

Livelihood Issues of Unorganized labourers: with Special reference to the Rickshaw Pullers in Bilaspur City

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Abstract

The unorganised sector is a very broad area. It consists of several occupational groups of labours and needs of the unorganised sector. The rickshaw pullers also come under the unorganised sector category. They are one of the most vulnerable sections, backward, of society in need of social security. In unorganized sectors socio-economic conditions of the workers particularly the rickshaw pullers are very miserable and ridiculous. There is a no proper job, no income, no job security, in large no social security and welfare provisions, no government plan has taken into account. They are bound to work at early morning up to late night and at odd hours and even in rainy, stormy, windy, summer hot and very bad or rough weather conditions without any protection or safety. Rickshaw pullers are amongst the poorest employed urban dwellers. There are currently approximately estimated 10 million rickshaw pullers in India. Rickshaw pullers are a marginalized community. Most rickshaw pullers cannot afford to buy their own rickshaws and rent them daily. With a lack of education and formal representation, they face lots of difficulties in their daily life, like harassment and threatens by the police and municipal officials, truck drivers, bus drivers shout on them when they unable to give the side at a very right movements of their speed as they go about their trade, and bribes, long queues and delays as they attempt to obtain official documentation, such as licenses, registration papers and insurance. Rickshaw pulling is an unorganized sector activity, which provides an opportunity to sail their family in a gentle and silent way of working culture i.e. income-earning for temporary basis; like seasonal migrants from the countryside also come into this type of employment in the urban settings. Rickshaw pullers can be easily seen transporting people in residential colonies of the city and also in its outskirts. Cycle rickshaw pullers are the very prominent in transport sector because they are considered as a eco-friendly people.

They play a vital role in transport sector in carrying people to their doorsteps in the urban and semi-urban areas. There is a general perception that rickshaw pullers are men from the countryside, who come to town temporarily during off-agricultural seasons in order to earn supplementary income for their families back home.

KEYWORDS: - unorganized labourer, rickshaw pullers, employment, livelihood

Introduction

This paper is focused on livelihood issues of the informal or the unorganized labourer who are poor and vulnerable population in India. It concentrates on a detailed analysis of the conditions of work and their livelihood consisting near about 86% of the total workforce population for most of them, conditions of work are utterly deplorable and

livelihood options extremely few.¹ Workers in the unorganized sector differ widely in terms of their income, status in employment, types of works and size, place of work, social protection, and employment protection. Extending coverage to such a heterogeneous set of workers and economic units requires the implementation of several instruments adapted to the specific characteristics of the different groups of labourers.² As per the Economic Survey 2007-08 and 2012-2013, 93% of India's workforce includes the self employed and employed in unorganized sector and in a recent reports of NCEUS(2014) on unorganized sector labourer estimates 86% or 395 million worked in the unorganised sector, generating 50.6% of the country's Gross Domestic Product.³ In India there are 14% of total population in organised sector in working with job security and 86% of total population are in unorganised sector not having job security.⁴

Unorganized Sector

According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment (2008) has defined unorganized sector as an enterprise owned by individuals or self employed workers and engaged in the production or sale of goods and providing service of any kind whatsoever, and where the enterprise employs workers, the number of such workers is less than ten.⁵

According to Statistics of Ministry of Labour (2008) report⁶ has classified the unorganized labour in India into four groups. These classification categorized India's unorganized labour forced by:-

1. In terms of Occupation: Unorganized industry workers in India include:- Small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, share croppers, fishermen, those engaged in animal husbandry, beady rolling, labelling and packing, building and construction workers, leather workers, weavers, artisans, salt workers, workers in brick kilns and stone quarries, workers in saw mills, oil mills etc. come under this category. The occupational structure refers to the distribution of the population according to their different occupations, labour, nature of work, and income⁷.

2. In terms of Nature of Employment: - Attached agricultural labourers, bonded labourers, migrant workers, contract and casual labourers come under this.

¹(Govt. Of India): National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (2007)

²ILO: *Extending social security to all: A guide through challenges and options* (Geneva, 2010).

