



Socio-Economic Profile of Child Labour in Nizamabad District: A Study

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Abstract: Child labour remains one of the most persistent and exploitative challenges to human development and economic progress globally. Defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development, it is a phenomenon deeply tied with poverty, inequality, and inadequate social protection. Telangana, as a newly formed state (2014), faces its own set of challenges with respect to child labour, particularly in its rural areas. The state has a predominantly agrarian economy, and child labour is most prevalent in agricultural sectors, construction, and domestic work in urban areas. This research used Mixed-Methods Approach which contains quantitative method i.e. survey as well as qualitative methods i.e. in-depth interviews and focused group discussion for triangulation. Snow Ball and Convenient Sampling techniques were used to identifying the area/ mandals and villages. Multi-Stage Stratified Random Sampling technique is used after the identification. Selected Households with children aged 5-17 in Nizamabad by Snow ball and Convenient sampling method. A total of 504 households were taken as population. 313 children were selected as sample from a total of 231 families with child labour. The main objective of this paper is to conduct a comprehensive economic analysis of the causes and consequences of child labour in Nizamabad district and to assess the prevalence and profile of child labour across different sectors in Nizamabad.

Key Words: child labour, hazardous work, exploitation etc.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Child labour remains one of the most persistent and exploitative challenges to human development and economic progress globally. Defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development, it is a phenomenon deeply tied with poverty, inequality, and inadequate social protection. Despite a significant decline globally, the ILO and UNICEF estimate that approximately 160 million children were engaged in child labour worldwide in 2020, with nearly half involved in hazardous work. The situation is particularly acute in developing economies, where structural vulnerabilities force families into difficult choices for survival.

India, as one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, presents a paradoxical picture. While it has made substantial paces in economic indicators, it is also home to one of the largest child populations engaged in labour. The latest Census (2011) data indicated the existence of over 10 million child labourers in India, a figure widely considered a significant undercount due to the hidden and informal nature of much of this work. The Indian government has enacted stringent laws, most notably the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, which prohibits the employment of children under 14 in all occupations and adolescents (14-18) in hazardous occupations and processes. However, the gap between legislative intent and ground-level implementation remains vast, prolonged by deep-rooted socio-economic complexities.

Definition of Child Labour

Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that is harmful to their physical, mental, emotional, or social well-being. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines child labour as work that deprives children of



their childhood, their potential, and their dignity. This term is often associated with activities that hinder a child's ability to attend school regularly, interfere with their educational opportunities, and may involve exploitative, dangerous, or hazardous conditions.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), child labour is defined as work that is mentally, physically, or morally harmful to children, obstructing their ability to attend school and engage in normal childhood activities. Various international conventions, such as the ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age Convention) and ILO Convention No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour), have established guidelines for the elimination of child labour. While efforts have been made globally to reduce child labour, the issue persists in many developing countries, including India, where a significant number of children remain involved in child labour.

Child Labour in Telangana

Telangana, as a newly formed state (2014), faces its own set of challenges with respect to child labour, particularly in its rural areas. The state has a predominantly agrarian economy, and child labour is most prevalent in agricultural sectors, construction, and domestic work in urban areas.

Agriculture: In Telangana, child labour is most prominent in districts like Khammam, Warangal, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, and Nalgonda, where cotton, tobacco, and sugarcane are major crops. Families often rely on the income generated from child labour during harvest seasons. Additionally, children work in areas like brick kilns and quarrying. According to the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) data, Telangana has an estimated 2.4 per cent of its child population involved in child labour, with a large number of children engaged in agriculture and related activities.

Urban Areas: In cities like Hyderabad, Warangal, Nizamabad, child labour is prevalent in unorganized sectors such as domestic work, construction, and street vending. The migration of rural populations to cities in search of better opportunities has contributed to the rise in child labour in the urban informal economy.

According to reports from local NGOs, more than 50,000 children are involved in hazardous domestic work and street vending in Hyderabad alone.

Government and NGO Initiatives: The Government of Telangana, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Employment, has launched various initiatives such as NCLP centres, which aim to provide education and rehabilitation to child labourers. NGOs like Bachpan Bachao Andolan and Save the Children are working at the grassroots level to identify and rehabilitate child workers.

Child labour in Telangana is a complex issue deeply rooted in socio-economic factors such as poverty, lack of education, and social structures. While India has made strides in addressing child labour through legislative reforms and governmental initiatives, the persistent challenges in enforcement, cultural acceptance of child labour, and the informal nature of work in certain sectors continue to undermine these efforts.

