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Title: Health related problems amongst hand and cycle rickshaw pullers.

SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (MUKUNDAPURAM) : It is a matter of disgrace to us that even after 59 years of independence hand pulled rickshaws and cycle rickshaws exist in our country. The rickshaw labourers are condemned to carry the burden of fellow human beings. The rickshaws are a remnant of the slavery system and it is time we stop it.

Even today, we can see hand pulled rickshaws and cycle rickshaws in several cities and towns. Lakhs of poor labourers are employed in this sector. Several among them succumb to serious diseases and meet with premature death.

We have made progress on several fronts, but it is regrettable that we could not improve the living conditions of the rickshaw labourers. Subsidy should be given to rickshaw labourers to buy auto-rickshaws on interest free loan. A central legislation should be drafted on these lines. Rickshaw labourers should have welfare funds and pension scheme.

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\*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Malayalam.

I urge upon the Government to take immediate steps and salvage lakhs of poor labourers in this sector.