



## **CHILD RAG PICKERS IN INDIA: AN INVESTIGATION INTO WASTE MANAGEMENT, HEALTH HAZARDS, AND EARNINGS**

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### **Abstract**

Rag picking means a person (s) who picks rag is called as rag pickers. Rag means a piece of old, often torn materials like scraped metals, paper plastics, glass bottles, plastic bottles, medical used plastic injection and garbage etc. Rag pickers collect these materials and sale to local dealers, they get some money. Therefore, rag picking becomes an occupation for the poor, unemployed, neglected, and downtrodden sector of the population. As a result, rag picking is an important occupation in the urban informal sector in the Telangana State of India. The aim of this study is to investigate the socio-present day economic conditions of child rag pickers, to understand the health hazards of child rag pickers, to examine their income, spending and waste management practices, and to identify the factors responsible for child labor. The study is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data have been collected from five municipalities of Telangana State of India and adopted a cluster sampling method; a total of 250 samples have been interviewed for the study. Poverty and unemployment are the root cause of child rag pickers, with rag pickers exposed to health hazards stemming from unhygienic practices and working conditions. 80% of child rag pickers age group is 11-15 years, 74% of illiterates and 85% of downtrodden. Nearly 68% of child rag pickers' income is below Rs. 11,000/ pa. 74% of child rag picker spending was on medical expenses, 90% of the children's means of transportation for collecting garbage was on foot. 85% of child rag pickers are facing health hazards, 98% of rag picking consisted primarily of plastics, glass bottles, cardboard, papers, tin, iron, copper, and aluminum. These waste materials can be found at waste dumps, street corners, or in residential areas. 82% were of the opinion that they are getting rashes and wounds and 94% of also opinion that rag picking is not an appreciable job in the society. The study examines poverty, unemployment, and poor economic conditions as the root causes of child rag pickers in urban towns. Therefore, a social development model is the only alternative for eradicating child rag pickers and the problem of child labor and the process of development for poorer sections through strict implementation of compulsory education, health, and skill development programs.

**Keywords:** Rag Picking, Poverty, Unemployment, Child Labor, Health Hazards, Social Development Model.