The immense increase in the number of rag pickers in the Madras city is alarming. Even in a particular area of the city we find over 3000 rag pickers. (The number of rag pickers is dependent on the area: residential or otherwise). We have interviewed over 100 rag pickers from north Madras.

It is unfortunate to note that rag pickers are not only small children who are runaways but several families do the job of rag picking. We are worried more about the risks, which they are exposed to while doing this job. Further these rag pickers suffer from several diseases because of their profession. These diseases remain untreated. They sleep in dingy pavements, on the roadsides, amidst sewers, with pigs, and dogs and live a life in the wretchedness of poverty deprived of any material comforts. This has forced us to analyze their problem.

Using the sample data and the expert’s opinion we use Fuzzy Cognitive Maps to study them.