

Enhancing Livelihood: A Case of Cycle-Rickshaw Pullers in Amritsar city.

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ABSTRACT.

In India, the livelihood of rickshaw pullers is in a worse state where they have to face severe climatic conditions, poverty, and social values as well as the economic values of the society. This research paper will try to identify the effective socio-financial reasons for rickshaw pulling. The detrimental consequences of their fitness of pullers and the issues confronted with the socio-economic and personal measures both had been additionally taken into consideration. This study article is based mostly on the statistical data which were collected from the primary survey and the personal interview in the form of the direct questionnaire sent to respondents in Amritsar city. This survey was executed at some key junctions or major intervals in February and March 2019. The studies concluded that although rickshaw drivers are counted as the salient members of the underprivileged community, they hold important positions in the intercity public transport system. The running surroundings are neither regulated nor are their social protection problems forwarded. They are generally uninformed approximately of the government schemes neither release relief for their poverty nor do their availability of fundamental services likewise their poor central infrastructures.

Keywords: rickshaw pullers, poverty-stricken, social and economic values, intercity transport, government schemes.

RESUMEN

En la India, el sustento de los conductores de rickshaw se encuentra en peores condiciones, ya que deben enfrentar condiciones climáticas severas, pobreza y valores sociales, así como los valores económicos de la sociedad. Este trabajo de investigación intentará identificar las razones socio-financieras efectivas para tirar de rickshaw. Las consecuencias perjudiciales de su aptitud como extractores y los problemas enfrentados con las medidas socioeconómicas y personales también se tomaron en consideración. Este artículo de estudio se basa principalmente en los datos estadísticos que se recopilieron de la encuesta primaria y la entrevista personal en forma de cuestionario directo enviado a los encuestados en la ciudad de Amritsar. Esta encuesta se ejecutó en algunos cruces clave o intervalos importantes en febrero y marzo de 2019. Los estudios concluyeron que, aunque los conductores de rickshaw se cuentan como miembros destacados de la comunidad desfavorecida, ocupan puestos importantes en el sistema de transporte público interurbano. No se regula el entorno del running ni se remiten sus problemas de protección social. Por lo general, no están informados acerca de los planes gubernamentales ni liberan alivio para su pobreza ni su disponibilidad de servicios básicos, así como sus infraestructuras centrales deficientes.

Palabras clave: conductores de rickshaw, pobres, valores económicos y sociales, transporte interurbano, esquemas de gobierno.

INTRODUCTION

Historical context of cycle-rickshaw pullers: The word “rickshaw” derives from ‘jinrikisha’ (a Japanese word), which means 'jin' is human, 'Riki' is Power or Force, 'sha' is called a Vehicle (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1993). The concept first emerged in Japan as a cycle-rickshaw emerged in the late 1860s (Satio, 1979), which constitute advancement in their technology with its predecessor entitled the Sedan chair. Then this cycle-rickshaw came into sight in 1873, Shanghai (Chen, 1955; Zheng, 1957), and it became the leading short-distance single mode of transit system by the early 1900s (Peng, 1935). In different countries, these cycle rickshaws are called different names likewise Becak in Indonesia, Cyclo in Phnom, Penh in Cambodia and Vietnam (Pacione, 2005). These rickshaw pullers are the utmost detrimental sections of society who are regularly occupied in transportation activities for the means of daily livelihood as rickshaw pulling is an unskilled and precarious job to perform daily (Warren, 1985). These rickshaw pullers are not able to fulfil their basic needs because they were not able to earn the required amount as they daily engaged in rickshaw pulling for the daily passengers, visitors or commodities from source to the destination place, from early morning to evening by waiting for their passengers and freight items. The condition of these cycle-rickshaw pullers is further evaluated by the owner of the cycle-rickshaw pullers where a majority of these pullers are not the owners as they rent it on daily wages or monthly wages which significantly concluded their everlasting struggle and competition among themselves.