In Telangana, despite the state's growth and development, the problem remains entrenched in rural areas, particularly in agriculture, construction, and domestic work. A concerted effort from the government, NGOs, and local communities is essential to break the cycle of poverty and child labour, providing children with access to education, healthcare, and a better future.

Addressing child labour requires improving enforcement of existing laws, strengthening educational systems, and tackling poverty. Only by addressing the root causes of child labour can India and Telangana eliminate this exploitative practice and ensure that children are able to enjoy their fundamental rights to education, health, and a safe childhood.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Sanjay Kumar and Pradeep Verma (2021) explore how child labour affects the economic development of India. It highlights the role of microeconomic factors like family income, lack of access to education, and informal labour markets in perpetuating child labour.

The research paper by Rajesh Tiwari and Kamal K. Das (2021) examines the economic drivers behind child labour in India's carpet industry. It finds that low wages for adult workers and seasonal demands lead families to involve children in work as a coping mechanism.

K. I. Singh and V. Agarwal (2021) examine the economic cost of child labour in the informal economy of India. Their study indicates that child labour in the informal sector contributes to a loss in productivity due to the low skill levels acquired by children engaged in this work.

Kumar and Bhat (2021) explore the prevalence of child labour in urban informal sectors such as domestic work and street vending. They argue that the urban economy often exploits children as cheap labour.

Sangeeta Tripathi (2021) highlights the legal and educational barriers that contribute to child labour. This research suggests that the legal framework needs to be improved for better enforcement of child labour laws.

S. Pandey (2021) examines the role of the informal sector in perpetuating child labour in India, particularly in cities. The study emphasizes the need for better regulation of informal sectors.



R.B. Choudhury and K.P. Prasad (2022) examine the economic relationship between child labour and family income. They conclude that poor families are often forced to involve children in work as a survival strategy, despite the long-term disadvantages to the family's economic well-being.

The research work of Ashok Kumar (2022) focuses on the impact of child labour in India's agricultural sector, concluding that the lack of mechanization in farming is a significant factor behind the persistence of child labour in rural regions.

The work by Vivek Mishra & Pradeep Yadav (2023) measures how rural economic shocks increase child labour rates in India. It concludes that economic vulnerability directly contributes to higher child labour.

B. Prakash and S. Banerjee (2023) focus on urban child labour, specifically in cities like Delhi and Mumbai. It finds that urban poverty, coupled with informal employment, exacerbates child labour issues in these metropolitan areas.

A. Patel and M. Khan (2023) analyse the relationship between child labour and migration in India. It reveals that migrant families in urban areas often rely on children for supplemental income, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty and child exploitation.

UNICEF (2024) report examines the relationship between child labour and schooling in India, emphasizing the need for improved educational strategies to reduce child labour. It suggests that enhancing school participation and learning outcomes can be effective in addressing the issue.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- To conduct a comprehensive economic analysis of the causes and consequences of child labour in Nizamabad district.
- To assess the prevalence and profile of child labour across different sectors in Nizamabad.
- To identify and analyse the socio-economic and demographic determinants of child labour at the household level.
- To suggest remedial measures to eradicate child labour.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Design: This research used Mixed-Methods Approach which contains quantitative method i.e. survey Aswell as qualitative methods i.e. in-depth interviews and focused group discussion for triangulation.

Sampling Design:

Population: Households with children aged 5-17 and having weak socio-economic parameters were taken as population for this study. Hard and cross enquiries were conducted at multistage with multiple persons while assessing and identifying these households.

Sampling Technique: Snow Ball and Convenient Sampling techniques were used to identifying the area/ mandals and villages. Multi-Stage Stratified Random Sampling technique is used after the identification.

At First stage, urban areas of Nizamabad, Bhodhan and Kamareddy and rural areas of Jukkal, Kodapgal, Madnur, Pitlam, Varni, Sirikonda, Ranjal and Gandhari mandals were selected for the study.

At Second stage, a total of 39 villages and at Third stage 503 households were selected for the study. From a total of 503 households, 231 with child labour and 273 without child labour households were selected for the comparative study. The total sample selected for the present study is 313.

Population:

Selected Households with children aged 5-17 in Nizamabad by Snow ball and Convenient sampling method. A total of 504 households were taken as population.

