Socio-Economic Status in Private Taxi Drivers in Punjab, North India

Dr. Lalita K. Sharma, Assistant Professor
Department of Management
Pyramid College of business & Technology, Phagwara

Dr. Sanjay Kumar Das (Corresponding Author)
Assistant Professor (Senior Scale)
Department of Economics, Purnea Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Purnea

Dr. Nidhi Bhagat, Assistant Professor
Mittal School of Business, LPU Phagwara
Nidhi.bhagat1523@gmail.com

Dr .Archna, Associate professor
Mittal school of business, LPU phagwara

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study aimed at examining the socio-economic status of taxi drivers in Punjab, North India. Punjab is a developed area where people are used to hire taxies. The major cities of Punjab were taken as Amritsar (tourist come to see Golden Temple/Harmandir Sahib), Ludhiana (Textile Hub) and Jalandhar. Public transport is not comfortable and, due to having less time, business class people and tourists prefer to hire taxi, which are more convenient for them to travel. As a result, many people now make a living from driving taxis. Therefore, the researchers decided to investigate the socio-economic standing of private taxi drivers.

Methodology: Employing a random sampling technique, 300 taxi drivers' data was gathered using a research schedule. In order to understand more about the socioeconomic standing of taxi drivers, an analysis was conducted on the data that was gathered.

Results: Results showed that the socio-economic status of taxi drivers is poor. They enjoy poor and miserable living conditions and lack the basic amenities of life. They are in debt and don't have any social security.

Recommendations: There is great need that taxi owners and the government should take serious initiatives to improve the lives of private drivers who are not covered under any social security law.

Key words: Socio-economic status, taxi drives, Punjab and Health challenges.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

India is experiencing urbanization now. Big cities have a well-established metro bus facility and trains as well. Due to fast urbanization, people transferring in the cities are increasing swiftly. The public transport system seems inadequate and insufficient to cater to the needs of the population due to the fast life pace. Public transport system do not seems to cater the needs of people of all the socio-economic groups because every group has different needs. Another factor i.e. time is also very important factor that affects the choice of mode of transportation. People go for taxi services as they find them more comfortable, flexible and planned in many ways, such as routes, timings, destinations etc. and taxies pick and drop at the door. Taxies are found to be convenient and accessible. Taxies can be hired easily, mostly near the railway stations and bus stands. The transport companies open their offices near the bus stands and railway stations so that it

can be easy for passengers to hire a taxi and owners can get customers easily. In the cities like Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar as the number of taxies are also very high due to large number of tourists and businesses coming to make their deals. So, getting a taxi is always an easy task in these cities.

Taxi drivers play an imperative role in big cities in India. Taxies supplement the public transportation to a great extent. Many people get into this occupation with hope to support the families in a better way and to earn a handful amount to secure the lives of dependents and own. However, the lives of auto drivers are one of financial struggle with low earnings and savings. Therefore, the present study is planned to examine the socio-economic status and health related issues of private taxi drivers.

1.1 Need of the study

A person's or family's place in society can be described by their socioeconomic status (SES), which is a complicated notion. Three levels are frequently distinguished: high, middle, and low. Numerous factors, such as income, education, career, living conditions, and resources, can influence a person's socioeconomic status. Due to their working conditions, taxi drivers may have a variety of health issues, such as irregular schedules, shift work, and bad posture.

A large number of studies have been conducted on driving profession. But most of the studies are on auto-rickshaw operators and truck drivers. So, the present study is conducted on private taxi drivers who are always remain on the road day and night for meager income but their importance always ignored by researchers. Because of their function in transportation networks, taxi drivers are a crucial population for studies on road safety.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lisa et. al. (2018) found that majority of respondents (70%) were not accorded a sufficient social position. People disrespect, mistreat, and have a negative opinion of drivers, which results in job dissatisfaction. It was found that almost half (40%) of the respondents said that their monthly income of Rs. 3000 to Rs. 6000 is insufficient to support them and their families, in particular, they find it difficult to manage even their basic needs, and as a result, the majority of auto drivers (70%) receive debt from family members or financial office owners. The study also revealed that all (100%) of the respondents reported that they have experienced a variety of health issues related to their jobs, including piles, stress, respiratory issues, eye sight problems, and heart diseases.

Arunraja (2015) stated in the past, society was divided into upper, middle, and working classes based on socioeconomic grouping. Socioeconomic background encompasses all aspects of income, profession, culture, religious beliefs, family relationships, and standard of living. An individual with a higher income than others and a high-ranking profession, such as an engineer, doctor, or judge, has a high status. Socioeconomic status refers to the social class in which an individual is a member.