³(Govt. Of India): National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (2013)

⁴ ILO (2012): *Report on Labour Force on organized sectors*. www.ilo.org

⁵ (Government of India, 2008):*Problems of Unorganized Sector Workers*; Ministry of Labour and Employment, New Delhi. http://www.erevise.com/current-affairs/problems-of-unorganised-sector-workers_art5253e5adee10f.html#.UuELgvvhXIU. Retrieved on 27/01/2014.

⁶Problems of Unorganised Sector Workers.http://www.erevise.com/current-affairs/problems-of-unorganised-sector-workers_art5253e5adee10f.html#.UuELgvvhXIU

⁷Datt,G. and Mahajan, A.,(2013). *Datt&Sundharam Indian Economy*. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Pvt. Ltd. 67th edition, P. 758.

3. Especially distressed categories: -Toddy tappers, Scavengers, Carriers of head loads, Drivers of animal driven vehicles, loaders and un-loaders come under this category.

4. Service categories:-In terms of Service categories: Midwives, Domestic workers, Fishermen and women, Barbers, Vegetable and fruit vendors, News paper vendors etc. belong to this category.

The recent reports of Ministry of labour and Employment (2013) Govt. of Chhattisgarh on unorganized sectors has categorized 50 types of unorganized workers who are engaged in different types of jobs on the basis of nature of work, employed or self-employed. Their characteristics are:-labelling and packing, weavers, washer man, tailor, gardener, cobbler, painter, **rickshaw-puller**, auto drivers, rag-pickers, footpath businessman, garage workers, working in transports, tent house workers, petty shop business men, farmers, those engaged in animal husbandry, cooks, hunters, beedi rolling, news paper vendors, camera man, boat sailor, fishermen, handicraft artisans, tailors, sericulture workers, carpenters, tannery workers building and construction workers etc.

Rickshaw-Puller as a unit in unorganized sector

Cycle Rickshaw pulling activity is an important occupation of the unorganized sector, where a million of poor not only serve the transportation needs of the society but also try to meet out their own economic and employment needs. Rickshaws are a mode of human powered transport; a runner draws a two wheeled cart which seats one or two persons. Despite the economic importance of this industry to the low-income families and eco-friendly benefits of this occupation, the public attitudes towards the cycle rickshaws in India, by and large, are negative and their use is being phased out in many Indian cities. In all urban areas of the country, the socio-economic conditions of rickshaw pullers are miserable. No government plans have considered their contribution in terms of service and economy. There are no job security and welfare provisions for them. They are bound to work even late at night and at odd hours and in inclement weather conditions without any protection or safety. There are virtually no medical facilities or rest shelters for them. They are subjected to social ignorance, apathy and injustice. All these people are being treated as outcaste and unwanted burden on the society. The existing social assistance programme also necessary reached to these people as they are still remain as vulnerable population.

Cycle- rickshaw means a three- wheeled cycle-rickshaw driven manually. This is an old terminology applicable to the manual rickshaws where a puller used, to pull the passengers likes an animal pulling the cart.⁸ The cycle rickshaw is a local means of transport and also known as pedicab, cyclo, or trishaw in different part of the world. Cycle rickshaws are human-powered, i.e. are pulled by a person on foot, a type of tricycle designed to carry passengers in addition to the driver. Another issue related to the present Act doesn't allow any one from holding more than one rickshaw and the owner himself has to ply his rickshaw and cannot rent out his vehicle. Renting out the vehicle is illegal and subject to various fine, penalties and even to punishment, since this Act doesn't allow the rental operation of rickshaws, as a result, when the rickshaw puller wants to suspend this work due to availability of other remunerative

⁸Sethi, R. B. & Das, L.K.(2012); *Redesign Of Cycle Rickshaw Considering The Needs Of The Elderly And Rickshaw Puller*, Newdelhi: Indian Institute of technology.

work in occupational seasons, he has to sell out the rickshaw at a low price due to the legal barriers.