Rickshaw pullers in the Indian context: In India around 1870, these rickshaw pullers first emerge in Shimla and Kolkata after 20 years (Dainik Jagran, 2009). Till the 1980s, these rickshaws were majorly run in the old vicinity of the city, along with the middle society neighborhoods and in the outer periphery of the cities. Now they are plying in all elite societies of the cities in the country (Kishwar, 2009). Since the 1880s, these cycle-rickshaws play a crucial responsibility in the intercity transport system, particularly in towns where the streets are narrow and restricted where the motor vehicles cannot run easily. However, these cycle rickshaws are the barely crucial transportation system to provide point-to-point destinations (Rajvanshi, 2002; Misra and Lakra, 2014). In India since 2019, there are presently around 8 million cycle-rickshaw pullers in which 95 per cent of whom, have not had their vehicle due to their financial crisis (Poirier, 2009), tough lifestyle, vigorous work and toxic living conditions. The difficult and sorrowful task of pulling a cycle-rickshaw, always offered a better income and livelihood as they lived in the village (Strand, 1989). Because these rickshaw pullers come from an economically challenged background consistently connected with their chronic poverty (Begum and Binayak, 2004), therefore mostly rickshaw pullers migrate to cities from their respective rural region to urban cities in search of their employment and desired livelihood (Khan, 2010), but their expectations are rarely realized in reality (Warren, 1985; Singh, 2020). After migrating to cities, being unskilled they work hard and try to exist on every little as they can try and save as much as they can send their families residing in the villages where they live in miserable conditions such as housing, electricity, water and other amenities is very poor.

Rickshaw pulling: the important occupation of the informal sector: The activity of pulling the rickshaw becomes an important occupation in the informal sector, where majorly poor populations try to meet their employment and better livelihood but also try to commute the transportation needs of the city. In India, cycle-rickshaws were first used in 1880 at Shimla and next after 20 years in Calcutta (now Kolkata). Since then, this cycle-rickshaw become an important and cheapest transportation system in the city. However, cycle-rickshaw becomes a substitute medium for lesser distance, especially for privately owned vehicle i.e., carrying peoples in a medical emergency, children from schools, and loading and unloading freight in commercial zone areas, especially in congested areas (Unnayan and Thomas, 1981; Ali, 2018). According to Ravi and Rajinder (2004), instead of focusing on public and private capital, rickshaws made people self-occupied and employed where people start living respectful and independent life without any urban compulsion. Rickshaws can emerge as an antidote to the dangerous exploitation of regional energy sources. Despite the economic importance of this industry to low-income families and the eco-friendly benefits of this occupation, the public attitude towards the cycle rickshaws in India, by and large, is negative and their use is being phased out in many Indian cities.

Rickshaw drivers live in deplorable socioeconomic conditions throughout the nation's metropolitan districts. No government initiatives have taken into account their contribution to the economy and provision of services. They are not given social benefits or work stability. Without any protection or safety, they are required to perform even late into the night, at odd hours, and in adverse weather. Hardly a rest shelters or medical facilities exist for them. They deal with societal injustice, carelessness, and ignorance. These individuals are all considered social misfits and undesirable liabilities to society.

LITERATURE REVIEW: STUDIES ON RICKSHAW PULLERS

1. Studies on Rickshaw pullers:

Sen (1996) in his article namely, 'Left Front and unintended city', comments on the drive by the left front Government in West Bengal to phase out rickshaw pullers (a part of the informal sector) by using authoritative means. He discusses at length the role of two factors within the Left Front which has been ruling for decades. He describes how few voices in favor of this segment of the informal sector were silenced due to protests from the majority who wanted to flush them out from the city of Calcutta to make it "cleaner".

Begum and Sen (2005) in their paper rickshaw pullers, examine the existence and situation of Dhaka's rickshaw pullers, they discuss the strategy for their livelihood along with chronic poverty of the rickshaw pullers which then become an occupation in the informal sector of the city. This paper focused on the information from previous to current cycle-rickshaw pullers of Dhaka, Bangladesh and found that most of these rickshaw pullers are very poor, unskilled and uneducated. Rickshaw pulling provides them with relatively easy access to the urban labor market, and an escape from extremely rural poverty. In the selected sample study, 402 rickshaw pullers were interviewed through the questionnaire with social and economic indicators-related questions as stated the current outline of rickshaw pullers with their families and explored it in detail while focusing on their livelihood situations, income generation, marital status, education etc. Moreover, other factors also need to be focused on for the well-being of the rickshaw pullers such as monthly expenditure. The high rate of health problems due to malnutrition and poverty is a directly challenged for the rickshaw pullers in terms of their physical activity

demand and sustainable livelihood. At last, the paper concludes that there is no permanent route to escaping poverty only by pulling the rickshaw.

