

Attributes of Cycle Rickshaw Pullers of Punjab: A Case Study of Ludhiana Municipal Corporation of Punjab**Navpreet Singh***
Dr. Balbir Singh****Introduction**

India has made a remarkable progress in different sectors of the economy since last three decades. The eleventh and twelfth five year plans of India also emphasised on the goal of inclusive growth, i.e., equitable opportunities for all the participants and benefits of economic growth should reach to every section of the society. However, the benefits have not percolated to the bottom level. Different strategies have been made from time to time to improve the economic status of the poor and particularly for the population engaged in informal sector, but their conditions are still unsatisfactory (Ali, 2009). The conditions are continuously deteriorating day by day of the people who belong to lower segment of the society. Unemployment, illiteracy, unhygienic health conditions and discrimination regarding distribution of resources and assets are common among the informal labourers (Madan, 1971).

Informal workers produce goods and services. They construct buildings, clean homes, sew clothes, pull rickshaws, weld car parts etc. Among the informal sector activities rickshaw pulling attracts a greater number of migrated people. A part of informal labourers prefer the business of rickshaw pulling to get quick cash earnings and employment. It is fact that now rickshaw pulling has become a popular source of income and employment among the poor rural immigrants in the urban areas (Begum and Binayak, 2004).

The cycle rickshaw is a local mean of transportation having three wheels. Being the cheapest means of transportation for the short distance, it gets popularity in the urban localities of Indian cities. Though rickshaw pulling is a symbol of poverty, it provides bread and livelihood to majority of the socio-economic backward people who partly or solely depend on this profession. Cycle rickshaws have been used as a means of transportation for social elite but, since 1880's this activity play a pivotal role in the intra-city transport system, especially in the towns and cities of the third world countries, where the streets connecting the roads are very narrow on which motor vehicles cannot be easily driven. Probably this is the only transport system which can provide point to point travel (Rajvanshi, 2002).

The section of cycle rickshaw pullers is the most disadvantageous section among all the sections engaged in the transportation activities for getting their means of livelihood, because pulling of rickshaw is a menial and hazardous occupation (Warren, 1985). Despite the economic importance of this industry for the low income families and eco-friendly benefits, the public attitude towards the cycle rickshaw in India, by and large, is negative and its use is being phased out in many Indian cities. In all the urban areas of the country, the socio-economic conditions of rickshaw pullers are miserable. No Government Plan has considered their contribution in terms of service to the economy. There is no job security and welfare provision for them. There are virtually no medical facilities 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.

Database and Methodology

The present study is based on the primary data, which has been collected with the help of schedules and observations from the sampled cycle rickshaw pullers in Ludhiana Municipal Corporation of Punjab for the year 2017-18. Multistage random sampling technique was followed for the selection of cycle rickshaw pullers. At the first stage, Ludhiana Municipal Corporation was selected. In the second stage, seven rickshaw stands of the Ludhiana Municipal Corporation were selected randomly. In the next stage 10 cycle rickshaw pullers from each cycle rickshaw stand were selected randomly. On the basis of above methodology, 70 cycle rickshaw pullers were selected from the Ludhiana Municipal Corporation.

Attributes of Cycle Rickshaw Pullers

In social research, it is very important to explain the social profile of the respondents, because it has an important bearing on the attitudes, behavior and activities of the individuals. People belonging to different socio-economic background are likely to perceive various social aspects differently. The special attributes of the respondents such as age, education, religion, caste, marital status, types of family etc. have to be discussed in order to reveal their real picture of the social profile. These features are explained as below:

Age

The strength and energy of a person depends upon his/her age. Age plays important role to determine the performance of an individual. In case of rickshaw pulling, age plays a crucial role

towards his working and earnings. Cycle rickshaw pulling is a hard occupation and generally most of the rickshaw pullers are belong to the younger age groups. Table 1 revealed that about 67 per cent of sampled cycle rickshaw pullers were between 15 years to 45 years of age. The data showed that 25.71 per cent of respondents between 35 years to 45 years, whereas 27.14 per cent were between 25 to 35 years of age. Further, 20 per cent of respondents were between 45 to 55 years of age and 12.86 per cent of them were more than 55 years of age. The remaining 14.29 per cent of cycle rickshaw pullers were between 15 to 25 years. Therefore, the majority of cycle rickshaw pullers in Punjab belonged to the age group of 25-45 years. This is also supported by the study by Kumar and Gupta that most of the rickshaw pullers in Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh) belong to the age group of 30 to 44 years.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents according to their Age