Cycle rickshaw was introduced in India in the early 1920s from the far-east (rickshaw is derived from the Japanese word jinrikisha, which means hand-drawn cart). It was estimated that close to 2 million cycle rickshaws ply on Indian roads, carrying about 6–8 billion passenger km/year (Rajvanshi, Winter 1999-2000). The exact number could be even greater, since there are no reliable records available. In some cities and small towns, they are the major means of transport.⁹

An Overview on the Livelihood Issues of the Rickshaw Pullers

According to (Chambers & Conway, 1992) “A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base”¹⁰

Rickshaw Pulling is a means of livelihood of many poor and marginalized sections of people who do not find any kind of employment to support their family and live a life. Rickshaw Pullers bear the burden of low wage or income as per the good living conditions. It is an activity carried by the person either pulling it or riding it in an extreme situations but it does not require any formal education qualification rather it requires a lot of physical power or stamina to carry the burden or load. Some of the key issues are as follow:-

1. Income: -Rickshaw pullers bear an extreme physical load/ burden to transport the people and their luggage to one place to another place; and comparing to their labour / burden of their income is very less. Thus their livelihood is severely affected and unable to run their families in a healthy way. In the situations like emergencies they are unable to give financial support to their families too.
2. Ownership on the Rickshaws: - there are about 10 million rickshaw pullers in India but they do not own their rickshaws. They hire them from garage owners paying merely Rs.40/- per day and Rs. 50/- for 24 hours. Thus their daily income is very less.
3. Health Issues: - the rickshaw pullers do a very hard manual labour daily and travel almost 40 – 50 km per day. Thus there is a possibility of getting joint pain, back pain, chest pain, may come across some injuries. Some of the rickshaw pullers are staying in a hazardous place and having sickness and other problems frequently.
4. Loss of Identity: - the rickshaw pullers are coming from very vulnerable sections of the society, marginalized and migrated from rural areas to urban areas in search of some kind of employment/ labour. So they do not have any kind of identity in urban areas. They do not have voter card, ration card, bank account or the labour card. Thus they are unable to access social welfare provisions and get benefits from different govt. schemes.

⁹GreenCABDial-a-Cycle Rickshaw Service: *Integration of Brt With An Emission Free Non-Motorized Public Transport Feeder Network*. Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (Dimts) Limited.

¹⁰Chambers, R. and Conway, G. (1992); *Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century*; IDS Discussion Paper 296. Institute of Development Studies, Brighton:University of Sussex. P.

5. Unaware about the Social Welfare Provisions and Social Security Schemes: - Most of the rickshaw pullers are not aware about the social welfare and social security schemes. They are not having insurance and are unable to receive any kind of financial from Govt.

Review of Literature

According to Begum and Sen (2005), people chose this type of employment due to lack of employment, no way of getting incomes or earning money, peer influence, lack of assets; like, agriculture land and house in rural areas. In that situation Rickshaw pulling became as a Push Factor for the rural poor to enter into this types of employment for their livelihood in urban areas. Only sometimes due to mutual interest people chose to be in Rickshaw pulling.

Reuveny (2007) denotes that the Rickshaw pullers joined this employment due to the natural calamities created problems to the people, disasters, and some environmental shocks push them to cities for their livelihood; because they did not have any other options for their livelihood in urban areas very easily.

Priya Deshingkar and Shaheen Akter (2009), Rickshaw pullers are eco friendly in nature. They played an important role in transports in older town/cities in very short and narrow streets. Many of the people who are not engaged in any other types of work or employment they chose this type of employment for their livelihood. They are migrated from rural areas to urban areas or they have travelled from other states in search of employment because they need some kind of employment either it might be a self-employment and through this job they can end poverty from their families to bring a livelihood opportunity for their families.

Planning Commission (2011) Livelihood of the urban poor, however, is set to get its due focus in the upcoming 12th Five Year Plan. The Approach Paper for the 12th Five Year Plan has identified, as part of its strategy, one of its key priority areas the task of addressing “the basic needs of the urban poor who are largely employed in the informal sector and suffer from multiple deprivations and vulnerabilities that include lack of access to basic amenities such as water supply, sanitation, health care, education, social security and decent housing.”

Arbind Singh (2012), the most important need for the urban poor is lot of expenditure is there because they do not have their own house. They remain on rented house. They need a basic thing in urban city like electricity, water connection etc. so whatever is earned by them is spent on the basic requirements of their day to day life. They earn very less amount to meet their daily needs. The utmost need is to get into use of saving habits in either in banks, post office, or their traditional way of saving money in community itself; but they should be in used to saving habits. Sometimes this saving habit in banks can avail them some financial support as loan or subsidy on loan can provide. On the other hand this saving habits in banks the pass book offer the as an identity or an address proof for them. Thus it would be an extra financial support for income generation activity for the rural poor in urban areas.

