half of a month out of home. Staying out of home for a long time, no matter how much they were used to it, was likely to have a negative impact on their temperament, health, and behaviors.

About 18 percent of the respondents mentioned that number of hours they could sleep while on duty was not sufficient. Proportion of these drivers without rest was higher in the case of truckers. Respondents driving truck suffered from lack of rest most when they had to drive number of days in a row within a tight deadline. Heavy work load was forced upon the respondents both by the employer and in cases respondents volunteered for such a schedule for higher income. Lack of rest of the drivers should be a concern for all as because fatigue is positively related with accident they commit. **(Reference)**

**Addiction:** As because of the stigma attached to drivers the study gave a special attention on their addictions. Respondents were hesitant in confessing about their addiction to gambling, drug use, and visit to sex workers but involvement of their community to these addictions, as mentioned by the respondents, appeared to be alarmingly high. That was, about 40% of the drivers gambled, about 61 percent of them were addicted to alcohol or other drugs of which about 33 percent consumed drugs before driving, and about 35 percent of the drivers visited sex workers. We have every reason to consider these statistics reliable as respondents being part of the community had a chance to observe their colloquies closely and they did not have any reason to be biased in providing the information to this study. Ample leisure time along with an environment for gambling encouraged drivers to involve in gambling. We have also seen that the respondents when working as helpers were introduced to drugs and sex-workers besides how to drive by their *ostads*. Respondents were also peer pressured to use drugs and visit sex-workers if the addiction to those was not a byproduct of their apprenticeship under *ostads*. It was unanimously believed and considered imperative that the community should be salvaged from these vices. We have seen that a small portion of the respondents managed to remain away from these addictions by preserving certain attitude in them – something should be banged upon to help the community.

The knowledge of respondents on HIV/AIDS was not adequate. Bangladeshis begin surrounded by countries widely infected by HIV/AIDS thus people over here have a higher chance of being infected by the disease in near future. In context it must be noted that drivers as a group is highly venerable to HIV/AIDS throughout the world. **(Reference)**

**Knowledge and Practice:** Respondents new 42 percent of the basic traffic rules that drivers were expected to know by BRTA. On the other hand respondents who underwent training from driving schools had a slightly higher score compared to those who received training from *ostads*. Respondents followed 41 percent of the traffic rules while driving. From the safety perspective it should be scary to think that the drivers driving heavy vehicles with less than half of the knowledge on traffic rules they were expected to know and follow those.

Although the scores on knowledge on traffic rules and abiding by them were almost similar they were weakly correlated. It must be kept in mind that the rules followed were not necessarily were the same rules that the respondents were aware of. In some cases respondents drove in such a way for personal safety or for some other reasons that became same like following the rules. Again in cases respondent followed a rule in an instance but violated the same in another. In these cases convenience or conditions set upon them at the spot dictated whether they should follow the rules or not rather than the sense of law abidingness or responsibility.

Apart from presence of knowledge on traffic rule speeding and overloading were two common forms of traffic violation economically motivated in most cases. Speeding is not only a form of traffic violation by itself but it also leads to other types of violation.

**Accident:** Forty-two-point-three percent of the respondents did not run into accident. Although number of accidents done was positively correlated with number years driving it appeared that respondents driving for lesser number of years had a higher proportion ran into accident then those driving for a longer period. This was partially because, greater number of drivers from the former group received license by bribing BRTA thus were with less skilled in driving and less knowledgeable on traffic rules compared to those in latter group. The causes of accidents were various. In most cases it was the fault of the respondents, mechanical fault of the vehicle, or fault of other parties on the road. Pedestrian and slow moving paddle-vehicles were mostly involved in good proportion of the accidents.

Like anybody respondents considered accident undesirable under any circumstance but they also maintained other perceptions about it. They were of the opinion that running into accident, at least once, was a must for any driver. They believed that driver became a better one only after accident as they took lesson from the accident and applied that in their cases to upgrade their driving skill. The logic reveals a selfish attitude of the respondents where they would like to become gainer at the cost of others involved in the accident. The logic also expresses lack of seriousness with accident in their part. Hit and run was a common practice after the accident indicating that they were least respectful towards the rule of law. Moreover they were least empathetic towards the causality of others involved in the accident. Being empathetic is very much needed for them to become considerate about others' right on the roads and regulate the movement of their vehicle by thinking that their action might harm others.