Age Group	Distribution of Respondents
15-25	10 (14.29)
25-35	19 (27.14)
35-45	18 (25.71)
45-55	14 (20.00)
Above 55	09 (12.86)
Total	70 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey 2017-18

Figures in the brackets indicates the percentage to the respective total

Religion

The religion-wise distribution of sampled cycle rickshaw pullers is given in Table 2. The data in the table showed that majority of the rickshaw pullers belonged to Hindu religion. Out of total sampled cycle rickshaw pullers, 18.57 per cent of them were belonged to the Sikh religion, 77.14 per cent of them belonged to the Hindu religion and 2.86 per cent of them belonged to the Muslim religion. The remaining 1.43 per cent of sampled cycle rickshaw pullers belonged to the Christian religion. The findings emerging out of the present study with regard corroborates the

results of the study by Gupta and others (1986) which also highlighted that Hindu rickshaw pullers in the city of Ludhiana in both the groups were more than the Sikhs and Muslims.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents according to their Religion

Religion	Distribution of Respondents
Sikh	13 (18.57)
Hindu	54 (77.14)
Muslim	2 (2.86)
Christian	1 (1.43)
Total	70 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey 2017-18

Figures in the brackets indicates the percentage to the respective total

It was found from the analysis that a large number of rickshaw pullers were related to the Hindu community. It is well known fact that Ludhiana is a highly industrial developed city of Punjab state. It offers more employment opportunities to the peoples. This resulted into an influx of migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in Ludhiana city and most of these migrated workers belonged to the Hindu community. As a result of that a large proportion of sampled rickshaw pullers in Ludhiana Municipal Corporation were related to the Hindu religion.

Caste

The caste system in India, with its social boundaries and societal classification continue to put its major impact on the Indian social set up. Table 3 shows the caste-wise distribution of the sampled cycle rickshaw pullers. Among all the sampled cycle rickshaw pullers, 18.57 per cent belonged to the general category, 15.71 per cent belonged to the Backward Class, 62.86 per cent belonged to the Scheduled Castes and 2.86 per cent belonged to the Schedule Tribes.

It has been found that the majority of rickshaw pullers were related to Schedule Castes category. The activity of rickshaw pulling is considered as one of the low grade profession in our country. The Schedule Castes people did not feel any type of hesitation to perform the low grade profession of rickshaw pulling. Many people belonged to low castes depended on rickshaw

pulling activity for their earnings, But the people belonged to General Category due to their social stigma did not want to join the rickshaw pulling activity.

Table 3
Distribution of Respondents according to their Caste

Caste	Distribution of Respondents
General	13 (18.57)
BC	11 (15.71)
SC	44 (62.86)
ST	2 (2.86)
Total	70 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey 2017-18

Figures in the brackets indicates the percentage to the respective total

Education

Table 4
Distribution of Respondents according to their Education

Education Qualification	Distribution of Respondents
Illiterate	39 (55.71)
Up to Primary	22 (31.43)
Middle	05 (7.14)
Metric	04 (5.72)
Secondary	00 (0.00)
Total	70 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey 2017-18

Figures in the brackets indicates the percentage to the respective total

Education play very important role in desirable change into the behavior of person. It helps the person to understand his surrounding and environment. The occupation of person or

society depends upon the education of person or society. Education helps the individual to get productive and gainful employment (NCEUS, 2007).

Table 4 depicts the distribution of the sampled cycle rickshaw pullers according to their level of education. Among all the 70 sampled cycle rickshaw pullers, 55.71 per cent of rickshaw pullers were without any formal education, 31.43 per cent were having education up to primary level, 7.14 per cent have middle level education and only 5.72 per cent of them have metric level education.

Mother Tongue

The study has also highlighted the mother tongue of cycle rickshaw pullers. Language plays important role in determining the performance of a person. The migrated person who strict to his mother tongue have less opportunities of getting jobs, but on other side the person who adopt the local language have more opportunities of getting jobs.

Table 5
Distribution of Respondents according to their Mother Tongue

Mother Tongue	Distribution of Respondents
Punjabi	15 (21.43)
Hindi	44 (62.86)
Other	11 (15.71)
Total	70 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey 2017-18

Figures in the brackets indicates the percentage to the respective total

In the present context, it has been found that in Ludhiana Municipal Corporation, out of total sampled respondents, 21.43 per cent of respondents having Punjabi as their mother tongue,, while 62.86 per cent having Hindi as their mother tongue. About 15.71 per cent of them reported other language i.e. Bhojpuri, Bengali, Nepali as their mother tongue.

