Chapter 7
Findings and Policy Recommendations

Workers in the informal economy are not different in any way than the other workers except that they perform their work in unregulated and unprotected conditions. With the process of globalization this sector has increased in size unexpectedly all around the globe. It is clearly evident that, due change in the world’s economy, the direction of the transition is not from informal to formal but it is from formal to informal. Due to reduction in employment opportunities in the formal sector the burden of employment on the informal economy is growing very fast. The competition due to globalization had eroded employment relations by encouraging formal firms to hire or outsource the workers at low wages and with some benefits or no benefits as the case may be with the sole motive of profit by the employer and earning wages by the employee or worker at the end of the day. Without any doubts the evidence related to informal economy showed that this sector is growing according to needs of people and new prevalent economic structure. The informal economy is very closely related to formal economy or vice versa. This sector is very vital in form of its contribution in global economy along with the labour force participation. With urban growth there is a marked increase in the population in this sector consisting of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled persons representing the illiterate, traditionally oppressed, vulnerable, and economically poor and socially exploited migrating from rural areas to cities in search of comparatively better income opportunities and a chance to have better living conditions. The informal sector refers to economic activities, where individuals and small groups of people and families are engaged in the work largely unprotected by the welfare legislation. The occupations in this sector are marked by social and traditional compulsions, poverty, illiteracy, helplessness, deprivation and so on. The majority of rural and urban poor working in the informal sector does not have any social security and are exploited and denied opportunities to lead a creative life and enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity and self respect.
Cycle Rickshaw pulling activity is an important occupation of the informal 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. The word Rickshaw comes from Asia where this was used as a means of transportation for the social elite. Now, a day’s man pulled rickshaws have been replaced by bicycle rickshaws. In India, Rickshaws was used in 1880 for the first time in Shimla and then 20 years later in Calcutta now Kolkata. Rickshaw since then is a mode of transportation and cheapest source of transport activities. 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 main objective of the present study is to know various aspects of the living and working conditions of rickshaws pullers in the city of Patiala. The specific objectives are following:

1. To study the demographic profile of the sampled rickshaw pullers.
2. To study the reasons for entering in to the rickshaw pulling profession.
3. To study the reasons of migration from native place to the present destination.
4. To know the family life aspects of these workers in terms of their relationship with wife and children, food habits, leisure-time activities etc.
5. To study the working and living conditions of the rickshaw pullers.
6. To explore the common health problems of these workers.

7. To explore the social security and welfare provisions/facilities available to these workers.

8. To highlight the scope of Social Work intervention and the role of State and NGOs in improving their living standards.

The area of present study was Patiala city of Punjab. For the purpose of research, the list of total number of registered rickshaw pullers with Patiala Municipal Corporation was obtained. There were 4189 rickshaw pullers registered with Patiala Municipal Corporation in year 2006-2007. A sample of 405 rickshaw pullers would be drawn from the list of registered rickshaw pullers with the Patiala Municipal Corporation at the time of data collection. The present study in primarily descriptive, interpretive and evaluative in nature, for which data was collected through interview scheduled. Along with the primary sources of data collection, the researcher had also collected information and data from secondary sources. The tools for data collection were mainly structured interview schedule and on the spot observation from the selected sample of the study form the universe.

Research Findings

On the bases of field inquiry and with the aim of fulfilling the purposed objectives of the present study, following are the research findings:

Socio-Economic Profile

Age

In the present study it is evident that maximum rickshaw pullers were from the younger age groups. The data reveals that a great majority (74.1percent) of the persons in this profession were between 25 years to 45 years of age. The break up further shows that more than two fifth (44percent) respondents were between 25 and 35 years whereas a little less than one third (30.1percent) were between 35 and 45 years of age.
Caste

As regards the present study it is clear that there are significant proportion of (29.6 percent) of the people belonging to higher caste, general caste were also found to have taken to rickshaw pulling in Patiala City. The data indicates that from among the sampled rickshaw pullers, a little more than one fourth (25.9 percent) of the respondents were from the backward caste groups while against the general perception, the proportion of scheduled caste was relatively very less (42.0 percent). Another issue that needs to be highlighted is that the proportion of general caste people from outside Punjab was significantly higher (47.2 percent) than the people from within Punjab (15.9 percent) into rickshaw pulling.

Religion

The religion wise distribution of the respondent rickshaw pullers showed that majority (84.0 percent) of them were from Hindu religion while 12.8 percent belonged to Sikhism. There were only 3.2 percent respondents from Muslim community were earning their livelihood by plying rickshaw in Patiala city. Migrant population was predominantly constituted of Hindus as their proportion is 92.1 percent while for Muslims and Sikhs it is 6.7 percent and 1.1 percent respectively. In case locals or native rickshaw pullers the majority, a little more than three fourth (77.5 percent) were from Hindu religion followed by 22.0 percent from Sikhism. Apart from this there was only one rickshaw puller among locals from Muslim community into the work of rickshaw pulling.