According to Rajesh Ranjan (2015), he conducted a study among drivers and found that they had health issues. "In the context of rapid economic growth, health disparities can play a significant role in bringing attention to the health of socioeconomically vulnerable groups in India," he says. It can monitor the efficacy of health programs and influence the conversation for public health action by highlighting the need for increased health spending. Our goal was to investigate the health issues that auto drivers face. Several studies have found that when people lack the funds to pay for treatment, they frequently avoid getting it altogether or end up in debt or poverty while attempting to do so. One of the main reasons people did not seek care when they were ill was low finances.

Bawa and Srivastav (2013) also found that approximately 65 per cent of cab drivers were between the ages of 21 and 40. The majority of cab drivers (59 per cent) were from lower socioeconomic classes.

In nutshell, a number of studies show that risks and crisis situations due to low level of health security are endemic for auto drivers. The working conditions are the main cause to have an adverse effect on the health conditions of auto drivers. Low nutritional intake due to low income, constant physical about increases health problems to the auto drivers Lack of resources to pay for the health care often forces the poor workers either to forego it or become indebted. Most of studies reported health problems mainly related to respiratory due to inhalation of the tobacco dust and body ach due to the peculiar posture that has to be maintained at all times of work. Thus, in this research the researcher studied the socio-economic and health challenges of auto drivers.

3.0 DATABASE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives of the Paper
- To study the socio-economic status of private taxi drivers;
- To know the perception of taxi drivers about the Role of Taxi Union;
- To know the types of social security scheme available to taxi drivers; and
- To assess the health problems faced by family members due to poor socio-economic status of taxi drivers

3.2 Data collection and analysis
The primary data was collected from 300 taxi drivers in Punjab by research schedules and through observation with random sampling technique. It is basically a descriptive study. Frequency, percentage and Weighted Average Score (WAS) were applied to investigate socio-economic and other issues among private taxi drivers.

4.0   DATA ANALYSIS

4.1   Personal/Demographic Characteristics of Taxi Drivers
The personal and demographic variables, namely age, religion, educational qualification, marital status, nature of family, nature/type of residence, income from all sources, job experience, family size, caste, mode of payment, nature of residence, detail of accommodation, opinion being a union member, origin, assets and liabilities, amount of loan, cost of living, distance between residence and place of work, awareness about labour legislations, number of working hours, facilities at work place, types of social security's , ration received through the PDS system, family members' facing any health problem and chronic decease, hospital they visited for medical treatment etc. are covered in the following discussion.

4.1.1   Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Personal & Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
4.1.1.1 Age wise Distribution of Respondents
Regarding the age distribution of respondents, the age of taxi drivers is regarded as a significant factor that may impact their occupation. In general, young people under 30 years old are more mobile, less burdened by various family and other social responsibilities, and therefore free to move around. Table 2 shows that 24 per cent of respondents are under 30 year age, 26 per cent are between 31 and 40 years old, 22 per cent are between 41 and 50 years old, and the majority (28 per cent), who are over 50 years old.

4.1.1.2 Religion wise Distribution of Respondents

Next important variable in a country like India is religion which plays a very important role in all spheres of life. During the interview, taxi drivers were asked about their faith in religion. The results of the survey are presented in Table 2. It indicates that Hindus and Sikhs were having 42 per cent and 52 per cent shared in the total sample of 300 taxi drivers and remaining 6 per cent comprises Muslim and Christian. The main reason of higher share of the Sikh taxi drivers is due to fact that major share of work force comes from Sikh majority who are also fond of driving.

Driving is also considered better in terms of status as compared to other manual works.

4.1.1.3 Caste wise Distribution of Respondents

Caste is another important factor which has impact on the life of people. The Caste-Wise distribution of the sampled taxi drivers is presented in Table 2 which indicates that out of 300 the major share i.e. 46 per cent of taxi drivers belongs to SC/ST castes, followed by 36 per cent from BC category. Rest (18 per cent) belonged to General category. The distribution of caste reflects that majority of taxi drivers belongs to low caste.

4.1.1.4 Education wise Distribution of Respondents

Another significant factor that affects career choice is education, which is also a vital component of development since it helps people to comprehend their surrounds and environment in particular and to gather knowledge to further their interests. Table 2 presents the level of education among the taxi drivers. The analysis of data indicates that among the taxi drivers the major share i.e. 44 per cent were matric, 32 per cent below matric, 16 per cent reached up to +2, 4 per cent were technical diploma holder and 2 per cent had completed diploma or certificate courses, and only 2 per cent had Graduation degree. So, the analysis of data reveals that the taxi drivers have low level of education.

4.1.1.5 Marital Status and Family Size wise Distribution of the Respondents

Table 4.1.1 further shows that 69.67 per cent taxi drivers were married and rest 30.33 per cent were unmarried. Generally, taxi drivers belonged to those families whose size was relatively large. Table 2 shows the size of the family. The analysis reveals that that 16 per cent families were having up to 2 members, 26 per cent were having 3-4 members, 30 per cent were having 5-6 members and 28 per cent of the taxi drivers belonged to families whose members were more than 6.