Hossain and Shahriar (2005) attempted to examine the level of awareness among rickshaw pullers in Dhaka city. The main intention was to achieve knowledge on HIV/AIDS and to explore the socio-economic indicators. The study also aims at recommending a scheme to raise the understanding of the underprivileged areas about HIV/AIDS and to create mass awareness about this fatal disease. In the survey, the interview taken of 50 rickshaw pullers and figure out some general information related to HIV/AIDS to check the knowledge base of rickshaw pullers about HIV/AIDS, a scale was invented and a series of ten questions was made. The findings revealed that 44 per cent of rickshaw pullers' level of knowledge on HIV/AIDS was stated to be worse while 42 per cent falls in the bad category of knowledge. Apart from this, 14 per cent were having a satisfactory knowledge level of the issues related to HIV/AIDS. The paper culminates the relationship of the knowledge level with awareness level about HIV/AIDS, as educated rickshaw pullers were more informed and aware of the present issue.

Khan and Hassan (2012) tried to engage the socio-economic characteristics of rickshaw pullers in their paper "Socio-Economic Profile of Cycle Rickshaw Pullers: A Case Study." The authors have highlighted the objectives of the municipality behind following this acknowledgement. They analyzed the collected data through a questionnaire and field survey done on the respondents of Aligarh city during February and March 2010. Aside from illustrating the socio-economic profile of the rickshaw pullers, the study aims at highlighting the implications rising of the health of these pullers and suggests remedial steps to overcome these health issues. The collected data on socio-economic variables include age, education, marital status, place of birth and other minuscule details. The analysis of the disclosed data demonstrated that rickshaw pulling is not a lucrative profession of society including social security and other benefits. The outcomes intimate that the causes which constrain these pullers to engage themselves in these jobs are poverty, family disintegration, illiteracy, debt and small size of land holdings. The data also revealed that most of them suffer from diseases like cough, cold, joint, back and chest pains, asthma, gastroenteritis and tuberculosis which leads to death. Among these pullers, smoking and chewing tobacco were very regular while many were in habit of drinking, consuming drugs and also committing to gambling. With regards to the issues faced by the rickshaw pullers, the report also includes a lack of rickshaw stands, basic amenities like water and medical aid, rude behavior of police, shopkeepers and passengers, condition of roads etc. The study underlines many remedial measures for improving the conditions of the working poor. The necessity of recognition of rickshaws as a non-polluting, cheap and efficient mode of transportation but the eradication of rampant corruption, and issuing of licenses to the rickshaw pullers are also adhering the key issues to them. The perception of authors has suggested some innovative steps like setting up rickshaw banks, declaring ace congested areas as 'No Entry' zones for motorized vehicles and provisions of both medical aid and insurance at cheap rates. Besides the above suggestions, the study also emphasized the need to educate the pullers with a special focus on the vocational education system.

Roy (2009) highlighted the living condition of migrant rickshaw pullers in Delhi. The author ascertains the origin root of migration along with the various factors which encourage them to leave their native place for a new terminus. In this paper, a comparison was drawn between the living conditions of migrant rickshaw pullers who were staying with and without families in Delhi. The author discovered that rickshaw pullers residing along with

their families were mostly staying in single rooms accommodating themselves on rent in slum areas. These areas were very unhygienic, and congested and also lack basic civic amenities like clean drinking water, toilet and electricity for living. The number of children was also high among the respondent rickshaw pullers with an average of 4.3 numbers. In their families, child labor was also pervasive. The study highlights the aspects of the living standard of pullers without families and suggested that these pullers preferred to dwell in pooled rented accommodation. There were no proper arrangements for the toilet/bathroom and kitchen for preparing food. They generally use public and open places for their alleged activities. The prevalence of chewing tobacco, smoking biddies and drinking cheap alcohol was also frequent in them. The author believes in some recommendations related to their improved living conditions, family planning and other health measures. In the end, the author attempts to give some social work interventions to improve their overall quality of life.

