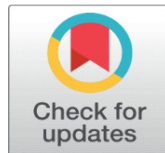


EXAMINING THE CONDITIONS AND BARRIERS FOR WOMEN AND GIRL CHILDREN IN TELANGANA'S UNORGANIZED WORKFORCE

Dr. Sarika Koluguri ¹, D. Sreeramulu ²

¹ Post Doctoral Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research

² Senior Professor, Dean- Department of Business Management, Osmania University, Hyderabad



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to comprehensively examine the conditions and barriers faced by women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce. It seeks to explore the status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities specific to this demographic, providing nuanced insights into their experiences. Additionally, the research identifies and analyzes barriers hindering their access to education, healthcare, and social welfare due to their engagement in the unorganized sector.

Methodology: The study employs a qualitative and exploratory approach, utilizing primary data collected through convenient sampling from 127 participants within Telangana's unorganized workforce. Data analysis includes statistical tools such as Discriminant Analysis and Exploratory Factor Analysis to gain in-depth insights into the challenges faced by women and girl children in this sector.

Findings: The findings underscore the complex interplay between health support initiatives from employers and the overall well-being of women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce. While positive correlations exist between favorable working conditions and work-life balance, persistent concerns about workplace safety highlight the need for enhanced safety measures. Despite moderate job security perceptions, the significant barriers in accessing social security benefits reveal underlying economic vulnerabilities. Educational challenges, such as discrimination at schools, coupled with limited utilization of government healthcare schemes, further emphasize the systemic hurdles faced by this demographic in accessing essential services.

Conclusion: The study concludes that targeted interventions are crucial to improve conditions for women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce. Priority actions include strengthening workplace safety regulations, enhancing accessibility to government healthcare schemes, and addressing educational discrimination. Streamlining access to social security benefits and fostering collaborative efforts involving local communities, employers, and governmental and non-governmental organizations are essential for effective implementation of recommendations and holistic support for this workforce.

1. INTRODUCTION

The term "unorganized worker" encompasses a broad spectrum of individuals who engage in various forms of employment within the informal sector, as defined by the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008. This includes home-based workers, self-employed individuals, and wage workers operating outside the purview of formal labor regulations. Importantly, it also includes those in the organized sector who lack coverage under specific legislative acts aimed at ensuring labor rights and social security benefits, such as the Employees' State Insurance Act and the Provident Funds Act. The characterization of unorganized workers underscores their significant presence in the Indian workforce,

comprising a substantial portion of the economy yet often facing precarious working conditions and limited access to essential welfare schemes (Patro et al., 2024).

In recent years, recognizing the challenges faced by unorganized workers, particularly regarding social security and welfare benefits, the Indian government has introduced several initiatives aimed at addressing these issues. Key among these is the eShram portal, launched in August 2021, designed to facilitate the registration of unorganized workers nationwide. This initiative seeks to establish a comprehensive National Database of Unorganized Workers (NDUW), enhancing the delivery of welfare schemes to millions across various sectors. Additionally, schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) and Aam Admi Beema Yojana have been pivotal in providing old-age protection and social security benefits to eligible workers, albeit challenges remain in extending coverage to all vulnerable groups within the unorganized sector (Akhilwarya & Havenga, 2012).

Telangana, a state known for its diverse economic activities ranging from agriculture to services, hosts a significant segment of the country's unorganized workforce. This sector plays a crucial role in the state's economic landscape, contributing substantially to its growth and

development. Within this framework, women and girl children constitute a vital but often overlooked demographic within Telangana's unorganized workforce. As discussed by the Bhagalpur, (2020), that their participation spans various occupations, including agricultural labor, domestic work, and informal manufacturing, reflecting both their economic agency and the socio-economic challenges they confront

Despite their integral role, women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce encounter multifaceted challenges that influence their earning potential, working conditions, and access to opportunities for socio-economic advancement. The Manimekalai, (2021), stated that the socio-cultural context further shapes their experiences, often limiting their agency and perpetuating gender disparities. Understanding the nuanced dynamics of their engagement within this sector is crucial for designing targeted interventions that promote gender equity, enhance livelihood opportunities, and ensure their rights to dignified work and social security.