Education

Majority (69.6 percent) of the rickshaw pullers was illiterate, there were just 5.7 percent who were matriculate, only 10.1 percent had acquired elementary education level and 14.6 percent were primary passed. The small proportion of people who were educated /matric pass entered into rickshaw pulling as a last and only available choice due for their livelihood compulsion. The proportion of illiterate pullers is much higher (78.0 percent) among locals than the migrants (59.0 percent) in the city. While in case of
having literacy level up to primary and middle level the proportion of migrants is quite higher as compared to the local rickshaw pullers. In case of matric passed rickshaw pullers the trends were opposite as the percentage of locals is slightly higher (6.2 percent) than the migrants (5.1 percent).

**Native State**

About more than half (56 percent) of the sampled respondents were from the state of Punjab whereas the rest (44 percent) belonged to state of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring country Nepal.

**Type of Family**

The analysis showed that over 72.8 percent families of the respondent rickshaw pullers were nuclear comprising mainly of their wife and children. A little more than one fourth (27.2 percent) still prefer to live in joint family system among the sample rickshaw pullers. As regards the locals and migrants rickshaw pullers the proportion of migrant rickshaw pullers was higher (31.5 percent) as compared to the natives (23.8 percent) who preferred or were staying in joint family system. The prevalence of nuclear family system is as high as 76.2 percent among respondents with in Punjab as compare to 68.5 percent in case of rickshaw pullers from outside Punjab.

**Number of Children**

The field enquiry on the married respondent rickshaw pullers (N=362) reveals that 35.4 percent of the respondents had only one child while 33.7 percent of respondents had their two children. 15.7 percent respondent rickshaw pullers were having three children while 8.8 percent of them had four children. A part from this, 6.4 percent of rickshaw pullers do not have any children. The proportion of single child (43.2 percent) and two children norm (35.9 percent) was common among Punjab residents while this proportion was low in case of migrant rickshaw pullers. Overall it was heartening to know almost about 70 percent of the total married respondent
rickshaw pullers were having at least one and maximum two children, which is very handy sign of population stabilization at overall national level.

**Family Members Living Together**

The data reveals that, a more than half (55.3 percent) families of rickshaw pullers in the area of study had three to six members in their families, whereas, 32.3 percent families had only one to three members. 11.9 percent families were large consisting 6 to 9 members while only two families in the sample were found to be very large having more than nine members. Among both (local and migrants) majority of the pullers were having medium size families comprising of three to six family members.

**Other Source of Family Income**

A vast majority (95.8 percent) of sampled respondent rickshaw pullers do not have any other source of income rather than their present earning activity of rickshaw pulling. Only very negligible proportion (4.2 percent) was having any other source along with rickshaw pulling to supplement their income.

**Savings**

A little less than three fourth (73.3 percent) do not able to save any money for their future but were only just able to meet the two end meals from this activity. Only a little more than one fourth (26.1 percent) of the total rickshaw pullers reported to save some amount from their daily earnings. It was further revealed that a substantial proportion (1.5 percent) was able to save between Rs 2500 to 3000 in a month by putting in extra hours than the normal working of 8 hours in a day while 5.4 percent of the rickshaw pullers were able to save between Rs 2000 to 2500. It was interesting to know that all the rickshaw pullers who were saving between Rs 2000 to 3000 in a month from their daily earning besides spending on other expenditures of daily wants belonged to other states than Punjab while a little more than, one tenth (11.9 percent)
rickshaw pullers were savings between Rs 1500 to 2000 in a month. Among the Punjab rickshaw pullers only 4.8 percent were able to save some amount i.e. up to Rs 2000 in a month where as an overwhelming majority (95.2 percent) were not able to save single penny from this work. As regards the total migrant rickshaw pullers, the proportion of pullers savings money was 54.5 percent but still 45.5 percent of the migrant rickshaw pullers were not able to save any money from their daily earnings.

**Utilization of Savings**

Out of the total (N=108) rickshaw pullers who were reported to be savings some money depicts that, a little more than three fifth (62.0 percent) of them send money back to their ancestral places for the purpose of helping the family members back at their homes while 10.2 percent used these savings to refund the loans they have taken for their various needs. A little less than three tenth (27.8 percent) among these rickshaw pullers were utilizing these savings for educating their children and few have spent and saved their savings for the purpose of solemnizing the marriage of their sons or daughters. The data analysis clearly showed that the proportion of migrant rickshaw pullers savings money was as high as 89.81 percent as compared to the local rickshaw pullers 10.19 percent.

Among the total respondents (N=108) who were able to save money the phenomena of savings money and remit back to their native places is more common among the migrants than the local rickshaw pullers.

**Monthly Expenditure**

The analysis of the monthly expenditure of the majority of rickshaw pullers was ranging from Rs 1000 to 3000. As it evident from the data that nearly three fifth (58.3 percent) rickshaw pullers were spending between Rs 1000 to 2000 in a month while about one third (32.1 percent) respondents were spending between Rs 2000 to 3000 for their day to day necessities. The analysis shows that the monthly expenditure of more than 90 percent rickshaw pullers was more than Rs 1000 and less than Rs 3000.
Share of Expenditure (Monthly)

It was highlighted that a more than three fifth (64.61 percent) of the total expenditure (in month) was done on daily food products and on cooking material. The further breakup of the expenditure utilized on food products shows that a little less than two fifth (37.39 percent) of the expenditure is done to procure food and food grains like wheat flour, rice pulses and other cooking material like salt, edible oil etc. while 11.91 percent of the monthly expenditure is done to buy the seasonal fruits and vegetable for daily consumptions. A little less than one tenth (8.38 percent) of the monthly expenditure is spend on milk and milk products. Besides this, 6.32 percent share among the monthly expenditure is spend on the arrangement of cooking material and fuel like gas, kerosene, firewood, dung cakes etc. Nearly about one fifth (24.50 percent) of the expenditure was utilized to pay the various bills, rent and school fee of the children by the respondent rickshaw pullers. Majority of the earnings by these informal sector workers are utilized or spend to procure their daily requirements related to food and food products. The expenditure on medicine and clothing are nominal.

