



## Working Conditions of Beedi workers in Nizamabad District

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### KEYWORDS

#### Introduction

Labour is one of the most important factors of production. The effective utilization of other factors largely depends upon the proper utilization of time and energy of workers. In fact, workers are human beings capable of holding responsibilities, extending co-operation and achieving objectives. They have their own attributes and aspirations, which, if handled properly, lead to the success of industrial or other work and growth of the economy. Besides, labour is no more an unorganized mass of ignorant and unconscious workers ready to obey the arbitrary and discretionary dictates of the employers/managements. To-day management deals with labour not only as individuals but also as members of trade unions which have greatly added to its strength and consciousness. The industrial worker of to-day has, therefore, acquired a dignity not known to his predecessor. He is no longer the unskilled worker of the days gone by, engaged in an unending struggle to eke out his living neglected by society except for his labour and with very limited aspirations. He has now a personality of his own. He shares the benefits which a Welfare State like India with a vast population and inadequate resources can offer and sometimes even more. He enjoys a measure of social security. He is secure in his employment once he enters it. He cannot be dismissed unjustly and has been given statutory protection against retrenchment and lay-off, and the like. In the days since independence, there has been a continuous rise in his money earnings and he now receives several new amenities because of legislation and also because the condition of the new industries requires the provision of these facilities, though this has not been without struggles nor has it necessarily improved his standard of living significantly or mitigated his worries about the future of his dependants since the employment situation in the country has been increasingly more difficult.

The question of labour is, therefore, of vital significance for any country both from national and international point of view. The future prosperity of a nation depends, in a large measure, on the proper solution of various special problems of labour engaged in various industries of the country. The industrial labour in many countries has now become a pivotal force which can be utilized towards the constructive purposes of the nation. For example, in India, labour has to play a pivotal role in the implementation of development programmes designed to benefit millions of people in the country. It is a dual core; the working class is not only a significant segment of the population and beneficiary of the fruits of development but is also the most important instrument for the achievement of national objectives. This dual core of labour "affects .not only the relationship between union and management but also the size and regularity of labour's income".

#### The Present Paper

The present paper is prepared with an intention to highlight the working conditions of labour in beedi industry in Nizamabad District. For the purpose of preparing the present paper the researcher has collected the primary data by deploying a schedule exclusively prepared for the purpose.

#### Objective

The present paper is prepared keeping the objective given hereunder in view to study the working conditions of labour in beedi industry in Nizamabad District.

#### Sample Design

The present study is confined to labour in beedi industry of Nizamabad district. The present study area consists of three revenue zones of Nizamabad district and 350 study beedi labour samples is taken as sample. Proportionate sampling is used for conducting the study. The sample size is more representative under the this sampling method..

#### WORKING CONDITIONS

Many of the studies revealed that most of the workers working for beedi industry are not given identity cards or other documents which are required for obtaining benefits under the law. Labour working for beedi industry in the entire country also is not aware of the laws as well. However, even if some awareness is there, the industry being home-based, the workers are scattered and collective action is difficult. The worst part, however, .is that helplessness and poverty-with no alternative work prospects-impels them to suffer in silence. Over the years, many efforts have been made to improve the working and jiving conditions of workers and their families involved in the beedi industry.

#### METHODS OF PRODUCTION

The methods of production of beedi vary from State to State and sometimes within the state they vary from district to district, depending on local conditions, and also on the business exigencies of the manufacturer. Broadly, production systems can be categorized as follows:

- Workers employed in the factory to roll beedies under the direct supervision of the management/owner;
- Company/branch issues raw material (tobacco, thread and tendu patta) directly to the Workers who roll beedies at their homes and bring it back to the company;
- Distribution of raw material to the contractors who in turn distribute them to workers to get the beedies rolled through workers either in their work sheds or throughout-workers in their homes; This is the most widely prevalent system whereby contractors get the beedies rolled and the company does the checking, roasting, labeling and packing in its premises.
- Sale-purchase method whereby raw material is sold to the workers and the rolled beedies are bought from them by the same contractor/ trader/ company (but using different name). This helps avoid the employer - employee relationship obligations under the beedi workers laws.
- In the direct system women directly take raw materials from the employer and return the finished products. Under the contract system manufacturers hire the contractors. In turn, the contractors give work to the workers. In the sale-purchase system manufacturers/contractors sell the raw material to the

contractors/workers and buy back the finished products from them in two separate transactions.