The earning ability of women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce reflects their resilience and contribution to household and community economies. However, disparities in wages and opportunities persist, influenced by factors such as occupational segregation, lack of skills training, and discriminatory practices. These disparities underscore the need for policies that not only address economic inequalities but also empower women and girl children to access higher-paying and more secure employment options within the unorganized sector, which was depicted by the Khetarpal, (2015).

While challenges abound, the unorganized sector also presents unique advantages to women, including flexibility in work arrangements, entrepreneurial opportunities, and the potential for self-employment. These advantages highlight the agency and entrepreneurial spirit of women in navigating complex socio-economic landscapes. Moreover, initiatives promoting financial inclusion and skill development can further enhance their capabilities to leverage these opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and economic independence (Clark & Bower, 2016).

This study aims to examine the status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities of women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector. It also seeks to identify the barriers they face in accessing education, healthcare, and social welfare due to their involvement in this sector. Through a comprehensive analysis, this research will provide valuable insights for

policymakers and stakeholders to design effective interventions that support the socio-economic empowerment of women and girl children in Telangana.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature focuses on the multifaceted challenges and motivations faced by women in unorganised sectors, examining their roles as entrepreneurs, laborers, and employees across different geographical contexts. The review integrates findings from several studies to highlight the systemic barriers and societal influences that shape women's economic participation and offers insights into potential strategies for overcoming these challenges. The author Ayisha Akhilwarya and Werner Havenga (2012), explore the pivotal role of women entrepreneurs in South Africa's post-apartheid economy. Their study, conducted in Gauteng with 144 respondents, reveals significant barriers such as limited financial access, regulatory challenges, and cultural norms. Despite these obstacles, women continue to contribute

substantially to income generation and employment, driven by motivations like profitability and personal freedom. This theme of systemic barriers and motivations is echoed in Abha Khetarpal's (2015), examination of working women in India. Khetarpal identifies wage discrimination, cultural barriers, and dual work burdens as major impediments, suggesting that societal changes due to industrialization and globalization have not sufficiently alleviated women's oppression and marginalization.

Furthering this narrative, Madeline Clark and Jamie D. Bower (2016), address the persistent gender wage gap in the United States. Their research highlights the intersectionality of socioeconomic status (SES) and gender in shaping career outcomes, particularly for marginalized women facing financial obstacles and higher poverty rates. The study calls for comprehensive research to inform career development interventions, aligning with Ritu Kumari Bhagalpur's (2020) investigation into the impact of agricultural labor on rural economic development in Bihar, India. Bhagalpur identifies challenges such as irregular employment, low wages, and poor living conditions, despite government welfare schemes, and recommends improvements in agricultural practices and wage policies to foster economic stability. The study of Kumari and MC Garg (2013) delve into the historical context and current studies on attitudes towards women managers, highlighting gender bias in the workplace. They synthesize various studies to reveal a 'male norm' perspective prevalent in traditional research, suggesting the need for promoting equal opportunities for women in leadership positions. This aligns with Udaya Sankar Patro et al. (2024), who examine India's

unorganized sector and advocate for sustained policy support to formalize and enhance welfare in household-based and minor industries, emphasizing the need for inclusive economic policies. The paper of Manimekalai N (2021) investigates the declining female labor participation in India, attributing it to globalization's impact on employment dynamics and the expansion of the informal sector. The study underscores the interconnectedness of SDGs 5, 6, and 8—gender equality, sanitation, and decent work and advocates for improved sanitation facilities to enhance female labor participation. Similarly, Jyothi Rani and Sanjay Kumar Sinha (2016) explore the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in rural Haryana, identifying barriers such as lack of family support, financial limitations, and societal disapproval. They propose solutions like securing sufficient funding, identifying new markets, and seeking professional guidance.