**Learn how to drive:** Apprenticeship of the respondents as helpers starts under *ostads*. It was an informal relationship differentially determined by the *ostads*. Gain in knowledge on traffic rules and driving skill of respondents depended upon couple of factors. Firstly, *ostads* with few exceptions were not provided with any remuneration for their services to the helpers. So the obligation of the *ostad* in providing training to the helpers remained at a low level. It was objective of the helpers to learn how to drive but for *ostad* it might have been to receive assistance from the helpers in driving. Secondly, learning how to drive by the helper was contingent upon the presence of driving skill, and knowledge on traffic rules by the *ostads*, but most importantly how the traffic rules were followed by the *ostads*. Finally, effort of the helpers to make their *ostad* to provide them knowledge and skill on driving was also an important factor in the development of the proficiencies of the helpers. As because of these factors the respondents were not equally proficient in driving, and some were likely to be below standard.

**Driver's License:** Having a driver's license is absolutely imperative for one to drive a motorized vehicle on road. It seems possession of driver's license is hardly associated with driving the vehicle. A group of respondents had license 2.6 years before they started driving. This indicates that many of the respondents received license as helpers when they were not up to the standard for receiving. On the other hand another group of respondents received license on an average 1.8 years after they started driving. This group violated traffic rule by driving without license; probably many in the group were also not up to the standard of driving during this period. In many cases the lag between receipt of license and driving vehicle resulted as because respondents, as helpers, applied for driver's license in group through union they were associated with. The unions in cases were in a position to influence the BRTA in issuing license. Besides, we have seen how respondents received license without any test or a showcase test in exchange of money irrespective of whether they were up to standard of driving or not. Not only it was easy to receive license in exchange of money but also the hurdles deliberately created within BRTA made it difficult for commoners to receive license without bribing its staff. When 60% of the respondents received license by bribing BRTA the policy of the organization that one need to pass tests to receive license from BRTA turned to nothing but a farce.

## **Problems**

**Contract:** The appointment contract between employers and respondents in their appointments were verbal almost in all cases. Verbal contact along with oversupply of drivers in the job market made it easier for the employers to terminate the drivers whenever they wished and change the terms of the contract at a later stage. When a driver was fired the position was instantly filled in as there were a good number of drivers always in lookout for jobs. Respondents were kept in the job so long they could bring an income as desired, did not make any damage to the vehicle, and were not absent from the job. Respondents were terminated on slightest deviation from these expectations even when they reasons were not in fault for the deviation. On the other hand respondents were always in lookout for a job with better terms and conditions. Because of these factors the relationship between the respondents and their employers was always monitory and their existed a high level of distrust between them. Employers always suspected that the respondents did not handover full income received from a trip to them, as a result respondents were always with a tension that they would be mistreated and terminated anytime. As because of such an uneasy state of mind respondents rarely had satisfaction from their job.

Besides these problems with the employer respondents faced variety of other problems considered serious. They were often subject to police harassment. The problem was handled by bribing the police. Another widely mentioned problem was that respondents could not give required time to their families. But, most serious problem and which they believed could not be resolve by them was that they had a low status in the society. This was because of their lifestyle and prevailing misconceptions about them in the society. As because of the status respondents had difficulties in marring themselves and encountered bad experiences when they tried to mingle outside their community. Consequently a sense of inferiority complex developed in them. Such a complex was so strong that in some cases they did not mingle outside the community or if they did that was in disguise by concealing their profession. In spite of being aware of low status about 75 percent of the respondents believed that they were treated well in the society, this was because in most of the times they associated within their community.

The down side of the profession like bad treatment by the employer, police harassment, and most importantly low social status made 96 percent of the respondents wish that their children would not take up driving profession when they would grow up. Higher income which was the main attraction of the respondents to pursue driving profession was not sufficiently strong to make them wish that their children should also pursue same profession. Although, finding no alternative they themselves would like to continue with the profession.

### **Improving the condition of drivers**

It was believed that the changed objectives and activities of three organizations – drivers union, BRTA, and police department – very much related to drivers were likely to bring qualitative changes in their lives.

Drivers remain as a unified group under the union. It is an organization appeared to be very much needed for the survival of drivers in the profession. If a driver is terminated from the union he would not be scheduled for a trip, in such a situation the employed would replace him by another driver. We have seen that union provides variety of services to the drivers both relating to job and outside. The services helps union to have a tremendous influence on the drivers which in turn can be used as a social control mechanism on the drivers. BRTA is the authority providing license to the drivers. In other wards they are in charge of ensuring whether drivers have required knowledge on traffic rules and skill in driving to be on the road. On the other hand it is the responsibility of traffic police department to ensure that eligible drivers are on road, traffic rules are followed with driving, and vehicles are up to the standard for safe driving.

