



Socio-Economic Status Of Rickshaw Pullers(Cycle) : A Case Study In Berhampur of Odisha

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Abstract

Rickshaw is a means of transportation for the people of Berhampur. The work has been conducted to know the socio-economic conditions of rickshaw pullers in Berhampur . It has also been observed that a significant number of rickshaw pullers worked hard to survive as their daily needs. The study has observed that most of the rickshaw pullers' savings are very little and most of the rickshaw pullers are found poor rural people, illiterate and daily commuters. To study the socio-economic conditions, several variables have been considered i.e., , Religion, Age, Marital Status, Level of Education, Income, Expenditure, Savings, and health conditions. Data have collected through field survey from the different areas of Berhampur, like Kotpeta Chhaka, Annapuna Market ,Church Road, Bada Bazar ,Gate Bazar and so on.

Keywords: Rickshaw puller, socio-economic status, education, and income

Introduction

The term "rickshaw" is derived from the Japanese word "Jin-riki-sha," which means "human-powered carriage."¹ Japanese sources often credit Izumi Yosuke, Suzuki Tokujiro and Takayama Kosuke invented rickshaws in 1868, at the beginning of the Meiji Restoration.² Rickshaw pullers are one of the poorest sections of the society, living in abysmal poverty. A significant number of rickshaw pullers worked hard to survive as their daily needs. Most of them work more than 8 hours daily. Most of the rickshaw pullers come out in 8 a.m. in the morning and go home late evening. Rickshaw pullers hire their rickshaws from the owners on the basis of daily rent ranging from 30 to 45 per day but earn only 150 to 300 per day. The cost of a new rickshaw is around 17,000/- which is not possible to buy a new rickshaw as most of the rickshaw pullers belong to low income group in the society and they don't have any other means of income other than rickshaw pulling . Rickshaws have been used as a means of transportation for social elite, but they play an important role in the 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 driven comfortably. They are perhaps the sole mode of transportation that offers point-to-point travel.³ Rickshaw pullers are the most disadvantaged section of the people who are involved in transportation activities in order to meet their means of livelihood, because pulling of rickshaw is a menial and hazardous occupation.⁴ The term 'Income' refers to wages, salaries, profits, rents, and any flow of earnings received. Other sources of income include Unemployment Allowances, social security benefits, pensions, gratuity, house rent allowance, medical allowance, interests or dividends, royalties, and others perquisites⁵.

Rickshaw pullers are deprived and exploited sections which are not recognized in policy document by the government and very little attention has been paid them. Therefore, It is necessary to elicit the relevant information regarding their demographic characteristics, socio-economic conditions and health status of rickshaw pullers .

Objectives

1. To understand socio-economic status of rickshaw pullers in Berhampur .
2. To study health conditions of rickshaw pullers in Berhampur .
3. To recommend some suggestions for the well being of these rickshaw pullers

Research Methodology

The present study is an empirical study based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data, generated through field survey and direct questionnaire from 80 respondents in Berhampur. This survey was carried out during the month of January 2022. The secondary data has collected from various reports of the Government of India viz., ILO, Economic Review, Municipality office, government reports, journals, and books. Simple percentage analysis has used to interpret the data. A well-structured questionnaire was prepared in order to collect information regarding the socio-economic condition of the workers as well as the health status that they face. The researcher has directly discussed with respondents from their workplace mostly during lunch break, and observed socio economic status of them .

Socio-Economic Background of rickshaw pullers

Table-1 Age Group

Age group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
20-30	8	10
40-40	12	15
40-50	38	47.5
50-60	18	22.5
60 above	4	5
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