Pooja Jain et al. (2023) focus on the challenges faced by unorganized women entrepreneurs in Chennai district, highlighting structural, legal, social, and economic barriers. Their qualitative study emphasizes the significant obstacles stemming from restrictive social norms and economic hardships, advocating for targeted policy interventions and support systems. This theme is echoed in Anantkumar et al. (2016), who examine India's unorganized retail sector and emphasize the need for policy interventions to enhance social security and improve working conditions. As the study of Zakiya Amani et al. (2023) investigated the challenges faced by BAME women entrepreneurs in the UK, revealing significant obstacles including limited finance, inadequate business-relevant skills, and prejudice. The study highlights the need for deeper examination of gender and racial dynamics impacting BAME female entrepreneurs. Similarly, Ashutosh Sharma et al. (2023) explore the barriers and motivations of women entrepreneurs in New Delhi, identifying challenges such as familial responsibilities, poverty, finance constraints, and discrimination. They recommend interventions to address financial barriers, provide training, and foster a supportive entrepreneurial environment. Remya B and Dhanya M (2024) examine the socio-economic conditions of women employed in textile shops in Kerala's unorganized sector, advocating for policy interventions to bolster legal protections and enhance financial inclusion. Sami Senyal et al. (2024) investigate the obstacles faced by Saudi Arabian women aspiring to leadership roles in the private healthcare sector, revealing significant cultural and organizational barriers. They underscore the need for leadership training initiatives and policy reforms to promote gender equality. Suneetha Kondeti and Dr. Narendra Kumar Illuru (2024) provide a comprehensive assessment of the socio-economic status and challenges faced by female unorganized laborers. Their findings

highlight pervasive issues such as low wages, irregular payments, and lack of social security, advocating for rigorous implementation of labor laws to improve working conditions and livelihoods.

This review of literature illustrates the interconnectedness of challenges faced by women across various economic sectors and geographical contexts. The studies collectively emphasize the need for comprehensive policy interventions, improved working conditions, and supportive environments to enhance women's economic participation and empowerment. By addressing systemic barriers and leveraging motivations, these interventions can contribute to a more equitable and inclusive economic landscape.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Existing studies have focused on various aspects of women's experiences in different unorganized sectors and regions. For instance, research has examined occupational difficulties and welfare barriers in agricultural labor, the broader status of working women in India, and socio-economic conditions in textile shops. However, there remains a significant research gap concerning the specific conditions and barriers faced by women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce. Existing literature often overlooks this demographic's unique challenges, such as access to education, healthcare, and social welfare, critical for understanding and improving their socio-economic conditions. This study aims to address this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis that integrates working conditions, health status, and vulnerabilities specific to women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the current working conditions, health status, and vulnerabilities experienced by women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector?

What barriers do women and girl children face in accessing education, healthcare, and social welfare due to their involvement in the unorganized sector in Telangana?

4.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities of women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector.
- To identify barriers for women and girl children face in accessing education, healthcare, and social welfare due to their work in the unorganized sector.

4.2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to comprehensively examine the conditions and barriers faced by women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce. It seeks to explore the status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities specific to this demographic, providing nuanced insights into their experiences. Additionally, the research aims to identify and analyze barriers hindering their access to education, healthcare, and social welfare due to their engagement in the unorganized sector.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study employs a qualitative and exploratory approach, utilizing primary data to gain in-depth insights into the conditions and barriers faced by women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce. This method allows for a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced experiences and challenges within this demographic.

Research Type: The study utilizes convenient sampling to gather data. This method involves selecting participants who are readily accessible and willing to respond, allowing for efficient data collection from the target population.

Sample Size: A total of 127 responses were collected from women and girl children within Telangana's unorganized workforce. This sample size was deemed sufficient to provide a representative overview of the issues being studied, allowing for meaningful analysis and interpretation of the data.

Study Area: The research focuses on the unorganized workforce in Telangana, capturing a diverse range of experiences and conditions faced by women and girl children within this sector. This geographic focus ensures the findings are relevant and specific to the local context of Telangana.

Statistical Tools

- **Discriminant Analysis:** This statistical tool was utilized to examine the status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities of women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized

- sector. It helps identify and explain the differences between groups by determining which variables discriminate between predefined groups.

Exploratory Factor Analysis: This method was employed to identify barriers women and girl children face in accessing education, healthcare, and social welfare due to their work in the unorganized sector. It helps uncover underlying relationships between variables by grouping them into factors, providing insights into the main barriers affecting their access to essential services.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Objective 1 - To examine the status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities of women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector.

Table – 1

Eigenvalues of status of women and girl children

Function	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	1.501 ^a	77.4	77.4	.775
2	.359 ^a	18.5	95.9	.514
3	.080 ^a	4.1	100.0	.272

Source – Primary data

The table shows the eigenvalues indicate that the first function explains a substantial portion of variance (77.4%) in the status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities of women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector. This suggests a strong relationship captured by the canonical correlation of 0.775, highlighting key factors influencing their overall well-being. The subsequent functions contribute progressively less variance, indicating diminishing additional insights beyond the primary factors identified.