Sample Size: 313 children were selected as sample from a total of 231 families with child labour.

5. DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Socio-Economic Profile of the Child Labour

Gender of the Sample Children

Table No:1

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	181	57.83
Female	132	42.17
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

In many poor and traditional family's son's education prioritised over daughter and boys are treated as their future breadwinners. Most girls are insisted for school dropout and forced to help their parents at home or treating as an



important source of income by involving them in work. Out of 313 children 181 i.e. 57.83 per cent are male and 132 i.e. 42.17 are female.

Area of Residence of the Sample Children

Table No:2

Area of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	184	58.78
Urban	129	41.22
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Area of the residence plays an important role in the study of the child labour. Infrastructural differences decide the nature and prevalence of child labour. In rural areas most of the children were engaged in agriculture and allied activities and children in urban areas involve in domestic work, street vending, construction, workshops etc. Out of 313 a total of 184 i.e. 58.78 per cent were residing in rural areas and 129 i.e. 41.22 per cent in urban areas.

Religion of the Sample Children

Table No:3

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Hindu	098	31.31
Muslim	151	48.25
Christian	053	16.93
Others	011	03.51
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The study of religion helps to identify certain religious groups that are more vulnerable, to understand work behaviour, influence of family structure, child rearing etc. Out of 313 children, majority of children child labour 151 i.e. 48.25 are from Muslim community. 98 i.e. 31.31 per cent from Hindu, 53 children from Christian and only 11 i.e. 3.52 per cent are from others.

Caste of the Sample Children

Table No:4

Caste	Frequency	Percentage
Scheduled Tribe	103	32.91
Scheduled Caste	045	14.38
Backward Caste	135	43.13
Others	030	09.58
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The marginalised communities like Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Castes have limited access to education, health and are associated with low wages and skills and social exclusion. The study of caste particulars of the respondents helps to identify the patterns of vulnerability. Out of 313 children, 135 i.e. 43.13 are from backward, 103 i.e. 32.91 per cent from scheduled tribes, 45 i.e. 14.38 per cent are from scheduled caste and 30 from others.

Type of the Family of the Sample Children

Table No:5

Family Type	Frequency	Percentage
Joint	203	64.86
Nuclear	110	35.14
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Investigating about the type of family of the respondent plays an important role in assessing the caregiving patterns, economic burden, emotional support accessible to children and child responsibilities within the family. In a total of 313 sample, 203 i.e. 64.86 per cent belongs to joint family and 110 i.e. 35.14 per cent children are from nuclear family. It is most useful to determine burden of dependency and resource sharing among the family.



Age of the Sample Children

Table No:6

Age	Frequency	Percentage
5-11	037	11.82
12-14	125	39.94
15-17	151	48.24
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Age is considered as one of most significant factors to determines the legality, nature and vulnerability of the child labour. It helps to design preventive measures and to structure educational and rehabilitation programs. A total of 313 sample, 151 i.e. 48.24 per cent are between 15 to17 years of age, 125 i.e. 39.94 per cent in 12 to 14 years of age and 37 i.e. 11.82 per cent are in the age group of 5 to 12 years.

Sectoral Distribution of the Sample Children

Table No:7

Sector	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	052	16.61
Industry	192	61.34
Services	069	22.05
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Sectoral distribution refers to the distribution of child labour among different sectors like agriculture, industry and service sector. The study of sectoral distribution of labours provides the patterns of employment, socio economic dynamics, level of risk etc. Out of 313 children, 52 i.e. 16.61 per cent were engaged in agriculture and 69 i.e. 22.05 per cent in service sector. Majority of child labour 192 i.e. 61.34 per cent were engaged in industry.

Nature of the Work of the Sample Children

Table No:8

Work Nature	Frequency	Percentage
Hazardous	122	38.98
Non- Hazardous	191	61.02
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

By the study of nature of the work engaged by children helps us to understand working conditions, work environment, level of exploitation, risk involved in work etc. out of 313 child labour, 191 i.e. 61.02 per cent are working in non-hazardous activities and 122 i.e. 38.98 per cent were in hazardous works.