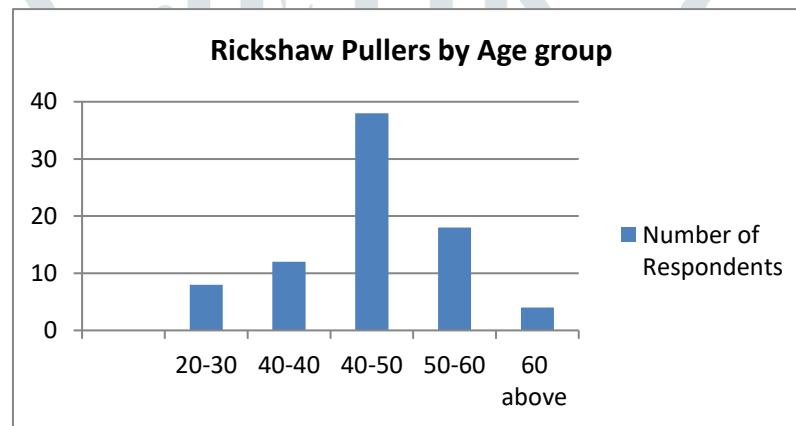


Figure-1

The above table show that 47.5 of the sample respondents are between the age group of 40-50. Majority of rickshaw pullers are above 40 years so they have long period of experience in this field. It indicates that there is inability to find better job at this age, which is primarily due to poor health condition, low education and unable to learn new skills.

Table-2 Caste

Caste	Number of Respondents	Percentage
General	08	10
Sc	57	71.25
Obc	15	18.75
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

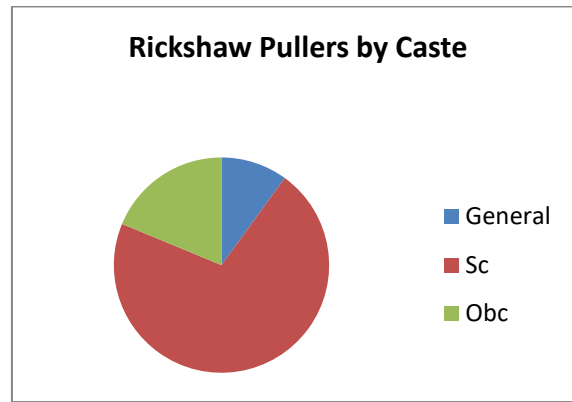


Figure-2

Looking at the above table it is clear that 18.75 percent of respondents are from the OBC category, 71.25 percent are from the SC category and 10% from general category. The study also finds that majority of rickshaw pullers are from OBS and SC categories. The study makes it clear that said respondents are not having any alternative work and bound to opt for rickshaw pulling work .

**Table – 3
Religion**

Religion	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Hindu	72	90
Muslim	07	8.75
Others	01	1.25
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

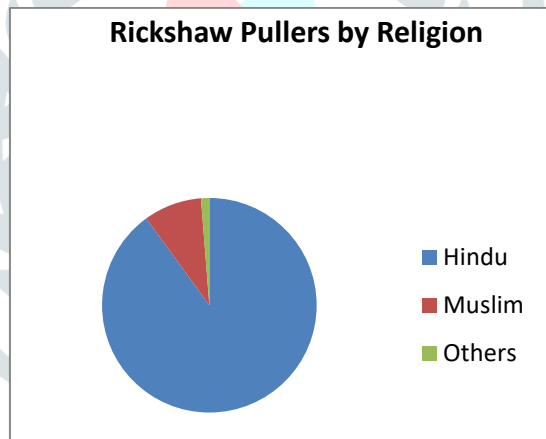


Figure-3

Table 3 shows that the religion of the sample respondents. Out of total, 90% respondents are Hindus, 8.75 % are Muslims and the rest are other categories. The table also reveals that the majority of the respondents are Hindus.

Table-4 Educational Qualification

Educational level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	08	10
Primary	52	65
10 th passed	19	23.75
Higher Secondary	1	1.25
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