4.1.1.6 Type of Family wise Distribution of Respondents

The analysis also reveals that majority of respondents (72 per cent) were living in joint families and only 28 per cent were lived in nuclear families. It further reveals that still family planning programme has not succeeded to motivate the unorganized workers to adopt two children norm. It may be the result of low level of education.

4.1.1.7 Earning Members in the Family wise Distribution of Respondents

The analysis further reveals that majority (26 per cent) of taxi driver responded that there were 4 earning members in their family, followed by 25.67 per cent were having only 2 earning members. While 23.33 per cent taxi driver were having 3 earning members in the family, followed by 25 per cent having single earning member in the family.

4.1.1.8 Monthly Income wise Distribution of Respondents

The analysis further reveals that majority of (49.67 per cent) taxi drivers were having monthly family income of Rs. 5001-10000, followed by 41.33 per cent having below Rs. 5000, followed by 5.33 per cent having Rs. 10001-15000. While only 3.67 per cent of the respondents were having monthly family income above Rs. 15000. So the analysis of income earned by the drivers reveals that majority of them fall in the low income group though this job is considered as a skilled job.

Table 2
Personal and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in yrs) wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Up to 30 years	72	24.00
	31-40 years	78	26.00
	41-50	66	22.00
	Above 50Years	84	28.00
	Total	300	100.00
Religion wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Hindu	126	42.00
	Muslim	12	4.00
	Sikh	156	52.00
	Christen	6	2.00
	Total	300	100.00
Caste wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	BC	108	36.00
	SC/ST	138	46.00
	General	54	18.00
	Total	300	100.00
Education wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Below metric	96	32.00
	Matric	132	44.00
	+2	48	16.00
	Graduation	6	2.00
	Technical Diploma	12	4.00
	Diploma or Certificate Courses	6	2.00
	Total	300	100.00
Marital Status wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Married	209	69.67
	Unmarried	91	30.33
	Total	300	100.00
Family Size wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Up to 2 members	48	16.00
	3-4 Members	78	26.00
	5-6 Members	90	30.00
	Above 6 Members	84	28.00
	Total	300	100.00
Type of Family wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Nuclear Family	84	28.00
	Joint Family	216	72.00
	Total	300	100.00
Earning Members in the Family wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	1 member	75	25.00
	2 members	77	25.67
	3 members	70	23.33
	4 members	78	26.00
	Total	300	100.00
Monthly Family Income-wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Below 5000	124	41.33
	Rs.5001-10000	149	49.67
	Rs 10001-15000	16	5.33
	Above Rs.15001	11	3.67
	Total	300	100.0

Source: Primary Data

4.1.2   Job Related Characteristics of Taxi Drivers

The important job-related characteristics are presented in Table 3. The analysis reveals that Majority (34 per cent) of respondents having driving experience of 6-10 years, followed by 30 per cent

having above 20 years and 20 per cent have 11-15 years. While 16 per cent were having 16-20 years of driving experience.

The taxi drivers were divided into four categories on the basis of monthly income. Table 3 shows that, 42 per cent were getting below Rs. 3000, 50 per cent taxi drivers were earning Rs. 3000-Rs. 5000, 4 per cent taxi drivers were getting monthly salary between Rs. 5000-Rs.8000 and only 4 per cent taxi drivers were getting above Rs. 8000. So, the analysis reveals that majority of respondents falls in low-income category.

The respondents were also asked about mode of payment. Table 3 shows that the majority (82 per cent) of taxi drivers received their payment on monthly basis. While 14.00 per cent and 4 per cent received on daily basis and weekly basis.

The working hour is another important issue. Table 3 revealed that majority (32 per cent) of taxi drivers worked up to 16 hours daily, followed by 30 per cent works up to 12 hours. While 24 per cent of taxi drivers were working up to 8 hours and 14 per cent were working above 16 hours daily. So, the analysis of data reveals that majority of taxi drivers are getting meager salary which compels them to go for longer hours of work to get overtime for their survival.

Table 3
Job Related Characteristics of Taxi Drivers

Job Related Characteristics of Taxi Drivers	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Job Experience (in years) wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	6-10Years	102	34.00
	11-15 Years	60	20.00
	16-20 Years	48	16.00
	Above 20 Years	90	30.00
	Total	300	100.00
Monthly Income wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Below Rs.3000	126	42.00
	Rs. 3000- 5000	150	50.00
	Rs. 5000-8000	12	4.00
	Above Rs. 8000	12	4.00
	Total	300	100.00
Mode of Payment wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Daily basis	42	14.00
	Weekly Basis	12	4.00
	Monthly basis	246	82.00
	Total	300	100.00
Working Hours wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Up to 8 Hours	72	24.00
	Up to 12 hours	90	30.00
	Up to 16 Hours	96	32.00
	Above 16 Hours	42	14.00
	Total	300	100.0
Shift Pattern wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers	Morning	138	46.00
	Night	162	54.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.3   Residence wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers

Table 4 showed the composition of respondents on the basis of native place and place of origin. The analysis of the data reveals that 52 per cent of taxi drivers were from urban area while rest of 48 per cent hails from rural areas. The analysis of data further reveals that majority (74 per cent) of taxi drivers were local and rest (26 per cent) were migrants. Out of 78 migrants, majority (53.84 per cent of 78 respondents who were migrated) of respondents were from other states and rest of them were migrated from rural to urban. Composition of sampled taxi drivers on the basis of place of origin showed that 52 per cent of respondents belonged to urban areas and rests were from rural area. Table 4 further showed the distribution of the taxi drivers on the basis of the place of

their living. The data reveals that 30 per cent of taxi drivers were living in rental houses and 70 per cent were living in their own house. The details of quality of accommodation of the taxi drivers are presented in Table 4 which showed that majority (70 per cent) of the taxi drivers lived in independent houses and 30 per cent were living on sharing basis.

Table 4
Residence wise Distribution of Taxi Drivers

Detail about Residence	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Native Place	Urban Area	156	52.00
	Rural Area	144	48.00
	Total	300	100.00
Origin	Local	222	74.00
	Migrant	78	26.00
	Total	300	100.00
Type of Migration	Rural to Urban	36	46.16
	From other state	42	53.84
	Total	78	100.00
Nature of Residence	Own House	210	70.00
	Rental House	90	30.00
	Total	300	100.00
Accommodation Type	Independent	210	70.00
	Shared	90	30.00
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.4 Quality of Accommodation of Drivers having their Own House

Table 5 shows that 22.86 per cent and 37.14 per cent taxi drivers having own houses have one room and 2 rooms and rest 40 per cent were having 3 or more than 3 rooms. Furthermore, all taxi drivers had separate space for kitchen and toilet. Majority of the respondents were living in Concrete/ pacca houses (made of Bricks).
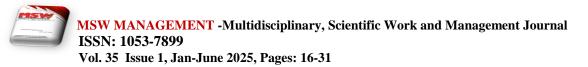
Table 5
Quality of Accommodation of Drivers having their Own House

Detail about Residence	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Number of Rooms	1 Room	48	22.86
	2 Room	78	37.14
	3 Or more than 3 room	72	34.29
	4 Room	12	5.71
	Total	210	100.00
Toilet Facility	Yes	210	100.00
Kitchen Facility	Yes	210	100.00
Material of House	Kutcha house	12	5.71
	Concrete (Bricks)	198	94.29
	Total	210	100.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.5 Quality of Accommodation of Drivers Living in Rental House

The detail of cost of accommodation of the taxi drivers' living in rental houses is presented in Table 6. The analysis shows that 66.67 per cent of taxi drivers were living in rental house paying monthly rent up to Rs.2000 and 33.33 per cent of taxi drivers were paying monthly rent between Rs.2000-Rs.4000. So the taxi drivers who were living in the rental accommodation were paying major part of their monthly income as rent. Furthermore, 53.33 per cent of respondents living in rental houses have one room only, followed by 33.33 per cent having two rooms and rest 13.34 per

cent were having 3 or more than three rooms. Independent toilets facility was available to 83.33 per cent taxi drivers and rest of taxi drivers living in rental independent house share toilet with others. Separate space for kitchen was available to the 86.67 per cent of taxi drivers and rest of 13.33 per cent use a part of their room as a kitchen.

Table 6
Quality of Accommodation of Taxi Drivers Living in Rental Houses

Detail about Residence	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Rent of House	Up to 2000	60	66.67
	2000-4000	30	33.33
	Total	90	100.00
Accommodation Type	Shared	50	55.56
	Independent	40	44.44
	Total	90	100.00
No. of Rooms	1 room	48	53.33
	2 room	30	33.33
	3 or more than 3 rooms	12	13.33
	Total	90	100.00
Toilet Facility	Yes	75	83.33
	Shared	15	16.67
	Total	90	100.00
Kitchen Facility	Yes	78	86.67
	No	12	13.33
	Total	90	100.00
Material of House	Kutcha house	0	00.00
	Concrete (Bricks)	90	100.00
	Total	90	100.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.6   Extent of Trade Unionization among the Taxi Drivers

As the taxi drivers are part of unorganised sector which is subject to different type of exploitation. Table 7 showed that apart from other reasons taxi drivers join a union basically to secure, security of job, good salary and better working conditions. Table 7 further reveals that only13 per cent of the taxi drivers were member of a taxi drivers Union at the time of survey. It implies very low extent of trade unionism among the taxi drivers.