Satapathy (2007) conducted a study to assess the health status of rickshaw pullers in Behrampur town of South Orissa. The authors realized various personal, social and environmental factors related to health and have suggested measures for improvement in them. The findings disclosed that 78.26 per cent of rickshaw pullers had migrated from rural areas and a majority of them were from the scheduled caste category. Of the total 48 per cent were illiterate and 52 per cent were found literate who had achieved education up to primary and upper primary levels. Concerning their health status, the study revealed that a huge majority (91.76 per cent) suffered from musculoskeletal problems which were one of the main reasons for foreboding among these respondents. Ophthalmic problems (related to eye problems) were present in more than half (51 per cent) of the population whereas more than one-third of these pullers suffered from one or the other dental issues. In the case of 12 per cent of respondents, Genito-Urinary (GU) problems were present whereas 15 per cent of rickshaw pullers had skin-related issues. In 11.95 per cent, respiratory diseases were present and 10.86 per cent had diarrhea infections. The study further highlighted that these pullers were also exposed to noise pollution by vehicular traffic led to sensory-neural type deafness. The study of addiction patterns disclosed that 81 per cent were addicted to tobacco chewing. More than half of the respondents had acid peptic diseases (APD), because of their irregular dietary habits, physical as well as mental stress, lack of adequate rest etc. The measures that should be taken for improving their health status along with the study underline the need for compulsory registration of rickshaw pullers so that appropriate health services can be suitably targeted for this community. However, the recommendations are that regular health check-ups should be carried out by involving NGOs and other social service organizations apart from carrying out awareness programs related to the prevention of RTIs/STIs and adopting a healthy lifestyle.

2. Rules and conditions of Rickshaw pullers in Punjab:

In Punjab, "the system of registration and regulation of rickshaws" was introduced in the country. Therefore, Punjab became the first pioneer state who introduced "The Punjab Cycle Rickshaw Act" in 1976 and the first state to introduce "Eco-cabs" in 2008. The cycle-rickshaw act is governed as per the guidelines of "The Punjab Rickshaws (Regulation of License) Act, 1976. According to byelaws of the Act "cycle-rickshaw" generally means a three-wheeled cycle rickshaw pulled manually with components and accessories. There is no limitation on the number of rickshaw vehicles as well as no permit is required for pulling rickshaws inside the precinct of the city. In Patiala, a token number with a license or permit is issued to the rickshaw pullers along with the photograph

proof else no other permit is required for rickshaw pullers without any limitations on the number of cycle-rickshaw.

In India, the government has not initiated any policy and schemes to strengthen their social insurance yet but Punjab as a fortunate state has taken the initiative and responsibility to provide its citizens with various forms of social security and social assistance benefits.

CITY PROFILE

1. A case study of Amritsar city:

Historically, Amritsar was initially known as Rāmdāspur and Ambassador, a holy city in northwestern India which became the administrative headquarters and is located in the Majha region of the Indian state of Punjab. As per 2011 census data, the population was 1,132,761. The city is situated at approx. distance of 217 km (135 mi) from the state capital Chandigarh in the northwest and a distance of 455 km (283 miles) from the national capital New Delhi, India in the northwest. The geographical location of this city exists North West of the country near Pakistan sharing their boundary with the famous Atari-Wagah Border being only at a distance of only 28 km (17.4 mi) away. The city is well known for its manufacturing industry of products like wooden chessboards and chess pieces (Snehi, 2018).

The fourth Sikh Guru Ram Das laid the founding of the holy city of Amritsar in its Sikh traditional style. The city evolution has two stories where the first one is regarding the land where Ram Das settled and the second one is as per the Gazetteer record in which the land was purchased because of Sikh donations of 700 rupees from the owners of the Tung village. The world-famous Golden Temple attracts several domestic tourists as well as international tourists for its architectural beauty and Sikh Architecture. The city also observes prestigious colleges as well as State University such as Guru Nanak Dev University (State University), and Khalsa College which help to drive an economic wage for the cycle-rickshaw pullers in the town (Singh, 2011).

