



Working Conditions of Child Rag pickers in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract: Rag pickers in the cities had very poor health due to the consumption of unhygienic food and working in polluted environment and suffered from diarrhoea, cold and scabies. About 48.8 percent respondents are facing cheating at sales point followed by 35.5 percent respondents are facing collecting money by goondas and police and remaining 15.7 percent respondents are facing collecting money by municipal workers. Thus, the majority child ragpickers are exploiting by various forms during their ragpicking work.

Key words: Health, consumption, unhygienic

Introduction

Rag pickers are well coordinated in their method of working. Among themselves, they have a good understanding for operating by area. Each group takes specific items from the bins. It has been observed that more and more women and children are getting involved in the business of rag picking. This is a matter of concern as these children who should be spending their time in schools either studying or playing are instead putting themselves at risk by handling waste. While picking through waste, the rag picker puts himself at a great risk and is always prone to disease as the waste that he rummages through can be infected. Rag pickers in the cities had very poor health due to the consumption of unhygienic food and working in polluted environment and suffered from diarrhoea, cold and scabies. They were highly exposed to tetanus and other infections caused from cuts by sharp metal pieces, broken glass and other solid wastes. Waste pickers were reported to have headache to have at many dump sites.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the socio-economic background of child ragpickers in

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation of Krishna District.

2. To assess the working conditions and exploitation of the child ragpickers.
3. To understand the nature and magnitude of the problem of ragpickers in the study area.

Research Methodology

The Research setting for the field study was Vijayawada Municipal Corporation of Andhra Pradesh, which is one of the major cities in Coastal Andhra Pradesh. It is spread over 110.44 sq. km., covering 136 slums consisting in 59 wards with a density of population of 294 persons per sq. km. The city is the second largest city in the State, while in respect to area it occupies 11th position. Of the total population, the urban population comprises 44.20 lakhs. The district's literacy rate is 60.6 percent. Hence, it was planned on the basis of any research design to test any hypothesis.

Universe and Sample

The study is taken up in Vijayawada City of Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, which has 136 slums. The study is confined to Vijayawada City of Krishna



district, Andhra Pradesh, which consist of 59 wards/divisions. Out of these, 8 divisions are connected to the inner city and mostly the rag pickers stay in this locality and collect the rags around the city. The study is purposively conducted in Vijayawada City. In the entire 8 slums nearly 678 child ragpickers are available as per the list provided by the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Department of Labour and Employment, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Vijayawada. Out of this list, the researcher identified 30 child rag pickers both male and female from each slum and a total of 240 from eight slums are selected by using simple random method for this study. The slums are shown in the table. Child rag pickers 5-16 year of age group who are engaged in this work constitute the universe of the study. Hence, the sample for the study is 240 child rag pickers. Field visits and data collection was organized during August 2015.

Findings of the study: The working conditions of child rag pickers which explains the prevailing conditions in the

deployment of rag picking work. Mostly the ragpicking work is multi-dimensional aspect and it is dehumanizing activity. Often child rag pickers are work in harsh conditions and they are prone to attack multiple diseases. In this circumstances, it is discussed about the various issues such as working hours, age at entry into this work, different forms of exploitation at junkyard, abuses at work place, health problems etc.

Socio-economic background of child rag pickers

The family background of socio-economic conditions of the rag picking children such as age, sex, residence, religion, caste, family composition, education, mother education, occupation, father education, occupation and income and other social aspects has been discussed in this chapter. The micro-analysis of these issues will reflect the status of rag picking children in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation.

Table- 1: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percent
< - 5	5	02.1
6 - 9	38	15.8
10 - 13	94	39.2
14 - 16	103	42.9
Total	240	100.0

$$\bar{x} = \text{Mean Age} (\bar{x}) = 12.35 \text{ years}$$

In the study, the age of the child ragpickers ranges from 5 to 16 years. In order to facilitate further analysis, four

age group categories have been developed. The table 1 reveals that the majority of the child ragpicking respondents were



belonging to age group of 14-16 years are 42.9 percent, 10-13 years of age group are 39.2 percent and followed by 6-9 years of age group belongs to 15.8 percent. Thus, making a majority of 14-16 age group and the mean age is 12.35 years.

Table- 2: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	169	70.4
Female	71	29.6
Total	240	100.0

Sex wise distribution: The table 2 indicates sex wise distribution of respondents the male child ragpickers who were constitutes 70.4 percent and female child ragpickers who are in the rag picking work. It is observed from the table that there are more male children among the female children who are majority of the respondents engaged in the rag picking work.

Table- 3: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by Education

Education	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	182	75.8
Literate	58	24.2
Total	240	100.0

Most of the child ragpickers are found poor in terms of education and literacy development. Even, 75.8 percent child ragpicker respondents are reported to be illiterate. Illiteracy was found more pronounced in these children. Importantly, educated children respondents were reported in primary education about 24.2 percent.