Table 7
Distribution of Respondents by Membership of a Union

Member of any Union	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	39	13.00
No	261	87.00
Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.7   Membership of Union in the Transport Sector

There were six main taxi drivers' unions operating in different units under study as shown in Table 8. The largest percentage of taxi drivers was member of Station Taxi Union i.e. 23.08 per cent. The share of membership of different unions, namely, Golbagh taxi union, Amritsar taxi union, Shahida Sahib Taxi Union, Majitha Road Taxi Union and Chhehrta taxi union was 17.95, 20.52, 15.38, 10.24 and 12.83 per cent respectively. The analysis of data reveals that taxi drivers are also victim of multiple trade unions which is a common problem of Indian trade unionization.

Table 8
Distribution of Union Members by Affiliation

Name of union	Frequency	Percentage
Station Taxi Union	9	23.08
Golbagh Taxi union	7	17.95
Amritsar Taxi union	8	20.52
Chatti vind Taxi Union (Shahida Sahib)	6	15.38
Majitha Road Taxi Union	4	10.24
Chhehrta Taxi union	5	12.83

Source: Primary Data

4.1.8   Distribution of Respondents by Experience as Member of a Union

The extent of participation in the taxi drivers' union activities also depends upon the years of membership of the members concerned. Table 9 shows that 15.40 per cent of the respondents were the member of a union from the last 5-10 years, while 69.20 per cent (69.20 per cent of 13 per cent who were part of Taxi Union) were from the last 10-15 years, 15.40 per cent of respondents were the member of a union from more than 15 years. The socio-economic background of the taxi drivers reveals that they belong to low-income section of the society and working for longer hour than the standard working hours. The existence of such conditions motivates the workers to participate in trade union activities. So, an attempt has been made to know the extent of unionization among the taxi drivers and their level of awareness in regard to trade union activities.

Table 9
Distribution of Respondents by Experience as Member of a Union

Years of Membership	Frequency	Percentage
5-10 years	6	15.40
10-15 years	27	69.20
More than 15 years	6	15.40

Source: Primary Data

4.1.9   Perception of Union Members in Regard to Level of Awareness and Participation in Trade Union Activities

Taxi drivers join the union when there is need and keep away at other times. So, it is difficult to comment on their membership. Table 10 indicates the level of agreement of taxi drivers about the union being a union member. In case of "provides protection to my job" a large majority of (12) taxi drivers were disagreed. However, the Weighted Average Score of 2.67 indicates degree of disagreement on the part of taxi drivers with regard to providing protection to job.

In case of the statement that "it provides protection from all type of exploitation /public" only one (2.50 per cent) were disagreed, 6 taxi drivers neither agreed nor disagreed category, 15 taxi drivers agreed and 14 taxi drivers were strongly agreed to the statement. The Weighted average score of 3.93 on this account clearly indicate a high degree of agreement on the part of taxi drivers.

Furthermore, 10 taxi drivers had shown their agreement to the statement that taxi union make efforts to "provide awareness in regard to the legal problems". While equal number shown their disagreement and 10 per cent fall in the category of strongly agreed. The Weighted Average Score of 2.04 shows that majority of respondents disagreed to the statement that union make them aware about the legal problems.

In case of "it provides help at the time of crises/problem (family/work)" 14 taxi drivers had shown agreement and 11 taxi drivers shown strong agreement with union's role in this regard. The

Weighted average score of 3.67 clearly indicates level of agreement on the part of the taxi drivers that trade union play positive role in solving family problems of the taxi drivers.

Majority of the taxi drivers disagreed with regard to union's role in "improving the working conditions". Again, 7 taxi drivers disagreed to the statement and 2 taxi drivers found strongly disagreed with regard to union's role relating to" improving the working conditions". The WAS of 3.75 showed a level of agreement on the part taxi drivers in regard to improving the working conditions.

Table 10
Perception of Respondents about the Role of Union

Opinion being a Union Member	SA (5)	A(4)	NDNR(3)	D(2)	SD (1)	WAS
It provides protection to my job	5 (12.80)	7 (17.90)	6 (15.40)	12 (30.80)	9 (23.10)	2.61
It provides protection from all type of exploitation.	14 (35.90)	15 (38.50)	6 (15.40)	1 (2.60)	3 (7.70)	3.92
It provides awareness in regard to the legal problems	10 (25.60)	10 (25.60)	4 (10.30)	10 (25.60)	5 (12.80)	2.05
It provides help at the time of crisis (family/work)	11 (28.20)	14 (35.90)	7 (17.90)	4 (10.30)	3 (7.70)	3.65
It provides help to improve working conditions	13 (33.30)	14 (35.90)	3 (7.70)	7 (17.90)	2 (5.10)	3.74

Source: Primary Data; Figures in parentheses are Percentages.

