

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dhaka, January 18, 2026 – INNOVISION Consulting has released its latest research titled “Urban Mobility Study: Rickshaws in Transition”, examining the rapid transformation of Dhaka’s rickshaw sector from pedal-driven to battery-powered vehicles. The key findings of the study were presented today at a dissemination event held in Dhaka.

The study comes at a critical juncture, as battery-powered rickshaws, popularly referred to as “*Bangla Tes/as*” have become a focal point of public debate concerning traffic congestion, road safety, informal employment, and regulation. More recently, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) have jointly launched a pilot initiative on BUET-approved battery-powered rickshaws, highlighting the urgency of evidence-based policy responses.

Mr. Md. Rubaiyath Sarwar, Managing Director of INNOVISION Consulting, presented the key findings of the study. The research explores the economic, social, and operational dimensions of rickshaws in Dhaka, focusing on drivers, passengers, and garage owners.

The study is based on primary data collected from 384 rickshaw drivers, 392 passengers, and 63 garage owners across different areas of Dhaka.

Key Findings Include:

Informality and Regulation: Rickshaws in Dhaka remain largely unregistered, with 97.4% of battery rickshaws and 85.94% of pedal rickshaws operating outside formal registration systems.

Changing Workforce Dynamics: Battery rickshaws are attracting younger drivers, with an average driver age of 38 years, compared to 42 years for pedal rickshaws. Notably, 75% of battery rickshaw drivers are new entrants who never previously drove pedal rickshaws.

Income and Cost Structure: Battery rickshaw drivers earn higher gross daily income (BDT 880) than pedal rickshaw drivers (BDT 594). However, due to high rental costs, rented battery rickshaw drivers earn lower net income than their pedal counterparts. Self-owned battery rickshaws generate significantly higher income.

Financing and Debt Exposure: Most battery rickshaw drivers rely on rental arrangements and microfinance loans. The average loan size for battery rickshaw drivers (BDT 79,927) is substantially higher than that of pedal rickshaw drivers (BDT 18,654), indicating increased financial vulnerability.

Passenger Perspectives: Passengers primarily use rickshaws for short-distance travel (1–3 km). While 82% prefer battery rickshaws for faster commute and lower daily costs, safety concerns are prominent. 30% of passengers reported accidents involving battery rickshaws, compared to 18% for pedal rickshaws, with injuries from battery rickshaw accidents reported as more severe.

Congestion and Public Opinion: A majority (62%) of passengers believe battery rickshaws are the primary contributor to traffic congestion. Public support for regulation is strong, with 56.6% strongly favoring stricter regulation and 21.9% supporting a complete ban.

Garage Owners' Accounts: Rickshaw rental is the primary livelihood for 86% of garage owners. While 62% prefer battery rickshaws due to higher demand and income potential, concerns regarding maintenance costs and frequent repairs remain significant.

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Recommendations:

The study recommends:

- Standardizing battery rickshaw design to reduce accident risks
- Regulating entry of new battery rickshaws by providing alternative job opportunities while facilitating affordable transition from pedal to battery rickshaws for existing drivers
- Using affordable credit to incentivize formalization and registration for battery rickshaws
- Providing traffic training and safety awareness for both pedal and battery drivers
- Developing alternative short-distance mobility solutions and improving pedestrian infrastructure

INNOVISION Consulting believes that balanced regulation and inclusive transition strategies are essential to ensuring that rickshaws remain a safe, productive, and sustainable component of Dhaka's urban transport system.

INNOVISION Consulting is a global management consulting, research, and technical assistance firm. The Urban Mobility Study is part of INNOVISION's ongoing research initiative to support evidence-based urban and transport policy in Bangladesh.

Access all the files of the study here:



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