Rukhsana and Asraf Alam (2013), the rickshaw pullers in rural areas are one of the poorest sections of the society, living in an extreme poverty life but they do play a vital role in intra-rural and rural-urban transportation system. Their education level is very poor. They are unaware about the governmental schemes launched for poverty alleviation and their accessibility in basic amenities and infrastructural facilities is also very poor.

Background of the Study Area

The Bilaspur city is located in Chhattisgarh state of India. Bilaspur city is governed by Municipal Corporation which comes under Bilaspur Metropolitan Region. According to the Census reports of India2011, the total population of Bilaspur is 330,106. Male 169,738 and female are 160,368. Although Bilaspur city has population of 330,106; its urban / metropolitan population is 452,851 of which 232,995 are males and 219,856 are females. ¹¹According to AshimaSood(2005) there are 176 Rickshaws garages under various vendors or owners who provide Rickshaws to the people who take rickshaws from them in Rs. 50/- for 24 hours and Rs. 30/- for half a day in Bilaspur City.¹²

Methodology

Objective of the study

1. To study the basic profile of the rickshaw puller community in Bilaspur city
2. To understand the economic conditions of the rickshaw pullers.
3. To analyse the Livelihood aspects of Rickshaw Pullers.

Research Design

The researcher used the descriptive design to state thedealings as it exists at present. The researcher has used interview schedule for the data collection informal group discussions with the rickshaw pullers.Participatory observation was used throughout the data collection. The researcher has taken40 Rickshaw pullers as sampleamong 18 rickshaw garage owners using snow ball sampling method to collect the data in different parts of Bilaspur City to analyse the changing patterns of their livelihood options. The rickshaw pullers and garage owners were interviewed.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table no. 01

Basic profile of the respondents

Variable		Frequency
Gender	Male	40
Age	18 years - 27 years	4
	28years – 37 years	12
	38 years – 47 years	17
	48 years and above	7
Education	Illiterate	07
	1 st Standard- 5 th standard	15
	5 th Standard and Above	18
Marital Status	Married	31
	Unmarried	09
Social Category	ST	5
	SC	34
	OBC	1

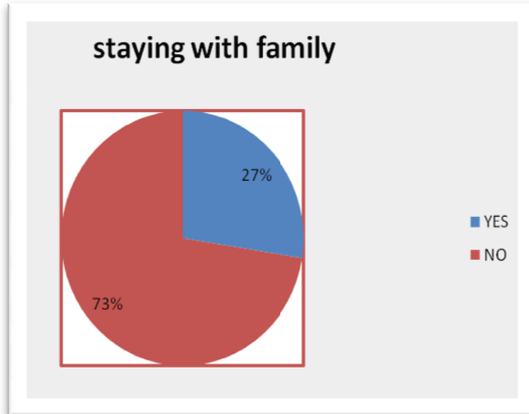
From the basic profile of the respondents it is clear that the employment of rickshaw pulling is carried out by men only in Bilaspur city and they are mostly belong to the

¹¹ <http://www.pria.org/docs/Bilaspur%20Book.pdf>. City Issue Paper Bilaspur. PRIYA P. 30.

¹² <http://www.indiatogether.org/2005/mar/eco-chingpar3.htm>..

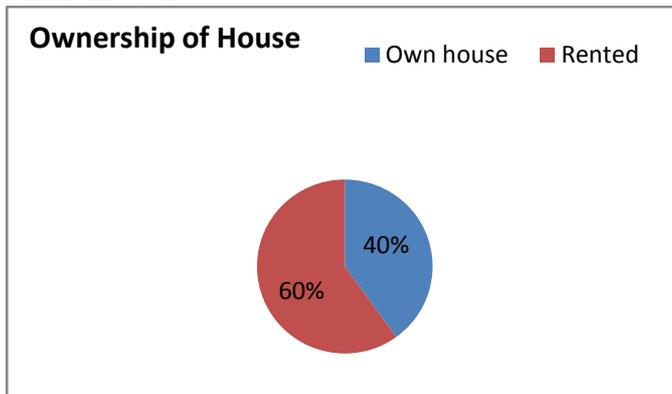
group of 38 years to 47 years and it is the positive case that there is no one under the age group of 18 years. The educational status of the rickshaw pullers is comparatively low because majority of the respondents 45% have studied 5th and above but not exceeding 8th standards. There have been noticed that 77.5% of the respondents are married and 22.5% are unmarried. There are no rickshaw pullers who are divorced or widower. So the respondents who were married and not unemployed took this profession as their bread winning for their family. From the social groups perspective there have been the majority of SC categories are employed higher than other social groups.