4.1.10 Distribution of Respondents according to Possession of Household Items

The Distribution of Respondents according to Possession of Household Items is presented in Table 11.Table reveals that the multiple household items in the possession of the respondents indicate better level of living. As shown in Table (11), while more than half (70 per cent, 88 per cent and 98 per cent) of taxi drivers were owner of house, Television, refrigerator. Furthermore, all the taxi drivers have gas connection at home. Majority (80 per cent and 74 per cent) of them were not having goods like computer and two-wheeler. Whereas just 26.67 per cent have personal ornaments in their possession at the time of survey.

Table 11
Distribution of Respondents by Possession of Household Items

Assets	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Own House	210	70.00	90	30.00
Personal Ornaments	80	26.67	220	73.33
Computer	60	20.00	240	80.00
TV	264	88.00	36	12.00
Refrigerator	294	98.00	6	2.00
Cooking Gas	100	00.00	00	00.00
Motor Cycle/Scooter/ Two Wheeler	78	26.00	222	74.00
Any other Vehicle	--	--	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.11 Distribution of Taxi Drivers on the Basis of Debt Liabilities

The data relating to distribution of respondents on the basis of outstanding financial liabilities is presented in Table 12. Attempt was also made to know the sources of debt. The analysis of data reveals that only 28 per cent of them had borrowed from financial institutions like banks. On the other hand, 32 per cent had borrowed money from informal sources like money lenders (10 per cent) and relatives (22 per cent) while 4 per cent had taken loan from the employer. The low share of loan from employers may be due to the frequent shifting of workers from one employer to the other. Therefore, the employers give loans to only those workers who were working

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with them from a long period. They believed that new and young workers may move anytime to get another better option or job and will not return the borrowed money.

Table 12
Distribution of Taxi Drivers on the Basis of Debt Liabilities

Liabilities	Have		Don't Have	
	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Borrowed from Bank	84	28.00	216	72.00
Borrowed from Money Lender	30	10.00	270	90.00
Borrowed from Employer	12	4.00	288	96.00
Borrowed from Relatives	66	22.00	234	78.00
Borrowed from Friends	42	14.00	258	86.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.12 Distribution of Respondents according to Outstanding Loan's Amount

The data relating to distribution of respondents on the basis of outstanding loan's amount is presented in Table 12. Table clearly reveals that 34 per cent taxi drivers had borrowed less than Rs. 50,000 while 30 per cent had borrowed loan amount between Rs. 51,000-100,000 and 32 per cent above Rs. 100,000. So, the analysis of data reveals that large majority of respondents were under debt which reveals that due to low earning and maintenance of better standard of living trap them in the net of debt.

Table 12
Distribution of Respondents by Amount of Loan

Amount of Loan (Rs.)	Frequency	Percentage
Less than Rs. 50,000	102	34.00
Rs. 51,000-1,00,000	90	30.00
More than Rs. 1,00,000	96	32.00
Not taken any loan	12	4.00
Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.13 Distribution of Respondents by Distance between Place of Residence and Place of Work

The data relating to distribution of respondents on the basis of distance between place of residence and place of work is presented in Table 13. Majority of respondents (58 per cent) were living within the radius of 2-5 Kms far from their taxi stand. Only 30 per cent reside within 2 Kms from their taxi stand. While just 12 per cent come from 5- 10 Kms. More than half (42.67 per cent) of respondents reach to their work place by local bus, followed by (36 per cent) use the taxi which they drive and 21.33 per cent percent reach to work place by walking.

Table 13
Distribution of Respondents according to Distance of Work Place and
Mode of Commutation

Distance between Residence and Place of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Upto 2 Kms	90	30.00
2-5 Kms	174	58.00
5-10 Kms	36	12.00
Total	300	100.00
Mode of Transport to Reach at the Workplace	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Local bus	128	42.67
Taxi (they drive)	108	36.00
Walk	64	21.33
Total	300	100.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.14 Distribution of Respondents on the basis of Coverage of Social Securities' Schemes

The data relating to distribution of respondents on the basis of possession of Social securities' Schemes is presented in Table 14. Table clearly indicates that 20 (6.67 per cent) and 280 (93.33 per cent) taxi drivers had LIC policy and saving account in bank, respectively. While just 114 (38 per cent) had other form of Social Security Scheme having account at post office etc. All the respondents were having of ration card and were getting ration from Fair Price Shop. So the analysis of data reveals that taxi drivers were not covered under different social security schemes which they were entitled.