Assets

The information regarding the assets possessed by the rickshaw pullers reveals that the great majority of these rickshaw pullers did not possess even the basic items required for the day to day life for example 54.6 percent of them did not even have a gas stove whereas more than half 51.1 percent were deprived of a television in their living places. Similarly 63.2 percent of these respondents did not have a radio and almost equal (60.7 percent) proportion did not have the wrist watch.

Possession of Mobile Phone

It is clearly evident that 16.5 percent of the respondent rickshaw pullers possessed their own mobile phone sets while remaining 83.5 percent were not having mobile phone sets. The comparison between migrants and local rickshaw pullers revealed that 18.5 percent rickshaw pullers among locals were having their own mobile phones while in case of rickshaw pullers from outside Punjab there proportion was 14 percent among their total.
Migratory Aspects

The process of movement of people from one state to another state, with in state or in between one country to another country in search of various issues related to human needs and development is called migration.

Reasons for Migration

An overwhelming majority (93.3 percent) of these migrant rickshaw pullers cited poverty as the one of the major reason due to which they have migrated to this place. Whereas 72.2 percent has given unemployment as other reason which compel these pullers to migrate. Significantly more than two fifth (44.9 percent) respondents has migrated due to the reason that the wage given to them were very low at their native places A little one tenth (9.6 percent) respondents had migrated due the influence of their peers / friends who had already migrated or visiting this place before. The data further shows that 9.6 percent of the pullers had migrated due to the social disputes or family enmity at their parental place.

State/Country of Domicile

It is evident that more than half (53.4 percent) of the sampled rickshaw pullers belonged to state of Bihar while 31.5 percent rickshaw pullers were native of Uttar Pradesh. The composition of neighbourhood states of Haryana (5.6 percent), Himachal Pradesh (1.7 percent) and Rajasthan (0.6 percent) is very less as compared to states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. A part from this 5.6 percent of these rickshaw pullers had migrated from neighbouring country Nepal.

Availability of Property at Native Place

It was clearly, evident about one fourth (24.7 percent) do not have any assets like agricultural land, cattle’s etc. The living condition of these rickshaw pullers was also not satisfactory has 68 percent of them were living in kacha or mud houses at their native place before migration whereas, a little more than one fourth (27.5 percent) possessed pakka house at their ancestral place. Agriculture as main occupation in villages (57.3 percent) of them were small or marginal farmers and acquire small chunk
of land while 56.2 percent of the migratory rickshaw puller had cattle’s as one of the resources at their parental place as cattle rearing is subsidiary occupation in rural areas.

**Motivation by Whom for Migration to Patiala**

Majority 32.0 percent of them was motivated by their relatives to migrate to Patiala. The family pressure was also clearly evident, in the data as almost two fourth 39.3 percent told by their father and elder brother to move from their native place. Besides this 28.7 percent had mentioned others who had motivated respondents to migrate which includes friends, neighbours and people from their native village whose family members had already migrated to this place in Patiala. The field enquiry further highlighted that majority 80.3 percent among the migrant respondent rickshaw pullers got the information about availability of work from their friends, relatives and family member.

**Age at the Time of Migration**

As nearly half 49.49 percent of the rickshaw pullers who had migrated from their native place to Patiala under the livelihood compulsions were between 11 -20 years of age. Apart from that more than one third 35.4 percent rickshaw pullers were between 21 and 30 years of age. It is clear from the data that a large majority 84.8 percent migrate rickshaw pullers were more that 11 years of age and less than 30 years of age. It also evident from the data that no respondent in the sample who had migrated an age more than 50 years while there were just 2.2 percent respondents whose age was between 40 and 50 years.

**Family Members Who Accompanied the Respondents While Migrating**

It was found that a great majority 64.6 percent of these rickshaw pullers had come to state of Punjab all alone in search of better employment opportunities. There were about 14.6 percent respondents who had migrated along with their whole family. The younger and many of the unmarried rickshaw pullers had migrated with their parents (3.4 percent). The present analysis also reveals that more than one tenth 11.2 percent respondents had migrated with their wives. There were about 6.2 percent respondents who had migrated along with their friends and relatives.
Number of Years in Patiala

More than half (55.1 percent) respondents among the migrants have been staying in Patiala for more than nine years while 30.9 percent were those migrant rickshaw pullers who have been here for more than 3 years and less than 9 years.

Family Profession at Native Place

The information on the familial profession of these migrants reveals that overwhelming majority (95.5 percent) of them has been doing the work either relating to farming and agricultural allied activities. The analysis further depicts that 57.3 percent of these respondents were doing labour as daily wagers before migrating to the present destination. There were just 3.4 percent respondents who were involved in rickshaw pulling activities even at their native places.