Chart no. 01



From the above pie-diagram, it is clear that the rickshaw pullers of Bilaspur city about 73% are not staying with family and only 27% of rickshaw pullers are staying with family. As per the conversation with respondents they answered that they are driven away from their home town in search of job and to earn money they chose this type of employment.

Chart no. 02



The above pie-diagram indicates that 60% of Rickshaw pullers are not having their own house here. They have come from other place to look for the employment and thus they have involved in Rickshaw pulling. Only 40% of Rickshaw pullers are having their own house in Bilaspur city or nearby the city. Within the Bilaspur

Table no. 02
Years In This Job

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-5 Year	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
6-10Year	11	27.5	27.5	40.0
11-15Year	17	42.5	42.5	82.5
15 Year-and above	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Though there is good no. of Rickshaw pullers who own their house they lastly got their house nearby the city and involved in this job for quite no. of years. From the above table it is clear that 42.5% of people are 11-15 years in this job. There is very close difference between the 0-5 year's involvement and above 15 years running in this employment people. That some of the people are new in this employment and some are very old in this employment.

Table no. 03

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	27	67.5	67.5	67.5
NO	13	32.5	32.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The present study tries to find out the subjective perception about feeling health issues in both mental or behavioural and physical status. The data states that 67.5% of rickshaw pullers find health problems in their daily life cycle of rickshaw pulling and 32.5% of rickshaw pullers say that they feel good about their current health status and do not feel health problems. Thus it was noted that the rickshaw pullers spend a substantial amount of time in working and generating income to discharge all their health problems away.

Table no. 04

Health Problems

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Back pain	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
Muscle pain	13	32.5	32.5	62.5
Joint pain	13	32.5	32.5	95.0
Heart palpitation	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

From the present study we can understand the health issues or problems of the rickshaw pullers that near about 32.5% of the rickshaw pullers feel muscle pain and joint pain and 30% of the rickshaw pullers say that they suffer from back pain. There are few no. 5% of the rickshaws pullers suffer from heart palpitation because of their continuous driving rickshaws and not having enough time to take rest.

Table no. 05

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Back pain	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
Muscle pain	13	32.5	32.5	62.5
Joint pain	13	32.5	32.5	95.0
Heart palpitation	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Name of disease

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Malaria	11	27.5	27.5	27.5
Chest Congestion	9	22.5	22.5	50.0
Sun strokes	17	42.5	42.5	92.5
Injuries	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

From the above table it is clear that 32.5% of the respondents suffer from joint and muscle pain, 30% of the respondents suffer from back pain and 5% of the respondents suffer from heart palpitation. In addition to the previous table 42.5% of the rickshaw pullers suffer from the sun strokes in the summer seasons, 27.5% of the rickshaw pullers said that they suffer from malaria, 22.5% of them said that they suffer from chest congestion and 7.5% of them said that they suffer from injuries in meeting with accidents.

Table no. 06**Basic Amenities**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Approved electricity connections	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
Water Connection	28	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

As per the basic amenities one person should have hygienic shelter, proper sanitation facility, and water facility to have a good life, but here we see that 70% of the respondents say that they only water connection facility and 30% of the respondents say that they have electricity connection. There is no one among the rickshaw pullers having both water and electricity connection in their house.

Table no. 07**approximate daily income**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than Rs. 200	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
Rs.200- Rs.300	15	37.5	37.5	62.5
Rs.300- Rs. 500	14	35.0	35.0	97.5
Rs.500-and above	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

For most of the rickshaw pullers daily income is approximately is of Rs.300/- 500/- near about 35% of respondents tell that they earn in between Rs300/--500/- and 37.5%

say that they earn about Rs. 200/- to 300/- per day. And there is only 2.5% of the respondents who earn approximately Rs. 500/- and above in a day.