Hazardous Work of the Sample Children

Table No:9

Hazardous Work	Frequency	Percentage
Garbage and Scrap Shops	19	15.57
Domestic Labour	26	21.31
Brick Kiln	18	14.75
Beedi Rolling	21	17.22
Construction Work	20	16.39
Hotels and Dhabas	06	04.92
Idol Making	12	09.84
Total	122	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The above table shows the data relating to the distribution of child labour engaged in different hazardous activities. Out of 122 sample, 19 i.e. 15.57 per cent are working in garbage and scrap shops, 26 i.e. 21.31 per cent were engaged in domestic work, 18 i.e. 14.75 per cent are working in brick making, 21 i.e. 17.22 per cent were rolling the beedi, 4.92 per cent i.e. 6 children in hotels and dhabas and 12 i.e. 9.84 per cent were involved in making idol.



Non-Hazardous Work of the Sample Children

Table No:10

Non-Hazardous Work	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	52	27.23
Repair Shops/ Mechanic Sheds	34	17.80
Street Vending	18	09.42
Transport Sector	14	07.33
Shops and Establishments	29	15.18
Herdsmen	23	12.04
Vegetable Market	21	11.00
Total	191	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Out of 313 total sample, 191 children are working in non-hazardous activities. In that, 52 i.e. 27.23 per cent are in agriculture, 34 i.e. 17.80 per cent were engaged in repair shops and mechanic sheds, 29 i.e. 15.18 per cent are in shops, 18 i.e. 9.42 per cent in street vending, 14 i.e. 7.33 per cent in transport sector, 21 i.e. 11 per cent in vegetable market and 23 i.e. 12.04 per cent were engaged as herdsman.

Education Level of the Sample Children

Table No:11

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	34	10.86
Up to 5 th Class	93	29.71
Up to 6 th Class	76	24.28
Up to 7 th Class	29	09.26
Up to 8 th Class	23	07.35
Up to 9 th Class	17	05.43
Up to 10 th Class	41	13.10
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Level of education is strongly associated with the child labour. Children without basic education often enter the labour market early due to lack of opportunities. Many working children are school dropouts, having left due to economic pressures, family responsibilities, disinterest, or poor school conditions. Out of 313 sample children, 34 i.e. 10.86 per cent were illiterates, only 41 i.e. 13.10 per cent children studied up to 10th class and majority of sample respondents studied up to 5th class. 76 i.e. 24.28 per cent child labour studied up to 6th class, 29 i.e. 9.26 per cent studied up to 7th class, 23 i.e. 7.35 per cent studied up to 8th class and only 17 i.e. 5.43 per cent completed 9th class.

Type of the Family of the Sample Children

Table No:12

Family Type	Frequency	Percentage
Joint	192	61.34
Nuclear	121	38.66
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The type of family refers to the structure and composition of the household where the sample children live. The study about this variable helps to know the economic pressure, children contribution to household income etc. In a total sample of 313 children, majority of children 192 i.e. 61.34 per cent are living in joint family and 121 children i.e. 38.66 per cent are living in nuclear families.

Level of Education of the Father of the Sample Children

Table No:13

Father's Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	117	37.38
Primary	095	30.35
S.S.C.	055	17.57



Inter	034	10.86
Graduation and Above	012	03.84
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The education level of the father is a significant socio-economic variable when studying child labour, as it reflects the household's exposure to education, employment opportunities, and socio-cultural attitudes. In a 313 total sample, father of 117 i.e. 37.38 per cent children's fathers are illiterates, 95 i.e. 30.35 per cent studied primary level, 55 i.e. 17.57 per cent completed S.S.C. and only 12 i.e. 3.84 per cent fathers were studied intermediate.

Level of Education of the Mother of the Sample Children

Table No:14

Mother's Education	Frequency	Percentage
Literate	094	30.03
Illiterate	219	69.97
Total	313	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The mother's level of education not only reflects the family's socio-economic status but also strongly predicts children's likelihood of attending school versus engaging in child labour. Empowering and educating mothers can be one of the most effective tools in combating child labour. Out of 313 children, majority mothers 219 i.e. 69.97 per cent are illiterate and only 94 i.e. 30.03 per cent of mothers were literates.

6. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, child labour has profound economic and social implications that extend far beyond the immediate financial relief it might provide to families. Economically, it hampers the potential growth of individuals, communities, and nations by stifling human capital development and limiting productivity. Socially, it perpetuates cycles of poverty, inequality, and poor health while denying children their right to education and a better future. To tackle child labour effectively, it is crucial to not only strengthen legislative frameworks but also address the root causes, such as poverty, illiteracy, and social exclusion. Ending child labour requires coordinated efforts from governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector to ensure children can grow up in safe, healthy environments where their rights are fully protected.

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