Earlier when work was direct men used to be equally active in beedi rolling but since factories and work units have closed down, the beedi rolling work has become home-based and thereby, dominated by women. Men are involved in labeling, marketing and selling the finished product. The sale-purchase system has been adopted by the manufacturers to avoid obligations of the employer employee relationship under the labour laws. In this system the manufacturer registers different companies. One company is responsible for buying the tendu patta and the tobacco from the market. This company then sells the raw material to the second company, which then 'sells' specified quantities of the raw materials to the contractor or directly to the worker. The worker is required to prepare the beedies which are then 'sold' back by her to the third company, whose sole 'business' is 'buying' the finished beedies from the workers. The amount the worker receives for beedies is equal to the 'wage' he/she should be receiving. The fourth company then sells the finished beedies in the market. All these companies are owned usually by one family. The worker has no choice as to who to 'sell' the beedies to and no control over the process, as would be the case with an independent producer.

### MANUFACTURING PROCESS OF BEEIDIES

**i) Soaking:** The beedi manufacturing process starts with the soaking of the dry wrapper leaves so as to make them soft. The dry leaves are soaked by pulling them in to small quantity-of water in earthen pots in the evening and they are taken out in the early morning and allowed to lose excess water.

**ii) Cutting:** The leaves that are soaked over night are cut to size in the morning. The employers supply tin trays to the workers to cut the leaves in the required size. The size and condition of the leaf may enable the beedi-roller either one or two beedies from each leaf.

**iii) Smoothening:** The reverse side of the leaves is smoothened by scratching away the thicker veins on the back side of the leaf with the help of a small hack saw blade.

**iv) Rolling:** The thicker veins of the tendu leaves on their backside are smoothened by scratching them away with the help of an hack saw blade. The leaves that are so smoothened are covered either by a wet cloth or by one then layer gunny bag till the rolling process is over.

**v) Filling:** Even while rolling a small quantity of tobacco powder is put inside the rolled leaf to facilitate rolling. Conical shaped, partly hollow, beedies are arranged in a ceramic coated tray plate with fire end upwards and tobacco powder is poured in them in such a way that half filled beedies are filled completely with the tobacco powder. Filling all the beedies at a time saves time. But some beedies may remain unfilled. As such, some times, beedies may be filled one by one. R

**vi) Closing:** At this type of operation the mouth of the beedi at the fire end is closed.

**vii) Bundling:** After the completion of closing operation seen after closing the head then the beedies are bundled in to 12 or 25 as the case may be (locally called beedi kattas) and taken to the employer at the end of the day's work. The employer inspects the bundles, rejects the defective ones and pays for the good ones at the stipulated rate per 1000.

**viii) Warming:** warming of beedies can be done by means of two methods. The first method of warming the beedies is to keep the beedies under the hot sun income alternatives for these poor women. While demanding protection of this industry, they have also been urging the government to formulate policies and measures aimed at assisting beedi workers to shift to alternative livelihoods.

Both the trade unions and the beedi manufacturers state that the beedi industry itself has come under pressure in recent years following the economic liberalization policies. The entry of tobacco multi-nationals, changing consumer preferences towards cigarettes and other non-beedi tobacco products and the growing competition from small scale beedi manufacturers in the informal sector is forcing the main beedi manufacturers to shift from the relatively organized sector to more backward and poverty-ridden areas in search of unorganized and cheaper labour. All this is contributing towards the decline in the availability of work and incomes to women in traditional beedi rolling areas. Most beedi women say that they have barely enough work for 2-3 days a week, sometimes even less.