Visit to Native Place

Nearly one fifth (19.7 percent) have not visited their previous place even once after settling down at Patiala where as the rest 80.3 percent visited in their ancestral place at least once in one year. The data further depicts that of those respondents who visited in their native places more than three fifth (67.8 percent) pay at least two visits annually while about 10percent visit at least three times in one year. The reason cited by them includes meeting family members (41.6 percent), celebrating festivals (24.2 percent) and attending family function like marriages etc. (14.6 percent)

Family Life Aspect

Leisure Time

The data on leisure time activities revealed that 4.7percent rickshaw pullers did not get any leisure time at all, where as 19.5percent get any leisure time. Besides this, a little more than three fourth (75.8 percent) were able to find some time for leisure activities. Of those who find time for leisure time activities, a little less than three fourth (70.9 percent) spend their free time by gossiping with follow rickshaw pullers. A
little more than two fifth (21.0 percent) of these rickshaw pullers finds time to visit religious place like Temples, Gurudwaras, Dargah etc, as the close association of picking and dropping passengers at religious places several times in a day spares time for these pullers to visit these religious places and pay obeisance. 22.5 percent of the respondent pass their spare time while listening to the radio as radio is the one of the common and cheapest mode of entertainment among these rickshaw pullers. Some of these rickshaw pullers also preferred listening news and other information through radio broadcasting due to the fact that many among them are illiterates. A little more than two fifth (40.2 percent) of the respondent spends their time while playing cards while waiting for the passengers. The reason behind this is that playing cards is one of the cheapest modes of leisure time activity and also founds to be most common among the rickshaw pullers. 18.05 percent of rickshaw pullers watch television after completing their daily work at their hideouts. A little more than one tenth (10.1 percent) help their family members in getting the daily house hold job to be done in time. It was interesting to know that 8.6 percent of these rickshaw pullers spend their leisure time while reading newspaper and sharing important news with the follow pullers.

**Relationship Status**

The status of relationship of the rickshaw pullers with their family members, a large number of respondents (82.7 percent) stated that they had good relationship with wives while 76 percent were of the view that the relationship with their children is good. As regards the relationship with their parents 64 percent respondents stated it to be good and similarly with the fellow rickshaw pullers the percentage of such respondents was 65.2 percent. The data further revealed that 84.6 percent respondents from within Punjab had good relations with their wives in comparison to 80.3 percent respondents from outside Punjab. The proportion of respondents enjoying their relationship with their children was 75.8 percent for locals while there was significant difference between the locals and migrant’s number of respondents whose relationship was good with their parents was much higher (77.5 percent) in migrants to that of the locals (53.3 percent).
Birthdays Celebrations

A little more than one fifth (21.2 percent) rickshaw pullers celebrate the occasions like birthdays of their young wards. A part from this, a little more than three fifth (62.5 percent) do not celebrate birthday of their children.

Habit of Watching Movies

The data shows that, a less than two fifth (36 percent) of the total respondents were in habit of watching movies as a source of recreation activity while remaining 64 percent were not in position of watching movies and spending their time and money in this activity. With regard to comparison among the locals and migrants the proportion of migrant rickshaw pullers was higher (53.4 percent) as compare to locals (22.5 percent) who were in habit of watching movies.

Source of Watching Movie

The analysis on the patterns of watching movies revealed that out of the total number (N=146) respondent rickshaw pullers, a little more than half (53.4 percent) of them watch movies on their own televisions while 2.1 percent were watching movies on their own DVD players. 15.1 percent rickshaw pullers were in habit of watching of movies by hiring DVD players and TV's on rent. A little less than three tenth (29.5 percent) rickshaw pullers were watching movies in cinema halls in the city. A comparison between migrants and locals rickshaw pullers the data revealed that the proportion of local rickshaw pullers (78.4 percent) was more than the migrants (40.0 percent) in the category of watching movies on their own TV sets at their residence. The habit of hiring DVD players and TV on rent for watching movies was higher among migrants (18.9 percent) than the locals (7.8 percent). With regard to going to cinema halls for the purpose of watching movies was also found, more common among migrants (38.9 percent) as compare to locals (11.8 percent).
**Purchase of Lottery**

A less than two fifth (35.8 percent) rickshaw pullers were in habit of spending on lotteries while a little more than three fifth (64.2 percent) do not believe in this practice. It was found that the proportion of rickshaw pullers from within Punjab was as high as (38.3 percent) than the migrants (32.6 percent) who were in habit of purchasing lottery tickets.

**Indulgence into Undesirable Habits**

The present study has revealed that the most commonly used drugs among the rickshaw pullers is alcohol habitually consumed by almost two fifth (37.3 percent) respondents in the area of the study. Further the data depicted that smoking, tobacco chewing and use of gutkha was prevalent in alarming proportion among these pullers. As it is evident from the data that more than three fifth (75.8 percent) rickshaw pullers were chewing tobacco as a habit while more than 66 percent were addicted to smoking. Besides this, gutkha was taken by more than 61 percent respondents in the area of study.