DATA COLLECTION

The study data is collected by field survey and questionnaire format provided to the respondents in Amritsar city. The field survey was initiated in the month of February and March 2019. Hence, the main junctions or intervals were identified to survey the rickshaw pullers. These junctions because lie in the main core or stretch of the city surrounded by mainly residential and commercial spaces. shown in Figure no 1 After finalizing the study area, at each junction 20 cycle-rickshaw pullers were questioned (see Table 1).

Table 1. Interviewed places in Amritsar (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Interview Locations	Total no. of Pullers questioned
Bus Stand	20
Hall Gate	20
Railway Station	20
Putlighar	20
Guru Nanak Dev University	20
Khandwala Chowk	20
TOTAL	120

The data collection of these pullers has been initiated at 6 junctions of the city which were the Bus stand, Hall gate (old core-city area), Railway station, Putlighar (commercial zone), GNDU University (state university), Khandwala chowk (residence area). At each junction 20 pullers were questioned by snowball survey to know the status of their age, marital status, birthplace, socio-economic conditions, daily earnings and the numerous issues overlooked by them. They cover a radius of a maximum of 4 km by dropping the passengers from a point-to-point destination. Each of the pullers finds its boundaries and fixed travelling distance within its limits.

The factors evolved for the data collection of these pullers in the city are as follows:

1. Rickshaw pullers age group data.
2. Rickshaw pullers marital status data.
3. Rickshaw pullers' birthplace and their Migration ratio.
4. Rickshaw pullers social and economic problems.
5. Rickshaw pullers' average daily earnings.
6. Various issues are overlooked by rickshaw pullers in the city.
7. Rickshaw pullers average daily working hours and monthly working days.
8. Rickshaw pullers' monthly expenditure.
9. Members in a Family of rickshaw pullers in Amritsar City.