Working conditions and the welfare facilities available to the labour employed by the beedi industry in Nizamabad district. The labor working for beedi industry from two places viz.. from home and in the factory premises. For the labours who are working for beedi industry from home the working conditions are not so conducive. But the workers who are working for the beedi industry in the factory premises are having relatively better facilities. They enjoy certain facilities like lighting ventilation rest rooms and the like.

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of select sample respondent labour of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and place of work where from the respondents are working for the beedi industry**

Name of the Revenue Division	Place from where the respondents work for beedi industry		Total
	At Home	In the factory Premises	
Nizamabad	78(78.00) (26.35)	22(22.00) (40.74)	100(100) (28.57)
Bodhan	83(83.00) (28.04)	17(17.0) (31.48)	100(100) (28.57)
Kamareddy	135(90.00) (45.61)	15(10.00) (27.78)	150(100) (42.86)
<b>Total</b>	296(84.57) (100)	54(15.43) (100)	350(100) (100)
<b>Chi-Square</b>	$\chi^2 = 6.887^*$ , $p = 0.032$ , $df = 2$ $TV = 5.99$		

#### \*Significant at 5 per cent level

**Source:** Field Survey data

**Note** : Figures in parentheses represent percentages to totals  
Table 1 portrays the distribution of select sample respondents of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and the place from where the respondents work for beedi industry. It is understood from the table that 296 respondents (84.60 per cent) out of 350 said that they work for beedi industry just by sitting at their homes, and 54 respondents (15.40 per cent) stated that they work for beedi industry by making beedies at the factory premises along with other members.

135 respondents (90.00 per cent) out of 150 in Kamareddy revenue division, 83 respondents (83.00 per cent) out of 100 in Bodhan revenue division and 78 respondents (78.00 per cent) out of 100 in Nizamabad revenue division said that they work for beedi industry just by sitting at their respective homes. And 22 respondents (22.00 per cent) in Nizamabad revenue division, 17 respondents (17.00 per cent) in Bodhan revenue division and 15 respondents (10.00 per cent) in Kamareddy revenue division said that they are working for beedi industry from the factory premises

along with the other members.

From the foregoing analysis it is clearly understood that majority of the respondents (84.57 per cent) in all the three revenue divisions together said that they are working for beedi industry just by silting at their homes and 15.43pcr cent respondents in all the three revenue divisions together said that they are involved in beedi making activity at the factory premises along with other members. Majority of the respondents (45.61 per cent), who said that they are working for beedi industry just by sitting at their homes, are representing Kamareddy revenue division. Majority of the respondents who stated that they are working for beedi industry by working in the factory premises along with others, arc representing Nizamabad revenue division. Graph further shows similar inference.

**Table 2**  
**Distribution of select simple respondent labour of beedi industry Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and details of how long they have been working in beedi rolling activity**

Name of the Revenue Division	Extent of time over which the sample respondents work in beedi rolling activity				Total
	For one year	Two years	Three years	More than 4 years	
Nizamabad	8(8.00) (26.67)	20(20.00) (31.74)	4(4.00) (7.69)	68(68.00) (33.17)	100(100) (28.57)
Bodhan	2(2.00) (6.66)	10(10.00) (15.87)	10(10.00) (19.23)	78(78.00) (38.04)	100(100) (28.57)
Kamareddy	20(13.33) (66.67)	33(22.00) (52.38)	38(25.33) (73.08)	59(39.33) (28.79)	150(100) (42.86)
<b>Total</b>	30(8.57) (100)	63(18.00) (100)	52(14.85) (100)	205(58.58) (100)	350(100) (100)
<b>Chi-Square</b>	$\chi^2 = 52.199^*$ , $p = 0.000$ , $df = 6$ TV = 16.81				

\*Significant at 1 per cent level

Source: Field Survey data

Note : Figures in parentheses represent percentages to totals

Table 2 shows the distribution of select sample respondents of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and the extent of lime over which the sample respondents working in beedi activity for beedi industry in three revenue divisions. It is understood from the above table that 205 respondents (58.58 per cent) out of 350 in all the three revenue divisions together said that they have been making beedies for more than four years followed by 63 respondents (18.00 per cent) in all the three revenue divisions together who said that they have been employed in the beedi industry in Nizamabad district for the past three years. 52 respondents (14.85 per cent) have been working for the past three years and 3d respondents (8.57 per cent) are working for the past one year.