The proportion of respondents who were habituated in taking alcohol was higher (43.2 percent) among the Punjab residents in relation to the migrant respondents (29.8 percent). As regards the gutkha consumption the trends were opposite as the percentage of migrants habituated of chewing gutkha was much higher (78.7 percent) than the local respondents (48.5 percent). The patterns of smoking and tobacco chewing did not show a significant difference between the two groups, however, percentage wise it was slightly higher for migrants in both cases.

**Food Habits**

In this regards the findings of the study clearly depicts that almost equal to three fourth (74.2 percent) among the respondent rickshaw puller has no reservations in having vegetarian or non vegetarian food while the rest, a little more than one fourth (25.8 percent) were purely vegetarian. In case of food habits of the wives the rickshaw pullers 53.6 percent were having liking for both vegetarian and non vegetarian foods while 35.8 percent of the wives do not take any non vegetarian food and simply believe in taking vegetarian diet. Among the children the trends were also the same as about
48.4 percent were in habit of taking non vegetarian diet on and often and have no prohibition while eating meat or fish. While 35.3 percent wards of respondent rickshaw pullers were purely vegetarian. The food habits of the parents of the rickshaw pullers showed that a little more than three tenth (31.6 percent) were totally vegetarian whereas 46.7 percent parents of the respondents were happily enjoying both type of food patterns. Despite these trends of more number of people were in habit of taking both type of food i.e. vegetarian and non vegetarian but still quite a significant number were available in the sample ranging from 25 percent to 35 percent who were strictly including vegetarian products only in their day to day food intake.

**Place of Taking Meals**

It is evident that mostly rickshaw pullers take their breakfasts and dinner at their place of living while percentage of rickshaw pullers taking lunch at their home is comparatively less (45.2 percent). The other places were these pullers take their meals are dhaba's and rehri's. Surprisingly quite few of them skip their breakfast (7.4 percent) and lunch (4.4 percent). The data also reveals that the percentage of those taking meals at rehri's was more in comparison to the dhaba's.

**Consumption of Tea**

An overwhelming majority, a little more than nine tenth (90.1 percent) of the sampled respondent rickshaw pullers were habituated of taking tea while it was good to observe that 9.9 percent of them do not drink tea in their daily life. The patterns of tea intake revealed that 27.2 percent of the rickshaw pullers were reported to be taking one to two cups of tea in a day while a little less than two Fifth (39.8 percent) were in habit of consuming three to four cups of tea every day. A little less than one Fourth 23.2 percent consumed tea between five to six cups on an average in a day.

**Health Aspect**

**Common Health Problems among Rickshaw Pullers**

The information collected related to common health problems among rickshaw pullers revealed that almost equal to forth fifth (79.3 percent) of them were having
problems with regards to their back like pains and stiffness of back. Among the respondent rickshaw pullers majority (69.4 percent) were facing the problem of heart palpitation. 67.9 percent of the rickshaw pullers had complaint about joint pains. A little more than two fifth (43.5 percent) were complaining of being tired after short duration of pulling. While a little less than three tenth (28.4 percent) of them were suffering from muscular pains and about one fourth (24.7 percent) had complains of frequent headache while working or after work. With regards to comparison between the locals and migrant rickshaw pullers it was found out that the proportion of migrants suffering from back pain is more (86 percent) than the locals (74 percent). The reason is that migrant rickshaw pullers work for longer hours in day as compared to the natives. The percentage for migrants (67.9 percent) and locals (67.4 percent) rickshaw pullers suffering from joint pain was almost same. While in case of rickshaw pullers suffering from muscle pain the proportion of migrants (42.7 percent) invariably higher than the locals (17.2 percent). The problem of joint pain was common among the both sections of rickshaw pullers. The percentage of rickshaw pullers having joint pains among the migrants is 68.5 percent while 67.4 percent for the locals.

**Any Disease Rickshaw Pullers Suffered in Last One Year**

More than two fifth (44.0 percent) respondents had faced heat strokes and skin problems like rashes, sun burns, allergies and other skin infections due to the unhealthy climatic conditions especially in summer. While, a little more than three tenth (30.1 percent) had got any sort of major and minor injuries during the course of their daily work. The occurrence of digestive related problems was reported by 12.1 percent respondent rickshaw pullers. A part from this, a little more than one tenth (10.6 percent) rickshaw pullers suffered from chest congestions and respiratory disease like cough, cold, allergies etc. Along with this 3.2 percent rickshaw pullers were bed ridden for few days in last one year due to malaria.

**Place of Taking Treatment**

It was found that, a little less than three fourth (72.1 percent) of them dependent on only prescription given by the medical store owners which are many times not
qualified enough to give a proper diagnosis and treatment to these rickshaw pullers. The data also depicts that about little less than one fourth (22.0 percent) took the treatment from government hospitals as these pullers finds Government hospitals as only suitable and cheap place having specialized doctors for their treatment whereas a few of them also consulted Registered Medical practitioners (RMP's) (2.7 percent) besides Vaids and Hakims (3.2 percent).

Weather/ Season Good for Rickshaw Pulling

The information revealed that the summer season remained as favorite for maximum work output for more than three fifth (62.6 percent) respondents. As regards the winter season more than one fifth (22.5 percent) respondents preferred winter season for working. According to their opinion the winters are better because during lower temperatures they don’t sweat and can work for longer hours. For 15.3 percent of respondent’s rainy season was stated to be a better season for rickshaw pulling because during rains people preferred hiring rickshaw to avoid getting drenched.