Table 2

Wilks' Lambda of status of women and girl children

Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1 through 3	.272	156.017	24	.000
2 through 3	.682	46.007	14	.000
3	.926	9.195	6	.163

Source – Primary data

The table presents Wilks' Lambda test results indicates significant multivariate relationships across functions (Chi-square = 156.017, df = 24, $p < 0.001$), highlighting substantial differences in the status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities among women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector. The findings suggest that the first function significantly influences these variables, while subsequent functions contribute incrementally less to explaining the overall variance.

Table 3

Structure Matrix of status of women and girl children

	Function		
	1	2	3

Working Condition			
Working hours conducive to maintaining work-life balance	.452*		
You have adequate tools and equipment for safe and efficient work			.515*
Workplace safe and conducive to good health		-.523*	
Health Status			
Rate your overall health as good			.394*
Employer support your health maintenance		.479*	
Vulnerabilities			
You feel secure in your job and free from unemployment fears	.359*		
Are there opportunities for skill development and career growth available to you	.473*		
You have access to social security benefits			-.543*

Source – Primary data

The table presents the Structure Matrix of status of working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities of women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector.

Working Conditions:

The structure matrix reveals significant positive correlations between favorable working conditions and maintaining work-life balance (.452*) and having adequate tools for safe work (.515*). Conversely, a negative correlation with workplace safety (-.523*) indicates concerns about health hazards. This suggests that while resources for efficient work are available, safety measures require improvement to ensure a healthier work environment.

Health Status:

The analysis shows the Health status of Women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector generally rate their overall health positively (.394*), indicating a moderate perception of well-being. Support from employers in health maintenance (.479*) further contributes positively to health outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of workplace health initiatives and employer support in enhancing the health status of workers.

Vulnerabilities:

The structure matrix highlights status vulnerabilities among women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector. The analysis shows, Participants express moderate job security perceptions (.359*), indicating a foundational sense of stability. The table depicts that, Positive correlations with opportunities for skill development and career growth (.473*) suggest potential pathways for empowerment through enhanced training and career advancement. However, challenges in accessing social security benefits (-.543*) underscore significant gaps in safety nets crucial for economic resilience. Addressing these vulnerabilities requires bridging gaps in social security access and reinforcing job security measures to ensure comprehensive support for women and girl children in the sector.

The study concludes that, status among working conditions, health, and vulnerabilities reveals that health status is perceived most positively, with moderate well-being and employer support. Working conditions show a mix of positive

aspects, such as work-life balance and adequate tools, but significant concerns regarding workplace safety persist. Vulnerabilities are the most critical issue, with moderate job security and skill development opportunities overshadowed by substantial challenges in accessing social security benefits.

Objective 2 - To identify barriers for women and girl children face in accessing education, healthcare, and social welfare due to their work in the unorganized sector.

Table 4

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.826
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	205.500
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

Source – Primary data

The table shows the results from Table 4 indicate a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of 0.826, suggesting that the data are sufficiently adequate for factor analysis. The table depicts that, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a significant chi-square value of 205.500 (df = 36, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the correlations between variables are significant, supporting the suitability of the data for factor analysis. These findings validate the presence of identifiable barriers faced by women and girl children in accessing education, healthcare, and social welfare due to their employment in Telangana's unorganized sector.

Table 5

Component Matrix of barriers for women and girl children

	Component
	1
Education	
Have you experienced discrimination at school because of your work	.572
You have access to educational resources and support	.649
Your family prioritize your education despite your work	.618
Healthcare	
Work conditions negatively affect your health	.613
You faced barriers to healthcare due to your work schedule	.652
Aware of and utilize government healthcare schemes	.568
Social Welfare Schemes	
You receive support from government or NGOs for welfare benefits	.646
Applying for social welfare schemes easy and accessible for you	.580

Source – Primary data

The table presents the component matrix reveals one component that explain the barriers faced by women and girl children in accessing Education, Healthcare, and Social Welfare due to work in the unorganized sector of Telangana.