78 respondents (78.00 per cent) out of 100 are working for beedi industry in Bodhan revenue division for more than four years followed by 10 respondents (10.00 per cent) working for the three years. 10 respondents (10.00 per cent) working for the past two years, and two respondents (2.00 per cent) working for the past one year in Bodhan revenue division.

68 respondents (68.00 per cent) out of 100 in Nizamabad revenue division are working for beedi industry for more than four years

followed by 20 respondents (20.00 per cent) for the past two years, eight respondents (8.00 per cent) for the past one year and four respondents for the past three years are working for beedi industry in Nizamabad revenue division.

59 respondents (39.34 per cent) out of 150 have been working for beedi industry for more than four years followed by 38 respondents (25.33 per cent) working for the past three years 33 respondents (22.00 per cent) for the past two years, 20 respondents (13.33 per cent) for the past one year have been working for beedi industry in Kamareddy revenue division.

From the foregoing analysis one can infer that majority of the respondents (58.58 per cent) in all the three revenue divisions together have been working for beedi industry for more than four years and only a few respondents (5.57 per cent) out of 350 in all the three revenue divisions together have been working for the past one year. It is clearly observed from the study that for majority of the respondents the main occupation is beedi making activity. Therefore, a sizable number of respondents have been working for more than four years. Majority of the respondents who said that they have been employed by the beedi industry for more than four years, arc representing Bodhan revenue division whereas those respondents who said that they have been employed by the beedi industry for just one year belong to Kamareddy revenue division. The graph still supports the data given in table.

**Table.3**  
**Distribution of select sample respondent labour of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and their opinions about the existence of unions to present their grievances**

Name of the Revenue Division	Opinions of the respondent labour of beedit industry on the existence of unions to represent their grievances		Total
	Yes	No	
Nizamabad	4(4.00) (50.00)	96(96.00) (28.07)	100(100) (28.57)
Bodhan	-	100(100.00) (29.23)	100(100) (28.57)
Kamareddy	4(2.67) (50.00)	146(97.33) (42.7)	150(100) (42.86)
<b>Total</b>	8(2.29) (100)	342(97.71) (100)	350(100) (100)

Source: Field Survey data

Note : Figures in parentheses represent percentages to totals

Table 3 shows the distribution of select sample respondents of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and their opinions about the existence of unions to represent their grievances. From the above table it is clearly understood that 342 respondents (97.71 per cent) out of 350 have responded that they do not have any union to get redressal of their grievances. And only eight respondents (2.29 per cent) irrespective of their revenue division from where they have been working for beedi industry in Nizamabad district have stated that they have unions through which they get redressal of their grievances.

146 out of 150 respondents who have been working for beedi industry in Kamareddy revenue division. 100 respondents of Bodhan revenue division and 96 out of 100 respondents of Nizamabad revenue division said that they do not have unions to sought redressal for their grievances. A very few respondents in all the three revenue divisions said that they have unions to represent their grievances for settlement.

From the foregoing analysis one can infer that all the respondents who are working for beedi industry in Bodhan revenue division,

97.33 per cent of respondents in Kamareddy revenue division and 96.00 per cent respondents in Nizamabad revenue division said that they do not have unions to represent their grievances to them. Majority of the respondents who said that they do not have any union to represent their grievances are representing Kamareddy revenue division. A few respondents in all the three revenue divisions together who have, said that they have unions to represent their grievances, are representing Nizamabad and Kamareddy revenue divisions and no respondent is representing Bodhan to say that he has union to represent grievances. Majority of the respondents who stated that they have unions to represent their grievances for redressal are representing Kamareddy revenue division.