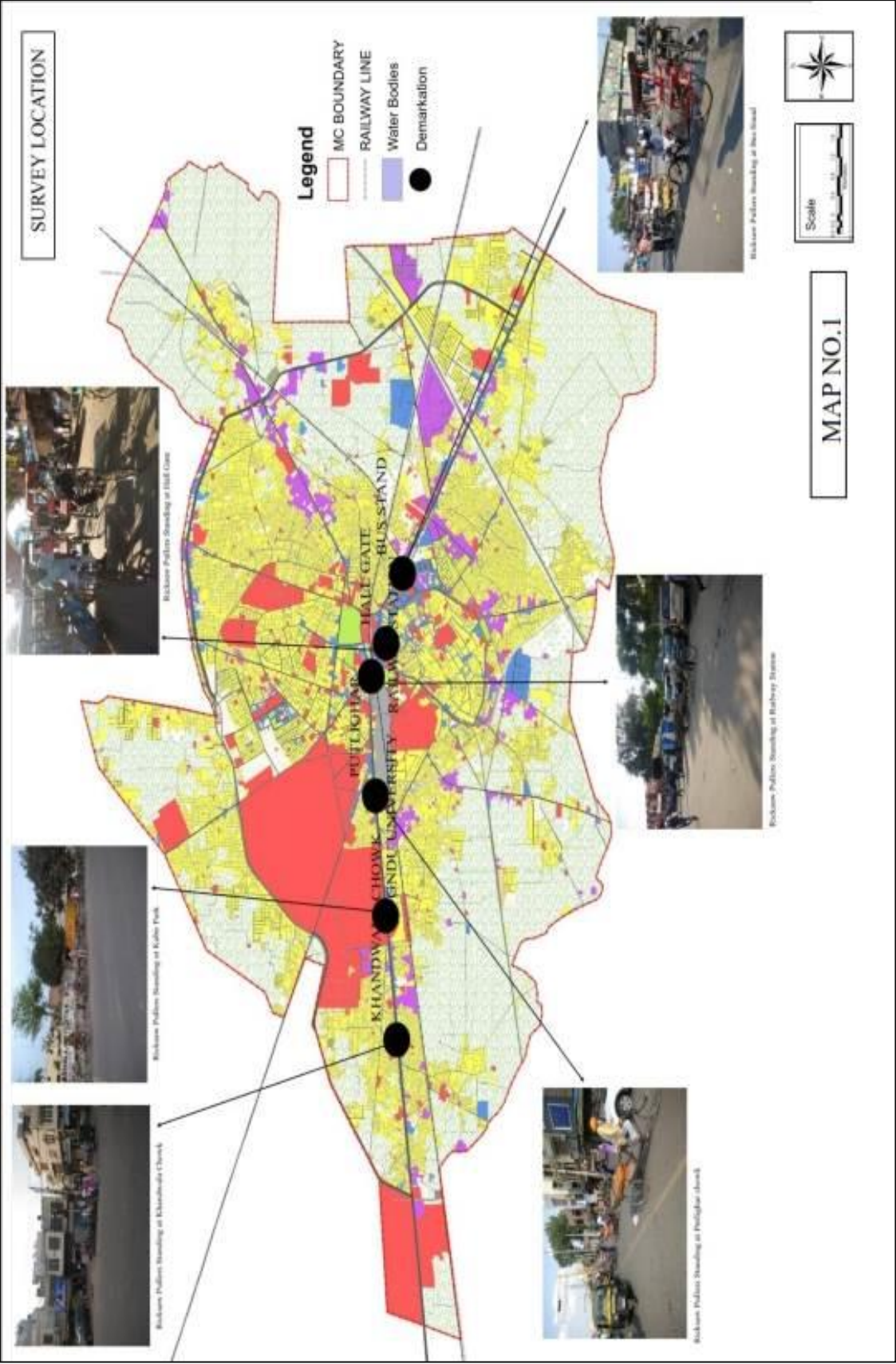


Figure 1. Demarcation of location

1. Age group data of rickshaw pullers in the city:

Table 2 exhibits the age group data of these pullers residing in the city. The sort of job of these pullers needs hard physical strength where age plays a critical role. From the data, it has been observed that 35 per cent of the peer group of these pullers belongs to the 50+ age group because this is the only option left for their family's living. In the collected data, 30 per cent of pullers belong to the age group of 35-50, and 24 per cent belong to the 25-35 age group. However, 11 per cent of these pullers were identified as young lied between the 15-25 age group.

Table 2. Age group data of Rickshaw pullers (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Age-group	Per cent
15-25	11
25-35	24
35-50	30
50+	35
Total	100

In accordance with data exhibited in Table 2, the section of the senior age group of cycle-rickshaw pullers is usually influenced by these pullers of young age groups by providing them with a small share. The demand for great physical strength in rickshaw pulling forced males to perform the job activity rather than females.

2 Rickshaw pullers' marital status data:

Table 3 exhibits the data of married rickshaw pullers which demonstrates that approx. 88 per cent of them are married whereas 12 per cent are unmarried. However, in most cases of married pullers provided information that in search of employment they migrated to the city alone while leaving their families. However, the married pullers have their families along with them and make them engaged in other work such as vegetable selling, in factories etc. so that they earn income for a better living.

Table 3. Rickshaw pullers' marital status (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Status	Per cent
Married	88
Unmarried	12
Total	100

3. Rickshaw pullers' birthplaces:

Table 4 observes most of the rickshaw pullers (62 per cent) have their birthplace in the city itself, and nearly 31 per cent came from a nearby village in Amritsar city. The migration data also observe that Bihar state share 5 per cent and nearby states in search of jobs, and better living and the remaining 2 per cent migrate from another city. As rickshaw pulling does not require any skilled work or license to run on the road, it is easy for people to migrate from one city to another city or from one state to another state and to start the work of pulling rickshaw as the city attract many visitors to commute daily.

Table 3. Rickshaw Pullers' birth place percentage (Source: Primary survey 2019).

State	Per cent
Within Amritsar	62
Excluding Amritsar	31
Bihar	5
Other Cities	2
Total	100

4. Socio-economic problems of rickshaw pullers:

Table 5 exhibits data on the socio-economic percentage of the needful people who engaged in rickshaw pulling. The serious financial concern is unemployment and poverty which forced nearly 39 per cent of them to engage in rickshaw pulling, while other factors such as social concern, and illiteracy 28 per cent ratio forced them to perform such jobs of pulling a rickshaw. Moreover, unskilled, wealthy and debt dues engaged 33 per cent of the people engaged in rickshaw pulling.