Education

The component matrix reveals that education-related barriers for women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector include significant factors such as experiencing discrimination at school (.572), limited access to educational resources and support (.649), and challenges in prioritizing education within families (.618). These findings indicate that despite efforts to attend school, discriminatory practices and inadequate familial support pose substantial hurdles. The factor concludes that, barriers could involve educational reforms promoting inclusive school environments and enhancing support mechanisms to ensure educational continuity for girl children affected by work commitments.

Healthcare

The analysis highlights barriers in healthcare access for women and girl children, with factors such as work conditions negatively affecting health (.613), barriers due to work schedules (.652), and limited utilization of government healthcare schemes (.568). These findings underscore pervasive health risks and systemic challenges in accessing timely healthcare services due to work-related constraints. Addressing these issues may require policies promoting workplace health initiatives, flexible healthcare delivery models, and increased awareness about existing healthcare schemes to mitigate health disparities and improve overall well-being.

Social Welfare Schemes

The table reveals that significant barriers for women and girl children accessing social welfare schemes in Telangana's unorganized sector include insufficient support from government or NGOs (.646) and challenges in navigating application processes (.580). Interestingly, there is a lower barrier reported for difficulty accessing schemes due to work constraints (.473),

suggesting that these specific challenges may not pose as much difficulty as bureaucratic and support-related issues. These findings underscore systemic obstacles hindering access to vital welfare programs crucial for economic and social security. Addressing these barriers through improved accessibility, simplified application procedures, and targeted outreach initiatives could effectively enhance participation and improve socio-economic outcomes for women and girl children in the region's unorganized sector.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 1) The study found that, Women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector generally rate their overall health positively (.394*), indicating a moderate level of well-being and suggesting that health support initiatives from employers play a crucial role.
- 2) The data finds significant positive correlation (.452*) between favorable working conditions and the ability to maintain work-life balance, highlighting the importance of supportive work hours in enhancing overall quality of life for these workers.
- 3) The table shows the Despite adequate tools for safe work (.515*), concerns about workplace safety persist (-.523*), indicating the need for improved safety measures to mitigate health hazards effectively.
- 4) The Participants express moderate perceptions of job security (.359*), indicating a foundational sense of stability in their employment, yet significant gaps remain in accessing social security benefits (-.543*), posing challenges to economic resilience.
- 5) The study found that, Discrimination at school due to work is prevalent (.572), highlighting educational barriers for women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized sector.
- 6) The study finds that, Work conditions significantly impact health (.613) emphasizing the urgent need for improved health policies and workplace conditions.
- 7) The results highlights that, Limited utilization of government healthcare schemes (.568) underscores gaps in healthcare access despite scheme availability, calling for enhanced awareness and outreach efforts.
- 8) The study signifies that, Insufficient support from government or NGOs for welfare benefits (.646) hinder socio-economic support, necessitating streamlined processes and increased support mechanisms.

- 9) The Exploratory analysis highlights that, Lower reported barriers in accessing schemes due to work constraints (.473) suggest that while work-related challenges exist, bureaucratic and support-related issues present more significant obstacles to accessing social welfare programs, requiring targeted policy interventions for improved accessibility.

8. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study has provided a comprehensive assessment of conditions and barriers faced by women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce, highlighting critical impacts on their well-being and socio-economic security. It finds a moderate level of overall health, supported by positive employer roles in health maintenance, yet highlights persistent concerns over workplace safety, necessitating improved safety measures. The study identifies significant hurdles in accessing education, healthcare, and social welfare due to work-related constraints, notably discrimination in schools and underutilization of government healthcare schemes. Additionally, while participants perceive foundational job security, gaps in accessing social security benefits crucial for economic resilience remain critical challenges. The study concludes that, targeted interventions to improve conditions for women and girl children in Telangana's unorganized workforce. The study highlights Priority actions include strengthening workplace safety regulations to ensure a secure environment and enhancing accessibility to government healthcare schemes to address healthcare disparities. It suggest to take Initiatives to contest discrimination in schools and support educational continuity are crucial, alongside efforts to streamline access to social security benefits for enhanced economic stability. Additionally, it suggests that Collaborative efforts involving local communities, employers, and governmental and non-governmental organizations are essential for effective implementation of these recommendations and holistic support for the workforce.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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