**Table 4**  
**Distribution of select sample respondent labour of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and the opinions of the respondents regarding whether their unions are registered are not**

Name of the Revenue Division	Opinions of the respondent labour of beedi industry on the existence of unions to represent their grievances			Total
	Registered	Unregistered	Don't Know	
Nizamabad	3(3.00) (50.00)	28(28.00) (31.82)	69(69.00) (26.95)	100(100) (28.57)
Bodhan	-	4(4.00) (4.54)	96(96.00) (37.50)	100(100) (28.57)
Kamareddy	3(2.00) (50.00)	56(37.30) (63.64)	91(60.70) (35.504)	150(100) (42.86)
Total	6(1.72) (100)	88(25.14) (100)	256(73.14) (100)	350(100) (100)

Source: Field Survey data

Note : Figures in parentheses represent percentages to totals

Table 4 portrays the distribution of select sample respondents of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and the opinions of the respondents as to whether they have registered their unions or not. It is clearly understood from the table that 256 respondents (73.14 per cent) out of 350 did not respond either positively (Registered) or negatively (Un-registered) followed by 88 respondents (25.14 per cent) who said that their unions are not registered and only six respondents (1.72 per cent) who said that their unions are registered.

96 respondents (96.00 per cent) out of 100 who are working for beedi industry in Bodhan revenue division have stated that they do not know whether their unions are registered or unregistered followed by four respondents (4.00 per cent) who responded that their unions are unregistered. No respondent from Bodhan revenue division has come forward to say that his union is registered.

91 respondents (60.70 per cent) out of 150 who are working for beedi industry in Kamareddy revenue division said that they do not know whether their unions are registered or unregistered followed by 56 respondents (37.30 per cent) who have stated that their unions are unregistered and only three respondents (2.00 per cent) who have stated that their unions are registered.

69 respondents (69.00 per cent) of those who are working for beedi industry in Nizamabad revenue division have stated that they do not know whether their union is registered or not followed by 28 respondents (28.00 per cent) who stated that their unions are unregistered and only three respondents (3.00 per cent) have responded that their unions are registered.

From the foregoing analysis one can infer that majority of the respondents (73.14 per cent) in all the three revenue divisions

together said that they do not know whether their unions are registered or unregistered, and only six respondents in all the three revenue divisions together have said that their unions are registered. Majority of the respondents, who said that they do not know whether their unions are registered or not registered, are representing Bodhan revenue division. But a few respondents who are representing Nizamabad and Bodhan revenue divisions have stated that their unions are registered.

**Table 5**  
**Distribution of select sample respondent labour of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and their opinions about working environment of beedi industry**

Name of the Revenue Division	Respondents and their opinions on the availability of the environment			Total
	Average	Good	Fair	
Nizamabad	27(27.00) (26.47)	35(35.00) (32.71)	38(38.00) (26.95)	100(100) (28.57)
Bodhan	45(45.00) (44.11)	22(22.00) (20.56)	33(33.00) (23.40)	100(100) (28.57)
Kamareddy	30(20.00) (29.42)	50(33.30) (46.73)	70(46.70) (49.65)	150(100) (42.86)
Total	102(29.14) (100)	107(30.57) (100)	141(40.29) (100)	350(100) (100)
Chi-Square	$\chi^2=19.471^{**}$ $p=0.006$ , $df=4$ , $TV=13.28$			

\*\*Significant at 1 per cent level

Source: Field Survey data

Note : Figures in parentheses represent percentages to totals

Table 5 depicts the distribution of select sample respondents of beedi industry in Nizamabad district over different revenue divisions and their opinions about the working environment' where they are working. It is understood from the table that 141 respondents (40.29 per cent) out of 350 have said that the working environment is fair followed by 107 respondents (30.57 per cent) who have stated that the working environment is good for their working and 102 respondents (29.14 per cent) irrespective of the revenue division from where they are working said that the working environment is average.