Use of Contraceptive

The data clearly showed that only 4.4 percent of them were using condoms during intercourse as a method of contraception and also as a preventive measure for safer sex practices while 72.6 percent of respondents rickshaw pullers do not use condoms in their day to day sexually practices. A part from this, a little less than one fourth (23.1 percent) do not respond to this query made by the researcher. The comparison revealed that 7.5 percent of the local pullers were in habit of using condom as a method of contraceptive while among migrants there was just only one such rickshaw puller.

Visit to Commercial Sex Workers

It was found that only 5.2 percent of the rickshaw pullers on and often visit commercial sex workers to pacify their sexual derives as many of them were married and living without their wives. It was heartening to know that 72.6 percent of them
responding in affirm 'No' to this enquiry made by the researcher. A part from this a little more than two fifth (22.2 percent) do not give any response to this enquiry and preferred to remain mum. The comparison drawn between migrant and local rickshaw pullers further revealed that the proportion of migrants (7.9 percent) was high as compare to locals (3.1 percent), who were in habit of visiting commercial sex workers.

**Awareness about HIV/AIDS and STD**

The data showed that a subsequent proportion of sampled rickshaw pullers (5.4 percent) were fully aware about the broader areas of HIV/AIDS. The proportion of rickshaw pullers who were 'fully aware' was higher among migrants (7.3 percent) as compare to the locals (4.0 percent). In the second category of awareness 'Partially aware', the proportion of sampled rickshaw pullers was as high as 70.1 percent. The level of awareness about AIDS was low among rickshaw pullers who had migrated from other states (64.6 percent) as compare to the locals (74.4 percent). Surprisingly, about one fourth (24.4 percent) rickshaw pullers do not know about the HIV/AIDS. This proportion was high among the migrants (28.1 percent) as compare to the local (21.6 percent) rickshaw pullers.

**Working Conditions**

The findings of the present study reveal that the working, housing as well as financial conditions of the respondent rickshaw pullers were quite unsatisfactory. Majority of them were not able to meet their ends through their day to day earnings.

**Ownership Status of Rickshaw**

The study found that of out of total (405) sampled respondent rickshaw pullers, the majority (67.9 percent) owned rickshaws while about one third (32.1 percent) hired rickshaw on daily rent to earn their livelihood. Only 16.3 percent Punjab domiciles were plying rickshaws in the streets of Patiala city by hiring the vehicle on rent while about more than half (52.2 percent) of the migrants do not have their own rickshaws. With regard to ownership, the situation of the Punjab domiciles was far better than the
migrant rickshaw pullers as from “within Punjab” category, more than four fifth (83.7 percent) owned rickshaws in comparison to 47.8 percent of the migrants.

**Daily Earnings**

The data with regard to daily earnings depicts the dismal picture as the very small proportion (1.7 percent) were able to earn more than Rs. 200, the rest of all earned only less then Rs. 200 in a day. For a great majority (72.8 percent) the earnings were between Rs 100 and 150.

**Daily Hours Spend in Rickshaw Pulling**

Majority (45.9 percent) of the rickshaw pullers work for on average, 8 to 10 hours daily. In the sample 34.8 percent worked for 10 to 12 hours in a day. From within Punjab, a little more than three fifth (60.4 percent) respondents were working for 8 to 10 hours in a day where as this proportion much less than (27.5 percent) in case of the migrants, but it is clear from the data that 63.5 percent of the migrants plied for 10-12 hours daily in comparison to 12.3 percent of the Punjab domiciles. The data showed that for a little more than, three fifth (60.2 percent) morning time is very productive as far as earnings are concerned, while for 28.9 percent evening time is also very beneficial.

**Daily Average Distance Travelled (in Kms)**

The data analysis revealed that almost half (49.9 percent) of the sampled rickshaw pullers were pulling rickshaw up to the distance of 40 to 50 km in a day, while 39 percent rickshaw pullers were covering up to 30 to 40 km. This clearly depicts that almost 80 percent of them has to cover a distance from 30 km to 50 km to earn their daily livings.

**Reasons behind Joining Rickshaw Pulling**

The data showed that 80 percent of the respondents had been pushed into this activity due to their sheer poverty while a little less than three fourth 73.6 percent sighted unemployment as one of the reason for joining this work. More than half (51.1
percent) of the total respondents lacks any special skills for doing any other job. Another push factor which was highlighted during the survey was availability of less wages and earnings at the native place as compared to the present destination and work (68.6 percent). A little more than four fifth (81.2 percent) finds this job to be productive as they can earn more than the other jobs available in the informal sector. A little more than three fourth (75.8 percent) had sighted easy entry into this work as one of the reason behind joining this work as rickshaw pulling. More than 70 percent of the respondents were of the view that one of the reasons for opting rickshaw pulling is that the timing for plying rickshaw are according to their own convenience. A little less than half (48.1 percent) finds rickshaw pulling as full time job and can earn well as majority of these rickshaw pullers were illiterate, unemployed and also lacks special skills for doing other jobs.