Table 14
Distribution of Respondents by Types of Social Security Scheme

Social Securities	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
LIC	20	6.67	280	93.33
Saving Account	280	93.33	20	6.67
Other form of Social Security	114	38.00	186	62.00
Possession of Ration Card	300	100.00	0	00.00

Source: Primary Data

4.1.15 Distribution of Respondents by Family Members Facing Health Problems

The data relating to distribution of respondents by family members facing health problems is presented in Table 15. Due to meager income and large family sizes, taxi drivers could meet with hardship only to the basic needs of their families. Therefore, they can not avail better health facilities for themselves and families. In the present study majority (74 per cent) of taxi drivers reported that their family members were suffering due to different diseases. However, they showed their helplessness to get medical treatment due to the costly health services. Table 15 shows that majority of (51.36 per cent) taxi drivers reported that their family members were suffering from different diseases from the last 2-5 years, followed by 27.02 per cent were suffering from 5-10 years and 21.62 per cent were suffering from 0-2 years. Table 15 reveals that 50 per cent of the respondent's family members were suffering from diabetes, followed by 44 per cent family members from high/low blood pressure, 26 per cent were suffering from Cardiac Disease, 16 per cent were suffering from Asthma, 12 per cent due to physical or mental disability, 3.67 per cent and 10 per cent family members were suffering from cancer and Tuberculosis, and majority (53.67 per cent) of family members were suffering from musculoskeletal disorders. So, the above analysis reveals that large majority of the taxi drivers' families were victim of one or another disease. This may be due to their poor financial conditions and poor diet.

It is further supported by the following data. around half (53 per cent) of the taxi drivers got their medical treatment from government/municipal hospitals followed by (33 per cent) from NGO/trust hospital, 11.67 per cent from private clinic and only 2.33 per cent got medical treatment by taking medicine from medical store. The low share to avail private hospital services may be due to the lacking of affordability of taxi drivers to get private medical treatment which they cannot offer.

Table 15
Distribution of Respondents by Family Members Facing Health Problems

Family Member Have Health Problem	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
	222	74.00	78	26.00
Number of Years from When Taxi Drivers Family Member Have Health Problem	**Frequency**		**Percentage**	
0-2	48		21.62	
2-5	114		51.36	
5-10	60		27.02	
Total	222		100.00	
Health Problem	**Frequency**		**Percentage**	
Cancer	11		3.67	
Blood Pressure (Bp)	132		44.00	
Cardiac Disease	78		26.00	
Diabetes	150		50.00	
Asthma	48		16.00	
Tuberculosis	30		10.00	
Physical or Mental Disability	36		12.00	
Musculoskeletal Disorders	161		53.67	
Type of Hospital Visited by Family Member for Medical Treatment	**Frequency**		**Percentage**	
Government/Municipal Hospital	159		53.00	
Ngo/Trust Hospital	99		33.00	
Private Clinic	35		11.67	
Medical Store	07		2.33	

Source: Primary Data

5.0 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1   Findings Relating to Personal & Demographic Characteristics of Taxi Drivers

➢   The analysis of Personal and Demographic Characteristics of the taxi drivers show that majority (28 per cent) of respondents fall in the age group of above 50 years of age. The study further found that this profession is dominated by SC/ST community belonging to Sikh and Hindu caste. The share of General caste was only 18 per cent.

➢   Another important finding of the study is that the large majority (44 per cent) of taxi drivers were educated up to 10th standard only. While, there were only 8 per cent above 10+2 (graduates and diploma holders).

➢   The finding reveals that majority (72 per cent and 69.67 per cent) of taxi drivers lived in joint families and were married.

➢   The study highlights that 30 per cent and 28 per cent of taxi drivers belonged to families whose size were 5-6 members and more than 6 members respectively, which reveal that drivers come from large size families.

➢   The study has further found that large majority (26 per cent) of taxi drivers responded that there are 4 earning members in their family and majority (49.67 per cent) of the taxi drivers have family monthly income of Rs. 5001-10000. So, the study highlights that the large majority of the drivers are living with the meager income in the present days of high cost of living.

5.2   Findings Relating to Job Related Characteristics of Taxi Drivers

➢   It was found that majority (34 per cent) of respondents were having 6-10 years of experience as a driver.

➢ The analysis of social/economic status of respondents further substantiates the low earning of the drivers. The study further found that large majority (50 per cent) of the taxi drivers were earning Rs. 3000-5000 which is very meager to run a smooth and healthy life in present days.

➢ Study further reveals that majority (82 per cent) of respondents got salary on monthly basis.

➢ Another important finding of the study is that taxi drivers are working for unlimited hours. All the respondents (taxi drivers) replied that there is no limit of working hours for them which leads to fatigue and early decline in health. 46 per cent of taxi drivers were working more than 16 hours a day. As a result of this, they hardly find time for their personal and social responsibilities.

➢ The result reveals that most of the respondents (54 per cent) reported that they drove taxi in night shifts too.

5.3   Findings Relating to Social/ Economic Status of Respondents

➢ The analysis of data reveals that 52 per cent of taxi drivers live in urban areas and large majority (74 per cent) are local and 26 per cent are migrated from other areas. 46.16 per cent migrated from rural to urban and 53.84 per cent are migrated from other states.

➢ The study found that 70 per cent of taxi drivers were living in their own houses and 30 per cent taxi drivers were living in rental and shared accommodation and pay rent up to Rs. 2000 per month.