The analysis of data reveled that the mother tongue of the large number of the sampled cycle rickshaw pullers was Hindi language. The major reason associated to this is that the migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar accounted for the major proportion among

sampled cycle rickshaw pullers in Ludhiana Municipal Corporation, and their mother tongue is Hindi.

Marital Status

Marriage is an important ceremony of human life. After marriage, people enter into new status and new life. Marriage delivers lot of responsibilities on the shoulders of person and these responsibilities affect the working life of person.

Table 6
Distribution of Respondents According to Their Marital Status

Marital Status	Distribution of Respondents
Married	59 (84.29)
Unmarried	10 (14.28)
Divorced	01 (1.43)
Total	70 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey 2017-18

Figures in the brackets indicates the percentage to the respective total

Table 6 shows the marital status of the sampled cycle rickshaw pullers. Out of the total sampled cycle rickshaw pullers, 84.29 per cent of rickshaw pullers were married and 14.28 per cent of cycle rickshaw pullers were unmarried. The table further revealed that 1.43 per cent of sampled cycle rickshaw pullers were divorcee.

Type of Family

The family is a basic unit of a society. The person learns the basic behavior pattern from the family. The process of socialisation of the person starts within the family. The type of the family affects the personal and social life of a person. Joint family was ideal form of family in traditional society, but in present era, due to growth of urbanisation and modernisation the joint family structure transformed into nuclear family structure.

It is evident from table that 67.14 per cent of the cycle rickshaw pullers have nuclear families and remaining 32.86 per cent of cycle rickshaw pullers have joint families. From the analysis, it can be said that nuclear family system replaced the traditional family system. The

traditional family structure has largely affected by the changing pattern of life styles along with huge urbanisation and migration.

Table 7
Distribution of Respondents According to Their Type of Family

Type of Family	Distribution of Respondents
Nuclear	47 (67.14)
Joint	23 (32.86)
Total	70 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey 2017-18

Figures in the brackets indicates the percentage to the respective total

Total Number of Children

The analysis on number of children in the family helps to understand the quality life of the family. The fact is established that more number of children in the families of poor economic strata. The most provable reason is inadequate information about family planning. Beside this, the people belonged to poor economic strata believed that children are source of income as they will supplement their future family income. They also of believe that more the numbers of male in the family means more the income of their families. The present study examines as to whether such a link existed in case of cycle rickshaw pullers or not.

Table 8
Distribution of Respondent according to their Number of Children

Number of Children	Distribution of Respondent
No Child	10 (16.67)
One	8 (13.33)
Two	11 (18.33)
Three	17 (28.33)
More than Three	20 (33.33)
Total	60 (100)

Source: Field Survey 2017-18

Figures in the brackets indicates the percentage to the respective total

Table 8 showed that more than half of the total sampled cycle rickshaw pullers have three or more than three children. Out of all the sampled cycle rickshaw pullers, 16.67 per cent of rickshaw pullers have no child, 13.33 per cent have one child, 18.33 per cent of cycle rickshaw pullers have two children, 28.33 per cent of rickshaw pullers have three children and 23.33 per cent of rickshaw pullers have more than three children. It was found from the analysis near about half of sampled cycle rickshaw pullers have almost ideal family structure.

Concluding Remarks

Cycle rickshaw pulling activity is an important occupation, 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. On the basis of primary survey it has been concluded that in Ludhiana Municipal Corporation of Punjab state most of cycle rickshaw pullers belonged to Hindu religion, whereas in case of caste system, backward groups in the social hierarchy (i.e., SCs and STs) are mainly engaged in the rickshaw pulling activity. The mother tongue of a large number of sampled rickshaw pullers was Hindi. On the family front, most of them have nuclear families with an average of three children. On the Education front, more than half (55.71 per cent) of the cycle rickshaw pullers were illiterate and those literate, they have education only up to metric level. The lack of literacy among the rickshaw pullers could be one of the reasons why the rickshaw pullers are vulnerable to exploitation and low level of living. All these facts revealed their attributes and showed their miserable conditions. Therefore, government should initiate to provide the education to the cycle rickshaw pullers and their children, because without education they cannot uplift the level of livings.

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