### **Union**

Study indicates that the children in divers' family starts school late, members in the family suffers from lack of power, and they are subject to violence. On the other hand drivers are addicted to gambling and drugs and frequently visit sex-workers. In context union may come forward to help the drivers. It is suggested that union should take up the responsibility of monitoring social life of the drivers under them so that they may have a lifestyle as desired by the society. In context several additional responsibilities of the union has been though about.

- Union should maintain a family profile of drivers registered under them in order to monitor and provide imputes to their families.
- **School:** Union should encourage and if needed pressurizing drivers to enroll their children in school at right age. Union might start with a monitory incentive for the enrollment of children to school at right age and for making them continue with education.
- **Addiction:** Unions should take measures to cut down the access of drivers to gambling, addiction, and sex workers.
  1. Union should have registered hotels free from gambling, drugs, and prostitution for the drivers to stay overnight during the trip. Drivers will receive a discount for staying in these hotels. Government should compensate the hotel owners for offering discount the drivers and should make sure that these hotels remain free from these practices.
  2. Union should ensure that gambling, use of drugs, and sexual activities does not take place within the boundary of the terminal. Access of drug vender within the boundary should also be prohibited.
  3. The terminals should have proper toilet and bathing facilities. The environment of the terminal should be made homely as such so that the drivers might have minimum need/desire to get out of their while on duty.

- Union should pressurize drivers not to indulge in addictions. Drivers found indulge in addictions as a policy should be assigned with lesser number of trips compared to others. Where possible union should test the drivers to ensure that they are not under the influence before starting a trip. Drivers found under the influence should not be allowed to take a trip. Periodical test on venereal diseases and HIV/AIDS for drivers should be organized by the union.
- Drivers becoming violent on the family members particularly when it is a serious one and frequent should be warned not to do it again. Family members particularly driver's wife should increasingly prepare themselves for outside home income generating activities and participate in them. Participation to income generating activities in a larger scale is likely to empower by providing them with a bigger bargaining power and elevate them to a higher status in the family which in turn is likely to work as a deterrent against violence on them.
- **Workshop:** Regular workshops conducted by professionals in line should be arranged by the unions in order help its members to get rid of above vices. NGOs may come in aid of the unions in organizing the workshops. The workshops should be have several objectives.
  1. Should develop a strong attitude against and capacity in resisting themselves against the addictions and violence against family members;
  2. It is supposed to develop a sense of responsibility of sharing total income of the drivers with the family members. If such income is shared drivers will be left with a little resource to engage themselves in addictions.
  3. Workshop should teach and encourage drivers to have safe sex.

An attitude and strength of resisting themselves against these vices can be developed by preaching morality and religion to them along with highlighting the consequences of these vices. Counseling should be arranged for drivers with serious problems.

- The management committed of the union should be in charge of above mentioned responsibilities. As the committee is constituted of drivers and if the members into it are addicted the effort in line may not be a success. It is recommended that a supervisory body of the government should be in charge to ensure that the committed is serious about these responsibilities and necessary steps are taken.
- **Income:** In spite of respondents having higher income none of them could buy any landed property and a small number of them managed to purchase vehicle. Provision for a long term loan with low interest rate to purchase vehicle may be arranged for the drivers by the bank. The system is likely to make drivers own asset and at the same time do safe driving as they would not like to get their vehicle run into accident.
- Efforts should be made so that the just interest of the drivers are better served in their job; consequently such efforts are likely to make drivers satisfied with their job. Union is expected to be or more active in regards.
  1. Drivers must be hired through an appointed letters specifying the terms and conditions of the employment. The drivers' labor union should look after the interest of the drivers as stipulated in the contract.
  2. Standard job description appropriate for drivers driving different types of vehicles and their helpers may be introduced. The policy should have a legal status and union should be in charge of monitoring the implementation of the same.
  3. Drivers should be protected from police harassment and paying extortion money to them.
  4. A policy may be taken on maximum length of time that a driver may drive nonstop and minimum length of a gap should be given between trips. Union should assign trips to a

driver keeping the policy in mind. Driver and their employer along with the union, if responsible, should be fined for the violation of the policy.