70 respondents (46.70 per cent) working for beedi industry in Kamareddy revenue division have agreed that the working environment available for them is fair followed by 50 respondents (33.30 per cent) who have stated that the working environment around them is good and 30 respondents (20.00 per cent) who have stated that the working environment around them is average.

45 respondents (45.00 per cent) who are working for beedi industry in Bodhan revenue division have agreed that the working environment available to them is average, followed by 33 respondents (33.00 per cent) who said that the working environment available for them is fair and 22 respondents (22.00 per cent) have agreed that the working environment is good.

38 respondents (38.00 per cent) working for beedi industry in Nizamabad revenue division said that the working environment for them is fair, followed by, 35 respondents (33.00) who have responded saying that the working environment for them is good and 27 respondents (27.00 per cent) who are working for beedi

industry in Nizamabad revenue division said that the working environment is average.

From the foregoing analysis one can infer that majority of the respondents (40.29 per cent) who are working for beedi industry in Nizamabad, Bodhan and Kamareddy revenue divisions have agreed that they have average and fair environment respectively to work in the beedi rolling activity and the least number of respondents working in Nizamabad. Kamareddy and in Bodhan revenue division have said that they have average and good working environment in beedi rolling activity. Majority of the respondents who said that the working environment is good and fair are representing Kamareddy revenue division and majority of the respondents who said that they have average environment at their work place are representing Bodhan revenue division. Graph further shows similar interference.

### Conclusion

Labour is of vital importance for any country both from national and international point of view. The future prosperity of India depends in a large measure on finding proper solutions to various special problems of labour engaged in various industries in general and beedi industry in particular. The labour in India has been classified into organized and unorganized sectors. Besides general laws, the government of India has enacted several laws. The ministry of Labour Affairs has been administering several funds for beedi workers. Though there exist several Acts to protect labour working in beedi industry, most of the workers working for beedi industry are not given identity Cards or other documents which are required for obtaining benefits under the law. Andhra Pradesh is the Second largest beedi manufacturing in India. Tobacco production is confined to some major states in India. Similarly, the production of tendu leaves is also confined to certain major states in India. Beedi manufacturing involves several methods and operations. The manufacturers, trade unions, NGOs are under the opinion that the beedi industry is under pressure due to public health concerns, emergence of economic liberalization policies banning of smoking in public places and the like.

### Working Conditions and Welfare facilities to Labour in Beedi Industry in Nizamabad District

- Labour who are working for beedi industry from home at present and even in future should be allowed to work from their respective homes because the beedi industry is dominated by female workers and, in turn these female workers usually are assisted by their children during their leisure times.
- Remunerative wages shall be paid along with all other facilities for the labour who are working for beedi industry for more than four years.
- The beedi workers shall come forward and form unions for themselves and they shall become members in their unions so as to bring their grievances to the notice of their respective unions for getting redressal.
- Labourers working for beedi industry shall be aware of themselves about the advantages of registering and owning unions for themselves. They shall form their unions and register them with an appropriate authorized body.
- All the labourers who are working for beedi industry in the district shall have their unions in which they shall invariably become members.
- Week end holiday is highly necessary for all the labourers who are working in the district, The proprietors shall take lead and pay an average pay for Sunday and allow them to relax and enjoy on that day.

- Good environment should be available to the workers working for beedi industry especially those who are working from their homes because the beedi industry is a home based industry. They need good environment in the sense that they shall have clean and tidy surroundings, ventilation good lighting, good air and the like.
- Proprietors of beedi factories in the Nizamabad district shall declare Saturday as week end holiday with minimum wage without assigning them any work on that day. In a democratic country and in socialistic pattern of society like ours week and holiday is very much essential.
- The proprietors of beedi factories in the district shall extract work from the beedi labour only for six days. Government shall also intervene in this regard and issue a notice to all the proprietors of beedi factories that they shall not insist upon the labour of beedi industry to work for them for more than eight hours a day. After the issue of notice, if any beedi factory owner in the district resorts to extract work for more than eight hours a day. legal action should be initiated and a fine shall be imposed on such proprietors.