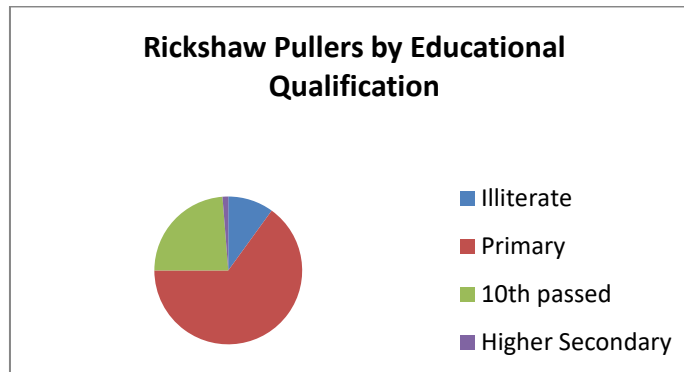


Figure-4

The main attraction to rickshaw pulling work is which never demands a particular education qualification. The study concludes that there is only one rickshaw puller with an educational qualification of higher secondary. The higher secondary qualified persons turn to the rickshaw pulling is due to the hereditary in nature and lack of employment. The majority of rickshaw pullers have studied up to 10th. This may be one of the reasons to become rickshaw puller.

Table – 5 Percentage Distribution of **Marital Status** of rickshaw pullers

Marital status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Married	64	80
Unmarried	07	8.75
Widow	09	11.25
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

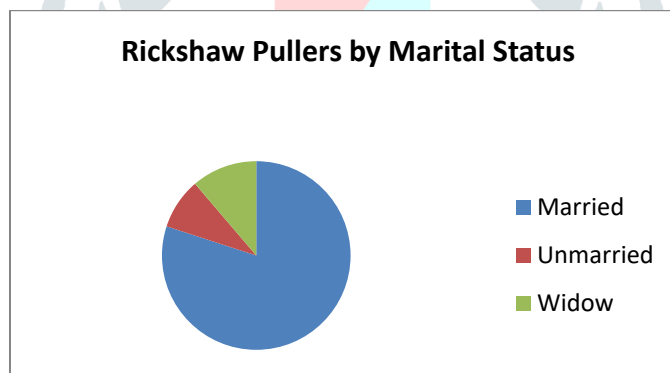


Figure-5

According to the above table majority of the respondents are married. That is out of total respondents, 80 % are married. The lowest number 8.75 % respondents are unmarried and 11.25 % respondents are widowed.

Table – 6 **Family Size** of respondents

Family Size	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1 - 5 (Small)	64	80
6 - 9 (Medium)	14	17.5
More than 9 (Large)	2	2.5
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

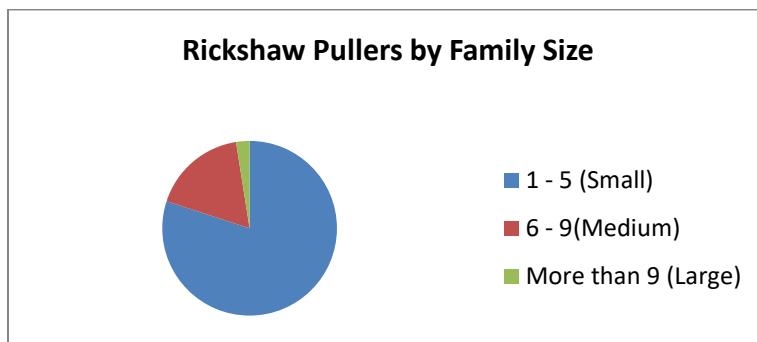


Figure-6

From the facts of the above table it is known that maximum number of family members of 80% of the respondents is between 1-5 (small size)and 17.5 %-of the family members are between 6 - 9 (Medium size), 2.5 % of the number of family members of the respondents is more than 9 members (large size).

**Table-7
Monthly Incomes of rickshaw pullers**

Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1000-3000	10	12.5
3001-5000	59	73.75
5001-7000	11	13.75
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