**Regular Passengers/Customers**

A little more than one fourth (25.9 percent) respondents rickshaw pullers were having their permanent/regular passengers while a little less than three fourth (74.1 percent) do not have any such customer/passenger but they are solely dependent on the availability of daily clients to procure their daily earnings. Out of the total number of respondent rickshaw pullers (N=105), a little less than three fifth (58.1 percent) of them were having school children as their daily permanent passengers while (22.9 percent) rickshaw pullers provide their services on regular basis to the teachers. 11.5 percent rickshaw puller has employees as their permanent passengers. About 7.6 percent of the respondent rickshaw pullers were also having old persons as their permanent customers.

**Trade Union Aspects**

The awareness regarding the trade unions showed that majority (73.3 percent) of the pullers were not aware of any trade union operating in the Patiala. From within Punjab 70 percent of them were not aware of any union made for rickshaw pullers in the city, while from the migrants rickshaw pullers, this proportion was even larger (77.5 percent). More than 89.3 percent of the respondents either said ‘No’ (52.3 percent) or
refused to give any response (37.0 percent) when asked about what the trade unions are doing for their welfare.

**Working Conditions**

With regard to the level of satisfaction regarding working conditions, nearly three fourth (73.1 percent) replied in the affirmative. The major reasons for dissatisfaction stated by 26.9 percent respondents were misbehaviour of the Municipal Corporation staff, traffic police and even the passengers at a time.

**Risk of Accident**

Just as any other vehicle, rickshaws are quite prone to accidents, on this aspects (60.7 percent) rickshaw pullers suggested that there were a lot of accident risks involved in this job. From outside Punjab category a little more than four fifth (82.0 percent) respondents suggested that there were lots of risk of accident involved in rickshaw pulling. For migrants this proportion was almost half (44.1 percent) to that the outside Punjab category.

**Type of Other Work than Rickshaw Pulling**

In the present sample as only 9.4 percent of them worked additionally. Among them a majority (55.3 percent) were doing labour in grain market during the season while in the remaining days they pulled rickshaws to support their families. 13.2 percent of them worked as security guards during night and pulled rickshaws during daytime, whereas 10.5 percent of these rickshaw pullers also worked as mechanics.

**Safety Equipments on Rickshaw**

It was found that 67.9 percent respondents were ignorant about the mandatory availability of bell on the rickshaw while about 40.0 percent did not knew anything about reflectors where as more than 30 percent did not have such knowledge about the mudguards and equal proportion was ignorant about the rear view mirror. The data indicated that the more than three fifth (67.5 percent) respondents were aware about the
mandatory installation of rear view mirror and almost equal proportion (63.5 percent) knew about the mudguards and 47.40 percent has information about the installation of the reflectors. As regards to the availability of rear view mirror the percentage of rickshaws was 60 percent while the rickshaws without mudguards were about 56 percent. The rickshaws without bell were as high as 76 percent while without reflectors were more than 68 percent.

**Living Conditions**

The information related to the type and condition of dwelling they live, along with this the facilities available at the place of living have been examined. Having general perception in the mind as well as highlighted by the several research studies that the overall living conditions of rickshaw pullers is not satisfactory. The majority of them do not have basic minimum facilities at their living places. Due to lack of proper space to live, water and sanitation and unhealthy and unhygienic living conditions make these rickshaw pullers more vulnerable to ill health which results into loss of working days and extra expenditure on getting medical aid to resume the work again.

**Ownership Status of House among Rickshaw Pullers**

The data in the table reflects that, a little less than two fifth (39.0 percent) rickshaw pullers were having their own houses while the remaining, a little more than three fifth (61.0 percent) were living in the rented accommodation in the city. The further breakup of the data reveals that the rickshaw pullers who were living in rented accommodations among them there were 15.6 percent living with others by pooling the rent and remaining 45.4 percent had hired the place for living alone or along with their family. A little more than three fifth (62.1 percent) of local rickshaw pullers were having their own house while in comparison this proportion is very less (9.6 percent) among migrant pullers. As regards the migrants more than half (55.6 percent) were living in the rented accommodations whereas just about one tenth (9.6 percent) had their own houses in the city. Rest 34.8 percent migrants were living in pooled accommodations.
Type of Accommodation in Patiala

There were around 56.8 percent respondents who were living in the houses made up of bricks and having concrete roof and floors. The rest of the rickshaw pullers were living either in mixed or kachha houses. A little more than one tenth (13.3 percent) of rickshaw pullers were living in jhuggies.

Availability of Basic Facilities in the House

The information collected with regards to basic facilities at the living space of rickshaw pullers shows that only 37.5 percent were having approved electricity connections. The proportion of local rickshaw pullers having proper electricity connection in their dwelling is larger (56.4 percent) as compared to the migrants (13.5 percent). In regard to water connection, this was highlighted that only 41.5 percent of the respondent were availing this facility and rest 58.5 percent had made their other arrangement to fulfill the requirement of water from other sources like hand pump, filling water from neighbourhood, common tape at the community corners or from religious places. The data showed that great majority (71.6 percent) respondent rickshaw pullers had reported that they were not having the provision of sewerage connection at the place of their habitation. Apart from this, almost about two fifth (39.5 percent) were not having any toilets at their house. More than half (50.9 percent) were not having separate kitchen facilities at their living place. The data further shows that quite a fewer number (3.5 percent) rickshaw pullers were having any extra place or room to store their belongings and other goods whereas overwhelming (96.5 percent) proportion were not having such facility at their living places.