Table no. 08
Other source of income

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Labour in grain market	16	40.0	40.0	40.0
Repair of rickshaws	15	37.5	37.5	77.5
Watchman	9	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

To support their family to meet the basic needs and other needs of family they are involved and engaged in some other employment or occupations. From above table it could be come to the conclusion that there are 40% of rickshaw pullers doing labour work in agriculture sectors, 37.5% are engaged in repairing of cycle rickshaws and cycles too, 22.5% are working as night guards according to their time arrangements and convenience.

Table no. 09
Expenditure on Gutkha, bidi, cigarette, alcohol

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Rs. 30- Rs. 50	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
Rs. 50- Rs. 100	13	32.5	32.5	75.0
Rs. 100- Rs. 150	3	7.5	7.5	82.5
Rs. 150 and above	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Among the rickshaw pullers everyone is habituated of taking gutkha, chewing pan, alcohol, and other intoxicating stuff. Among those 42.5% of the respondents answered that they spend for those thing about Rs. 30-50, 32.5% of the respondents say that they spend Rs. 50-100, 7.5% are the persons who spend on those things very less amount but there are 17.5% of the people who spend the highest amount about Rs. 150- and above.

Discussion

Income and expenditure analysis

Based on the data collected and reported expenses on house rent, rickshaw rent, food expenses, managing family, substance abusing habits like gutkha and pan consuming, alcoholism, the rickshaw pullers find it difficult to manage the expenses. As other family members are engaged in work, so they manage somehow all the expenses. Those who stay in Bilaspur temporarily have land and other resources which are managed by their family. By combining both the income, the families are surviving.

Health issues and loss of livelihood

The researcher found that majority of the respondents fall in within 10-15 years of experience in rickshaw pulling. Then due to health problems like back ache and muscle pain etc. they just disappear from the rickshaw pulling.

Observation

During the study the researcher has observed that about the socio- economic conditions of the rickshaw pullers in Bilaspur City that:-

- The respondents were not easily and willingly to respond to fill the interview schedule.
- They were hesitating to answer the questions. It was observed that there has been a minimum charge or fare taken by the rickshaw pullers were Rs.10/-the fare was charged according to the distance of place.
- Rickshaw pullers are not having union among themselves. Only there was a union among the rickshaw garage owners.
- It has been observed that many of the rickshaw pullers were staying at the railway stations either on platform or on the rickshaw itself.

Limitations of the study

- This study was time consuming and expensive for the researcher; because for the respondents to get the answers from the respondents the researcher used to travel in their rickshaw with them
- The respondents were not easily willing and availing themselves to give information to the researcher.

Suggestions for improvement:-

- Awareness to be created among Rickshaw Pullers on social security scheme and social welfare provisions i.e. LIC.
- BPL cards for rickshaw pullers to be issued.
- Rickshaw stand could be established.
- There should be no penalty on Rickshaw pullers by Police & Municipal Authorities..
- Rickshaw pullers are needed to be made aware about their rights other stakeholders needs to be sensitized about protecting and improving the conditions of work, living conditions and other aspects related to their family life of the population.
- The rickshaw-pullers need union/ organization and representation.
- If rickshaw pullers would be provided access to adequate financial support to own their assets, and better designed vehicles.
- Some technical improvement on cycle rickshaw to be invented like gear cycle rickshaw to reduce the physical hardness of the labour in manual driving

Conclusion

Generally speaking, Rickshaw Pulling is not a very a very good job and not a well-paid activity and majority of the people in this occupation remain hand to mouth only. These workers choose to rickshaw pulling under livelihood compulsions arising out of poverty, lack of skills and absence of a better choice. People usually don't enter into rickshaw pulling with the aim of future savings and creating assets but just to meet their day to day needs. The data depicted that the situation has not changed much over the period of time as about three fourth respondents were not in a situation to save any money for their future but were just able to meet the bare minimum requirements required for day to day living. From one perspective, the rickshaw pulling is a huge source of needed jobs; the rickshaw pullers themselves clearly prefer it to continue in this same employment. Further, unlike many other professions, it involves a good deal of freedom in terms of labour, time, money, and gives them a chance to choose their hours and to rest when they wish.

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