Table – 4: Percentage distribution of sample respondents how long did you work as ragpicker by their Sex

How long work as ragpickers Vs	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
< - 2	46	1	47
	97.9%	2.1%	100.0%
3 - 4	22	26	48
	45.8%	54.2%	100.0%
5 - 6	37	2	39
	94.9%	5.1%	100.0%
7 - 8	43	23	66
	65.2%	34.8%	100.0%
9 - >	21	19	40
	52.5%	47.5%	100.0%
Total	169	71	240
	70.4%	29.6%	100.0%

$\chi^2=49.171$, $df= 4$, $P < 0.000$, Significant at 0.01



The chi-square table 4 shows that the respondents how long they working as a ragpickers and its association to sex. There is a significant difference in the experience of doing this job between males and females. In compare to both sexes female are more long service i.e. 7 and

above years than the males. It is statistically significant and the P value is 0.000 at 0.01 level. It indicates that girls are not given preference traditionally in India to send school and they are more neglectful in providing all the needs.

Table – 5: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by what type of rags do you pick

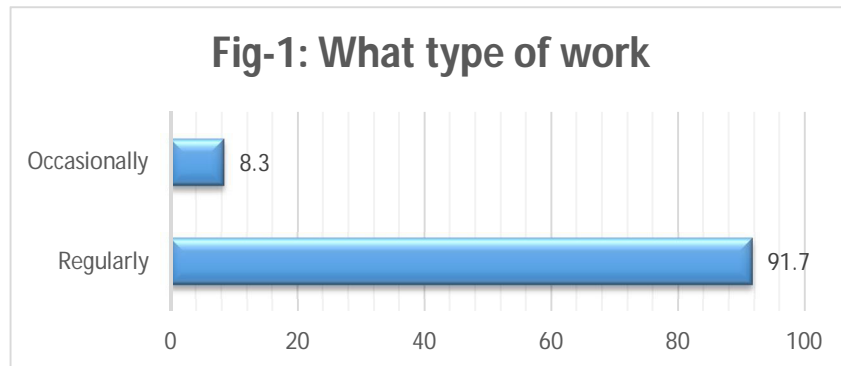
Variable	Frequency	Percent
Plastic	42	17.5
Paper	25	10.4
Plastic & Paper	110	45.8
All Items	63	26.3
Total	240	100.0

As regards to table 5 displays that what type of rags do you collect. It reveals that 45.8 percent of the respondents are collect plastic and paper, whereas 26.2 percent of the respondents are collect all item that means plastic, cardboard, paper, tin etc. followed by 17.5 percent collect plastic

alone and 10.4 percent paper collect by the child ragpickers. KHURANA INDRAJIT (2001) and others in their studies reveals that child ragpickers gathered all the material of Plastic, Paper, metal items.

Table – 6: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by what type of work

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Regularly	220	91.7
Occasionally	20	08.3
Total	240	100.0





The table 6 and figure 1 shows that do you engage in collecting rags whether regular or occasional. The majority (91.7 percent) of the respondents are engaged in this job regularly. About 8.3 percent of

the respondents are engage in this job occasionally. Thus, it is indicates that the children who are engaged regularly in this work are neither drop outs nor never attended the school.

Table – 7: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by how many hours do you work

Variable	Frequency	Percent
1 - 2	10	4.2
3 - 4	32	13.3
5 - 6	86	35.8
7 - 8	69	28.8
9 - >	43	17.9
Total	240	100.0

The data show that how many hours are working the child ragpickers in a day. The table 7 shows that majority (35.8 percent) children working 5 to 6 hours for a day, followed by 28.8 percent and 17.9 percent 9 hours and above are working for a day for ragpicking respectively. The remaining 13.3 percent 3 to 4 hours and 4.2 percent

1 to 2 hours are very short time and in due course they engage some part time work in a remaining day. Thus, the majority children are engaged in ragpicking very long hours to get their livelihood. KSHITIJ (2003) found that the majority of the child ragpickers works more than 10 hours per day.

Table – 8: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by how much do you collect

Variable	Frequency	Percent
< - 10 KGs	52	21.7
11 - 20	87	36.2
21 - 30	40	16.7
31 - 40	61	25.4
Total	240	100.0

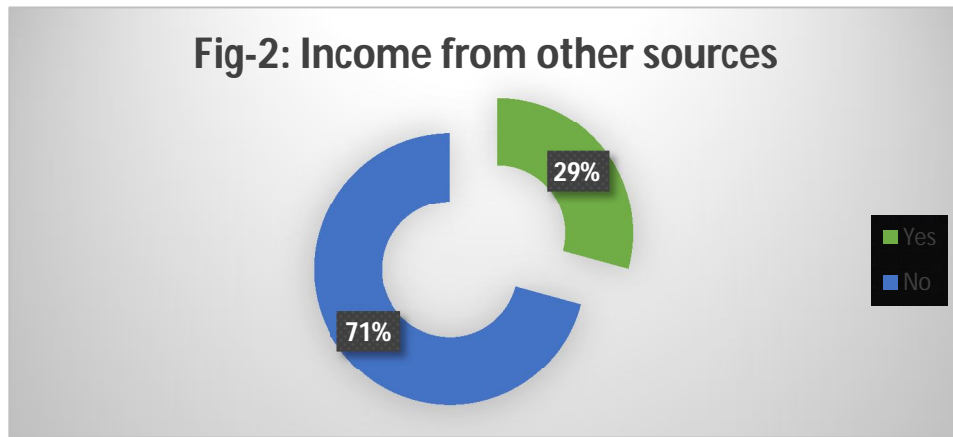
The table 8 indicates that how much do you collect for a day. The majority respondents 36.2 percent are 11 to 20 KGs collect from various sources, followed by 25.4 percent collect 31 to 40 KGs and 21.7