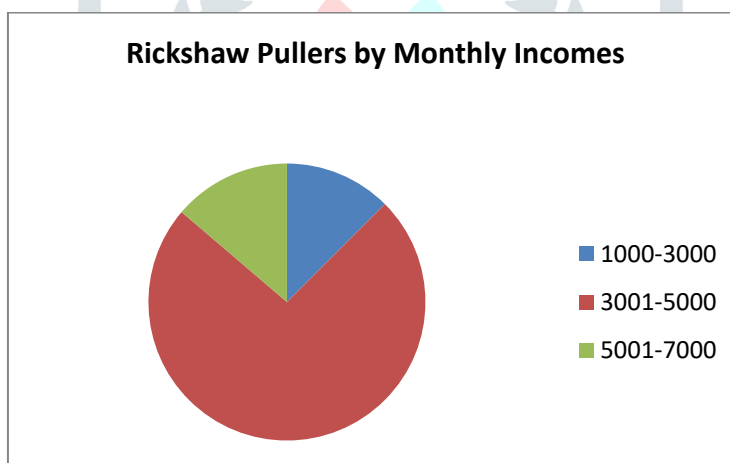


Figure-7

Table 7 discloses monthly incomes earn by rickshaw pullers. The maximum 73.75% of respondent’s monthly income is between 3001 to 5000. 12.5 % of rickshaw pullers earn monthly income between1000-3000 while 13.75 % of rickshaw pullers earn only rupees 5001-7000. It can be conclude that due to weak bargaining power, rickshaw pullers do not get fair wages according to their work in unorganized sector.

Table: 8 Monthly Expenditures of rickshaw pullers

Expenditures	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1000-3000	1	1.25
3001-5000	11	13.75
5001-7000	55	68.75
7001-9000	13	16.25
9001and above	-----	---
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

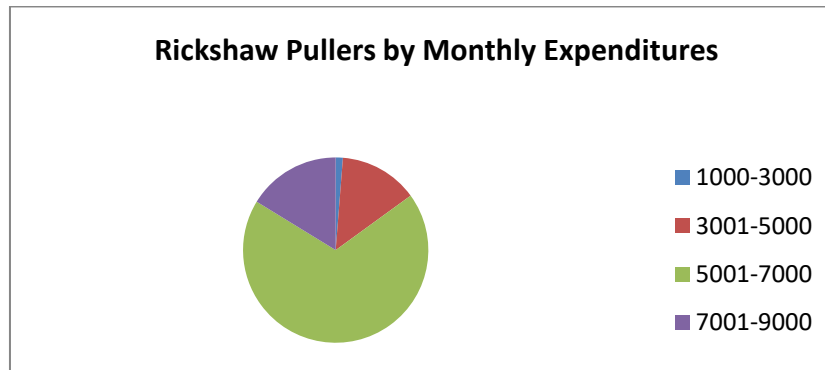


Figure-8

Table 8 shows monthly expenditure of the respondents. Out of total, 1.25% respondent monthly expenditure has between 1000-3000, 13.75% respondents have 3001-5000, and 68.75% respondents have monthly expenditure between 5001-7000 and 16.25 percent respondents do expenditure between 7001-9000, because due to the low wages and having no other source of income, the status of monthly expenditure of rickshaw pullers is low.

Table.9 Mode Of Saving

SCHEMES	Number of Respondents	Percentage
No savings	61	76.25
Bank	02	2.5
Post office	04	5
Shopkeepers	07	8.75
Rikshwa owners	06	7.5
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

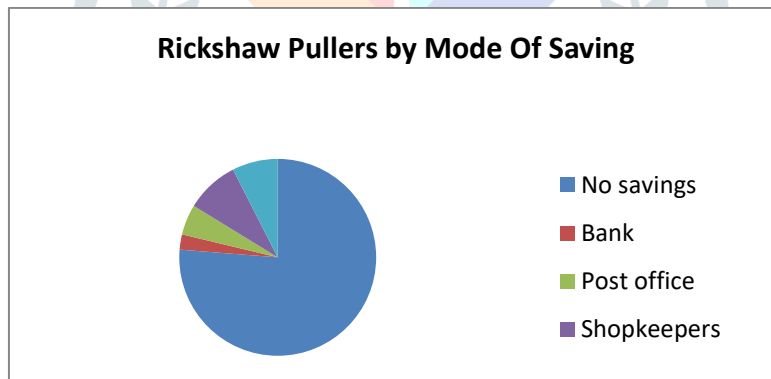


Figure-9

It can be observed from table -9 that majority 76.25 percent of rickshaw pullers not save any amount of money because they get minimum amount of money to meet their daily needs. Only 2.5percent of rickshaw pullers deposit amount in bank and 5 percent deposit in post office. Out of total , 8.75 percent of rickshaw pullers deposit amount in Shopkeepers and 7.5 deposit in Rikshaw owners. In the study area majority of the rickshaw pullers are not using online banking services but they visit bank to deposit and withdraw their amounts itself.