Workers in the unorganized sector are characterized by low level of unionization and lack of social security and welfare provisions. Almost all of these workers in this sector remain unprotected by the various labour welfare and social security legislations. According to NCEUS (2007) only 0.4 percent of the workers in the informal sector are getting benefits under the existing social security schemes. The situation is not very
different as regards the welfare provisions as well. There are number of social security and welfare provisions which directly or indirectly govern the informal sector workers. Despite the fact, there is no special provisions laid down by the Central and State government to protect the rickshaw pullers in the state of distress.

**Welfare Facilities**

The analysis of the suggestions of the respondents revealed that a huge majority (79.3 percent) wanted to have better medical facilities for them for their usual health problems. An almost equal proportion of the rickshaw pullers (79 percent) suggested that government/municipal corporation should make sufficient arrangements for them for night shelters. A little less than, three fourth (72.1 percent) rickshaw puller had thrust on the need of providing training to them about the road safety norms. About 66.4 percent of the respondents were of the view that there should be provisions for free legal and advocacy services available to these rickshaw pullers in wake of accidents, confiscations’ and other related issue. Besides this, the majority (62.7 percent) of them had expressed the need for provisions related to the insurance cover for both rickshaw and rickshaw puller. Apart from this, a little more than three fifth (62.2 percent) rickshaw pullers had express their desire that the district administration along with NGOs and civil societies should make efforts to make these rickshaw pullers educate and aware about the rules, regulations, safety norms etc. While giving their suggestions many (42.2 percent) had express their concern for availability of easy financial mechanism

**Welfare provisions**

Overall situation on welfare aspects was not very good as only small percentage (4.4 percent) respondents were getting the benefits under the public distributive system of the Government. Similarly, about a little more than one third (37.5 percent) respondents were getting subsidized electricity and about 41.5 percent were subsidized water. The trends were, by and large, similar across the natives and the migrant rickshaw pullers. The facility of training was being availed by just 4.4 percent rickshaw pullers.
Social Security Provisions

The governmental provisions for social security particularly for rickshaw pullers were negligible. Nevertheless, some of the rickshaw pullers were getting benefits from social security provisions made by the Government for the general population like Old Age Pension, Girl child Allowance, Girl Marriage Benefits, Loan Facilities and so on. The perusal of the data indicates that only a handful of rickshaw pullers in the area of study were availing Insurance Cover (2.2 percent), Loan facility (2.0 percent) and Old Age Pension (1.7 percent).

Social Work Intervention

The primary concern of the social work profession is towards the enablement of individuals, families and groups by capacity building and strength efficacy of social institutions. The scope of social work intervention has been highlighted in the areas of family, conditions of work, living condition besides addressing the issues relating to the legislative provisions. In the backdrop of the mandate of the professional social work, some of the intervention strategies used to improve the plight of the rickshaw pullers included awareness generation, sensitization, advocacy, laisioning and networking in the areas of health, education, diet and nutrition including HIV/ AIDS, working rights, drug de-addiction and road safety. Extension lectures, documentaries, posters, sensitization drives, health check up camps, education and information dissemination were the main strategies adopted for the Intervention. The details have been presented in the preceding chapter on social work Intervention.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings, 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 rickshaw should be registered like registration for other vehicles.
➢ Separate tracks for Non Motorized Vehicles like cycle and rickshaws to be constructed.

➢ The Clause of 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 subject to the fitness and willingness of the puller. Besides this, it should be as the rules and regulation 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 pullers himself should be the owner of a rickshaw and person cannot own more than one rickshaw or fleet of rickshaw like in 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 the light of environment 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 loked 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 on the vehicles thus exposing them to illness and exploitation and at times robbery by anti social elements.

➢ Special identity card should be issued to the rickshaw pullers by the municipal authorities bearing the photo and all the particulars of rickshaw puller mentioning his present and native place addresses.

➢ Life insurance rickshaw puller along with the insurance of 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 about importance of health and hygiene during these free medical check-up camps.

➢ District administration should made efforts to sensitize rickshaw pullers about family planning, modes of contraceptive and also about STDs, HIV/AIDs by organizing awareness generating drives in collaboration with reflective NGOs, civil society organizations, social workers etc. as majority of them are illiterate, poor and migrants who work as daily wagers and has time constrains in getting existing service.

➢ Rickshaw pullers should be made aware about the road safety norms by organizing training camps by district administration.

➢ Drugs, drinking alcohol, chewing of tobacco and smoking are common among rickshaw pullers and as an endeavor 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 above products on the health.

➢ A registered and elected rickshaw union should be established so that they can act as pressure group 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 rickshaw.

➢ 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 contribution from each owner and puller and that amount must be utilized for their overall
benefits like construction of low cost houses, providing education, health and basic minimum facilities to attain decent standard of living.

In the light of 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 quality life of rickshaw pullers in the State. Academia, union leaders of the rickshaw pullers should be involved in the process of making welfare policy.