5. Labor union should be made vigilant so that the policy taken may be implemented effectively and the drivers defying the policy should be fined along with their employers.

## **BRTA**

First step in maintaining driver's discipline on the road in terms of following traffic rules is that they should have license received through proper process. It is absolutely necessary that only those who are up to the standard may receive license to drive vehicle on the road.

- **License** to the drivers and helpers should be issued only by BRTA.
  1. Driving license may be issued to the applicants only after successful passing of a driving test.
  2. It should be ensured that BRTA is free from corruption in issuing driving license.
- The **recruitment process** of the helpers should be formalized.
  1. It is recommended that one should be minimum high school graduate to become a helper. This will make them more competent for driver's training that they will have to undertake and will provide the with a bigger job market in case they decide to switch their profession.
  2. Possession of a temporary license from BRTA after completion of the training should be a prerequisite for appointment as a helper. They should be apprenticed by the drivers who have graduated from BRTA training school.
  3. Permanent license will be issued to the helpers after completion of the apprenticeship as helper and taking the final test arranged by BRTA.
  4. Drivers already received license should go through a driving test. Those found not up to the standard should undergo training in these schools to upgrade their standard.
- **Training schools** should be opened throughout the country so that one may learn how to drive in these schools. NGOs should come forward along with BRTA in operating the driving schools.
  1. Quality training should be ensured in these schools. The curriculum of the training should direct itself in the development of driving skill, learning of traffic rules, and development of the sense of responsibility and proper attitude very much need to become a responsible driver.
  2. It should be ensured that the driving schools remain above corruptions of any sort.
  3. Only the graduates from the driving schools may be allowed to apply for driving license.

## **Police Department**

- Fitness of the vehicle should be checked more frequently and honesty so that unfit vehicles may not run on the road.
- It should be ensured so that overloaded vehicles are not allowed to run on the roads.
- People in general should be made aware of traffic rules so that they may not become cause of accident in any instance.
  1. Programs may be aired in TV and radio to orient people about traffic rules.
  2. School text books should have contents on traffic rules.
  3. BRTA and NGOs should organize workshops to orient people about traffic rules.

## Appendix 2.1

### Amount of money spent for own consumption by respondents by items (Tk.)

Parameter	Items				
	BLMC <sup>1</sup>	SMMC <sup>2</sup>	RHMC <sup>3</sup>	TRMC <sup>4</sup>	OWMC <sup>5</sup>
Type of vehicle					
Heavy truck	2100.7	652.7	597.6	418.1	518.5
Light truck	1828.5	773.4	565.0	462.7	560.0
Big bus	1847.4	768.0	740.6	433.7	526.5
Minibus	1665.9	546.1	549.1	366.3	343.1
Number of years driving					
1-9	1830.3	622.2	639.2	383.1	446.4
10-19	2031.6	745.2	568.6	466.7	573.8
20 years or more	1931.8	685.5	698.3	419.6	466.8
Total	1912.0	676.0	625.2	415.9	490.1

<sup>1</sup>Breakfast, lunch and dinner; <sup>2</sup>Smoking; <sup>3</sup>Rent of hotel; <sup>4</sup>Transportation cost; <sup>5</sup>Others

## Appendix 2.2

### Amount of land owned by type of vehicle and number of years driving (in decimal)

Type of vehicle	Homestead		Cultivable	
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
Heavy truck	97	15.3	30	77.9
Light truck	31	12.5	4	15.0
Big bus	85	13.6	24	92.3
Minibus	44	12.8	39	65.6
Number of years driving				
1-9	98	14.0	32	63.7
10-19	93	12.4	29	61.6
20 years or more	66	16.2	18	129.2
Total respondents	257	14.0	79	75.8

## Appendix 2.3

### Assessment of economic condition of own family by respondents (n=416)

Parameter	Poverty status			
	Deficit for whole year	Occasional deficit	No deficit no surplus	Some surplus
Type of vehicle				
Heavy truck	33.3	34.6	54.0	34.4
Light truck	11.1	9.9	3.6	13.8
Big bus	33.3	24.7	26.3	32.8
Minibus	22.2	30.9	16.1	19.0
Number of years driving				
1-9	22.2	38.3	50.4	56.1
10-19	33.3	40.7	29.2	28.0
20 years or more	44.4	21.0	20.4	15.9
Total	9	81	137	189

Sign and Symbols



Restricted line



Cautious line



Overtaking prohibited



Parking restricted



Speed limit



Side road



Pedestrian crossing



School

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