Table – 10 Details of health problem of rickshaw pullers

Disease	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Cough and cold	23	28.75
Diabetes	03	3.75
Anaemia	04	5
Gynaecological Problem	16	20
High/Low Blood Pressure	04	5

Asthma	10	12.5
Back /Joint pains/chest pain	18	22.5
Allergy/Skin diseases	02	2.5
No disease	-----	
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

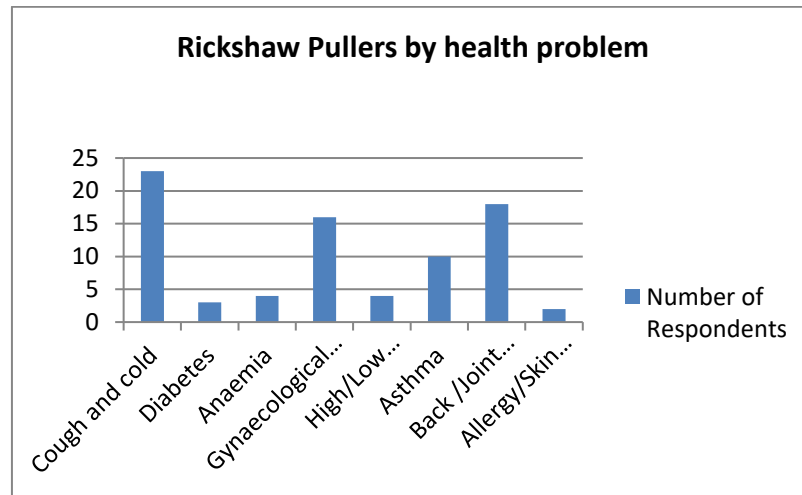


Figure-10

The table-10 indicates health issues of the rickshaw pullers. Majority 28.75 percent of the rickshaw pullers have cough and cold. The problem of joint, back, and chest pains are very common among the rickshaw pullers, their proportion suffered by these diseases have been recorded 22.5 percent. In addition, 12.5 percent of them have asthma, 9 percent tuberculosis and gastroenteritis and 3.75 percent reported that they have the diseases like diabetes, blood pressure and stone in gall bladder. From the study it is very clear that all of the respondents are suffering from one or the other diseases.

Major findings:

- Majority of rickshaw pullers are above 40 years so they have long period of experience in this field. Lowest 10% respondents are in the age group of 20-30. Which shows that the participation of young generation is low in rickshaw pulling. Mostly middle-aged men are engaged in these work.
- Majority of respondents (71.25 %) are from Schedule Caste. Most of them are from *pano* Caste .Only 10%from general category.
- Out of 80 respondents, there is only one rickshaw pullers with an educational qualification of higher secondary. . The majority of rickshaw pullers have studied up to 10th . It shows the literacy rate among rickshaw puller is average.
- 8.75% respondents are unmarried while 80% respondents are married. Which shows the high participation of married men in pulling work.
- Majority of Respondent's (49.17%) family size is between 1-5 and 2.5% respondents' family size is more than 9 members. Which shows that most respondents live in nuclear family.
- Majority of respondents (73.75%) monthly income is between 3001-5000 and 12.5% respondents' income is less than 3000. Which shows the average monthly income of them is very low.
- All of the respondents suffer from health-related diseases due to intense physical labour and inadequate nutritional food.

Conclusion

Overall, the study shows that the rickshaw pullers are one of the poorest sections of the society, living in abject poverty but play a pivotal role in transportation system. Cycle rickshaws are eco-friendly and they have helped to reduce pollution in the environment. Neither their working conditions nor their problems with social security are addressed. Their key challenges include Unemployment, low income, borrow, , sanitation and health issues and unsatisfactory fare etc.

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