percent are collect below 10 KGs of the rags. The children's who are collect 30 to 40 KGs are frequently get health problems while carrying the weight on their shoulders in the whole day.



Table – 9: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by income from other source

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	70	29.2
No	170	70.8
Total	240	100.0



It is clear that the child ragpickers gaining some additional income besides the ragpicking work. In the mean time they engage in part time work and earn

some amount. The table 9 and figure 2 observed that 70.8 percent are not doing any part time work, whereas 29.2 percent work as part time and earning some additional income.

Table – 10: Percentage distribution of sample respondents do you face any problems by their age

age	Do you face any problems		Total
	Yes	No	
< - 5	4	1	5
	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
6 - 9	32	6	38
	84.2%	15.8%	100.0%
10 - 13	74	20	94
	78.7%	21.3%	100.0%
14 - 16	88	15	103
	85.4%	14.6%	100.0%
Total	198	42	240
	82.5%	17.5%	100.0%

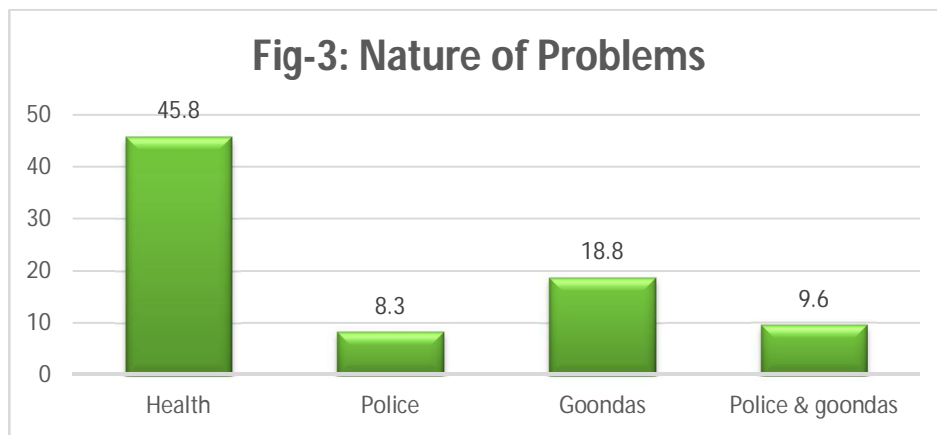
$\chi^2 = 1.643, df = 3, P < 0.650, \text{ Not Significant at } 0.05$



The table 10 portrays that do you face any problems vs. their age. It shows that the problems faced by child ragpickers during the ragpicking as well as selling the collected items. The majority out of 240 respondents, 198 child ragpickers face the problems while they are collecting the rags. About 88 child ragpickers face the problems in the age group of 14-16 years followed by 74 child ragpickers in the age group of 10-13 years also face the problems. Remaining a negligible number of age groups 6-9 and below 5 years are 32 and 4 child ragpickers face the problems. Hence, there is statistically no significant association between the do you face problems and by their age.

Table – 11: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by nature of problems

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Health	110	55.6
Police	20	10.1
Goondas	45	22.7
Police & goondas	23	11.6
Total	198	100.0



As shown in the table 11 reveals that nature of problems by child ragpickers. A majority 45.8 percent of the respondents faced health problems. About 18.8 percent of the respondents face with goondas while collecting the rags. By and large 8.3 percent were problems faced by police in way of harassing for collecting money. Girls are more vulnerable than boys by facing the problems.



Table – 12: Percentage distribution of sample respondents by type of exploitation

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Cheating at sales point	62	48.8
Collecting money by municipal worker	20	15.7
Collecting money by goondas/police	45	35.5
Total	127	100.0

n=127

As regards to table 12, there are many types of exploitations have been experienced by the child ragpickers. This is all due to that they are children and vulnerable group. The tables indicates that 48.8 percent respondents are facing cheating at sales point followed by 35.5 percent respondents are facing collecting money by goondas and police and remaining 15.7 percent respondents are facing collecting money by municipal workers. Thus, the majority child ragpickers are exploiting by various forms during their ragpicking work.

Conclusions:

Government as well as other national and international non-government organizations are working and implementing various plans for child welfare in the country but it has not been successful to improve their condition. It seems that child labour in other sector has been discouraged but in reality it is still not satisfactory.

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