➢ The analysis of data indicates that 22.86 per cent and 37.14 per cent of taxi drivers having their own houses have one room and 2 rooms respectively, and rest 40 per cent were having 3 or more than 3 rooms. Furthermore, all taxi drivers have separate space for kitchen and toilet and majority (94.29 per cent) of the drivers were living in pacca houses.

➢ The analysis of data shows that majority (66.67 per cent) of taxi drivers were living in rental house paying monthly rent up to Rs.2000. So, the taxi drivers who are living in the rental accommodation were paying major part of their monthly income as rent. Furthermore, 53.33 per cent of respondents were living in rental houses have one room only, followed by 33.33 per cent having two rooms and rest 13.34 per cent were having 3 or more than three rooms. Independent toilets facility was available to 83.33 per cent taxi drivers and rests of taxi drivers were living in rental independent house and share toilet with others. Separate space for kitchen was available to the 86.67 per cent of taxi drivers and rest of 13.33 per cent use a part of their room as a kitchen. So, the taxi drivers who shared accommodation were living in poor colonies without their own houses and with poor amenities.

➢ In addition to these findings the field observation during the survey, it was found that taxi drivers spend major share of their earning on food, clothing and other household expenditure (including rent and electricity charges etc.). As a matter of fact, they failed to spare money to spend on education, health and entertainment.

➢ The analysis of data indicates that 13 per cent of taxi drivers were member of some local trade union. But they were not member of any registered trade union. There was not even single taxi driver who was member of union from Jalandhar and Ludhiana districts.

➢ The study highlights that majority (69.20 per cent) of the respondents where member of a taxi union is from the last 10-15 years. The weighted Average Score (WAS) was calculated on the basis of 39 local taxi driver union members from Amritsar district, WAS of 2.67 indicates disagreement on the part of taxi drivers with regard to the question that provide protection to job. In case of "provides protection from public" the WAS of 3.93 clearly indicate a high degree of agreement on the part of taxi drivers. Furthermore, the WAS of 2.04 shows disagreement on the part of the taxi drivers with regard to "provides awareness

in regard to the legal problems". In case of "provides help at the time of problem (family/work)" the WAS of 3.67 clearly indicate high level of agreement on the part of the taxi drivers pertaining to taxi union's role in "providing help at the time of problem (family/work)". Majority of taxi drivers disagreed with regard to union's role in improving the working conditions. The WAS of 3.75 also reveals a high level of agreement on the part of taxi drivers with regard to "improving the working conditions".

➢ The results of the study reveal that more than half of taxi drivers had their own houses, television (TV), fridge and all taxi drivers had gas connection at home. Large number of taxi drivers did not have own durable goods like computer and vehicle, while just 26.67 per cent had own personal ornaments.

➢ Study further found that all taxi drivers have taken loans from one or other source which clearly reveals that they all were under debt. Majority of them has taken loan from banks and relatives up to Rs.1, 00,000.

➢ The study found that majority of respondents (58 per cent) lived 2-5 Kms far from their taxi stand and were coming at work place by the local bus.

➢ The result reveals that all of respondents have saving bank accounts and get ration through Public Distribution System (PDS) and Aata Dal Scheme (ADS).

➢ In addition, the results reveals that majority of taxi drivers' family members were suffering from chronic diseases and took medical treatment from Government Hospitals

➢ The analysis further found that all the respondents replied that they did not get any social security benefits from their employer. So socio-economic conditions and status of taxi drivers were very low. It indicates that they were living in miserable conditions.

6.0   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, driving occupation has extraordinary impact on the socio-economic and health perspective of drivers. The findings of the study in consistent with Bawa and Srivastav (2013) who found that majority (59%) of taxi drivers belonged to the lower socio-economic class. In present study it is seen that taxi drivers have to survive with meager wages. Taxi drivers work in dust, fumes and pollution which lead to major health issues. Family members also cannot afford good health practices due to hand to mouth earning of the drivers. If they join a taxi drivers union even then they cannot get any social benefits. The amenities and facilities at the taxi stands are also very poor. There is lack of proper sitting platform, drinking water facilities, fan and lavatory facilities which are very essential to live a proper working life. They have to sit under the tent made of Tarpal (Plastic Sheet) and trees. Passengers also insult and treat the taxi drivers badly. Therefore, in conclusion it can be said that the socio-economic conditions and health related issues needed to be addressed properly to protect their health and promote their wellbeing of private taxi drivers.

7.0   SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEACH

➢ Longitudinal studies are required to confirm examined cross sectional association and to further observe the specific occupational exposures responsible for the association between driving time and stress related problems as Hypertension, Cardiovascular, Gastrointestinal and Musculoskeletal Disorders.

➢ Similar studies may be performed by increasing sample size and involving more refined expertise and techniques to yield better outcomes.

➢ Findings of the present study may be tested by conducting similar studies. Further study may be conducted on impact of dietary habits on drivers' health and lifestyle factors.

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