Table 4. Socio-economic causes (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Causes	Per cent
Unemployment	21
Poverty	18
Unskilled	22
Illiterate	28
Debt	11
Total	100

5. Rickshaw pullers' average daily earnings data:

Table 6 exhibits the rickshaw puller's percentage of average daily income earned. The collected data represents that 25 per cent of them earned an income of Rs 100-150 per day. While 34 per cent of them has been observed average daily earnings between 150-200 rupees and 41 per cent earned more than 200-250 rupees per day.

Table 5. Rickshaw Pullers' average daily income (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Daily Income (Rupees)	Per cent
100-150	25
150-200	34
200-250	41
Total	100

6. Various issues overlooked by rickshaw pullers:

Table 7 exhibits the various issues overlooked by the pullers which demonstrate that the shortage of rickshaw stands is the most repeated problem faced by entire pullers of the city. In the collected sample size, nearly 08 per cent raised the shortage of rickshaw stands as only one rickshaw stand existed near the old bus stand with a lacking of basic amenities like drinking water and sanitation. The other major issue of these pullers is the visionary problem as 71 per cent have reported insufficient correct vision due to inefficient street lights during the night hours. Moreover, 21 per cent of pullers accepted the problems of weakness because of their hard work.

Table 6. Various issues faced by Rickshaw pullers in Amritsar city (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Problem	Per cent
Shortage of Rickshaw Stand	08
Vision Problem	71
Weakness	21
Total	100

7. Rickshaw pullers average daily working hours and monthly working days:

Table 8 demonstrates that 80 per cent of these pullers perform the arduous work of pulling their rickshaw for more than 10 hours per day and 20 per cent of them pull their rickshaw for 8 to 10 hours per day. In further analysis, Table 8 shows that 82 per cent of rickshaw pullers have an average monthly working day of more than 25 days and 12 per cent were involved in their rickshaw for 20 to 25 days per month.

Table 8. Distribution of average daily work hours and monthly work days of Rickshaw pullers in Amritsar city (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Daily Work Hours	Per cent
8-10	20
More than 10	80
Total	100
Month Work Days	Per cent
20-25	12
More than 25	82
Total	100

8 Rickshaw pullers' monthly expenditure:

The further study of the monthly expenditure of the most of pullers was ranging from Rs 1000 and 3000 rupees. As it is evident from the data nearly (52 per cent) of pullers are spending between Rs. 1000 and 2000 per month while about (32 per cent) of respondents were spending between Rs. 2000 and 3000 for their day-to-day necessities. It was observed that the daily expenditure was almost equal to the number of daily earnings eventually leading to a very peculiar situation where whatever they earned was utilized for daily needs leaving nothing for savings.

Table 9. Rickshaw pullers' monthly expenditure (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Monthly expenditure	Per cent
Up to 1000	5
1000-2000	52
2000-3000	32
Above 3000	11
Total	100

9. Rickshaw puller family members data:

The size of the family usually has an impact on the expenditure and thus the quality of life of the family members. The studies have proved that the spending of large families is more eventually leading to lesser savings and subsequently poor quality of life. The analysis depicted that in the present sample quite a large number of

respondents were having big families (35 per cent) with four members. There were only two respondents' families who were noticed to be even larger with more than four members. There were about (65 per cent) of respondents whose families had only one to three members which are as follows 12 per cent had one member, 24 per cent had two members, and 29 per cent had three members shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Rickshaw pullers family members' data (Source: Primary survey 2019).

Number of Members in Family	Per cent
1	12
2	24
3	29
4	35
Total	100

FINDINGS

1. They have common problems like unemployment and poverty.
2. They are illiterate so can't do any other kind of work also.
3. They don't have proper stand or shelter to stand under worse weather conditions.
4. They have vision problems also as they are in this profession for a long time.
5. Problem like asthma is created because of pollution on road.
6. Sometimes they have to face the audacious behaviour of police and rickshaw owners.
7. Some of them have to work daily more than 10 hours per day to earn a little so that they can eat properly daily.
8. Hardly they earn 200 rupees for working intensely for more than 10 hours per day.
9. Total income = Total expenditure in the life of rickshaw pullers.
10. They have to work almost every day per month to survive.
11. They have no savings at the end of the month as all is spent on daily needs.
12. They have to work hard daily more than 10 hours per day to earn a little so that they can eat properly daily

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study underlines the need for improving the quality of life of rickshaw pullers by suggesting some of the following policy recommendations:

- Rickshaws and rickshaw pullers be included as an integral part of the National Transport Policy as other motorized vehicles.
- Cycle rickshaws should be registered like registration for other vehicles.
- Separate tracks for Non-Motorized Vehicles like cycles and rickshaws to be constructed.
- The Clause of the upper age limit (45 years) in, The Punjab Rickshaws (Regulation of License) Act, 1976, for driving or owning a rickshaw should be amended and it should be subject to the fitness and willingness of the

puller. Besides this, it should be as the rules and regulations for other motorized vehicles in the state where no upper age limit is required.

- According to the legal provisions of 'The Punjab Rickshaws (Regulation of License) Act, 1976'. The puller himself should be the owner of a rickshaw and a person cannot own more than one rickshaw or fleet of rickshaws like in the case of other vehicles. This provision should be abolished and fleet operation of rickshaws by the owners should be inducted in The Punjab Rickshaws (Regulation of License) Act, 1976,
- In light of environmental protection and conservation, the use of cycle rickshaws should be encouraged, as they do not consume carbon fuels and do not cause air or noise pollution and are eco-friendly.
- Authorized rickshaw stands should be provided in the city so that pullers are not unduly harassed and beaten up by the Traffic Police on the ridiculous charge of causing obstruction and being "encroachers" on public land. The penalties, bribes, harassment of pullers by the police and municipal authorities and confiscation & destruction of cycle rickshaws should be looked into.
- Arrangements for providing clean night shelters with provision for bathing and healthy recreation for rickshaw pullers should be made so that they do not have to sleep on the pavements or the vehicles thus exposing them to illness and exploitation and at times robbery by anti-social elements.
- A special identity card should be issued to the rickshaw pullers by the municipal authorities bearing the photo and all the particulars of the rickshaw puller mentioning his present and native place addresses.
- Life insurance for rickshaw pullers along with the insurance of the vehicle should be made mandatory.
- Health cards should be issued by the health department for a free comprehensive health check for these rickshaw pullers and also medicine should be given free by public hospitals or at very nominal prices.
- Rickshaw pullers should be made aware of the importance of health and hygiene during these free medical check-up camps.
- Rickshaw pullers should be made aware of the road safety norms by organizing training camps with the district administration.
- Drugs, drinking alcohol, chewing tobacco and smoking are common among rickshaw pullers and as an endeavour the district administration should involve credible NGOs, religious and social institutions, philanthropists and social work organizations in generating awareness about the ill effects of using the above products on health.
- A registered and elected rickshaw union should be established so that they can act as pressure groups to implement their demands and press upon the government for their rights and represent their cause.
- A simple financial mechanism should be devised with a reputed private or nationalized bank to enable each registered rickshaw puller to open a savings account by using the identity cards issued by the municipal authorities.
- Easy loan facilities should be provided by the banks at very concessional rates to the pullers who want to purchase new rickshaws and also Rickshaw Banks should be introduced.
- Provision of bank accounts to rickshaw pullers under govt. scheme Pradhan Mantri Jan Dan Yojna and Provision of clean fuel to every puller under Ujjwala Yojna.
- A Rickshaw Grievances Redressal Cell should be formed to deal with the complaints of rickshaw pullers.

- A Rickshaw Welfare Fund should be established by taking monthly contributions from each owner and puller and that amount must be utilized for their overall benefits like the construction of low-cost houses, providing education, health and basic minimum facilities to attain a decent standard of living.

In light of the above-mentioned recommendations, the State Government should formulate a well-defined comprehensive welfare policy for rickshaw pullers comprising all aspects of economic and social security to provide a quality life for rickshaw pullers in the State. Academia and union leaders of the rickshaw pullers should be involved in the process of making welfare policies.

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