

**YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ECONOMICS
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME**

**A STUDY ON CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR
(CASE STUDY : NORTH OKKALAPA TOWNSHIP)**

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EMPA - 70 (20th BATCH)**

JUNE, 2025

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A thesis submitted as a partial fulfillment towards the requirement for the degree of
Master of Public Administration (MPA)

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This is to certify that this thesis entitled “**A STUDY ON CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR (CASE STUDY : NORTH OKKALAPA TOWNSHIP)**” submitted as the requirement for the Degree of Master of Public Administration has been accepted by the Board of Examiners.

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ABSTRACT

Child labour is one of the major problems in Myanmar. The elimination of child labor is a global concern and a major national challenge, as thousands of children continue to work in hazardous and exploitative conditions. This objective of study is to investigate the causes and consequences of child labour in North Okkalapa Township. The quantitative research method was used. Descriptive method was used in this study. In addition, the structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 265 child labour in North Okkalapa townships. It has been found that 67.92% of children drop out at the primary level, with 66.41% of them working to support their families. Additionally, 53.58% of respondents have migrated from other states and regions to Yangon in search of better job opportunities, as their hometowns offer limited employment prospects, 46.79% of working people in Yangon earn between 100,000 and 150,000 MMK per month.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
C138 ILO	Convention No.138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and work
EFA	Early Childhood Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
MLF	Myanmar Labour Force
MY-PEC	Myanmar Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
KAP	Endline Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations; Children's Fund
UN	United Nation
UNDCCP	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
WHOAL	World Health Organization's Quality of Life

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the study

Child labour remains a widespread issue in many developing countries, primarily driven by poverty and the low income of parents. In households where adults lack access to stable or formal employment, children are often compelled to engage in various forms of work to contribute to the family's survival. Despite government policies offering free primary and middle school education, the indirect costs such as transportation, meals, and other informal expenses continue to be a financial burden for poor families. As a result, many children are forced to leave school prematurely and enter the workforce. Furthermore, while legal frameworks prohibiting child labour exist, enforcement is often weak or inconsistent, allowing the practice to persist in both formal and informal sectors (ILO, 2006).

Economic hardship, political instability, and deep-rooted social norms promote child labor in Myanmar. Natural and man-made calamities, particularly civil upheaval, put youngsters in dangerous and exploitative jobs. Poverty, poor education, and lax labor laws worsen the situation. Thousands of Myanmar youngsters work in perilous industries including agriculture, construction, and domestic service, facing physical and psychological hazards. Child labor is fueled by economic instability and weak legal protections, according to the ILO. In response, the ILO has worked with local partners to implement targeted legal reform, community awareness, and educational and social support systems as sustainable alternatives to child labour (ILO, 2023).

Myanmar is witnessing political and economic changes that affect child labor. Recent economic liberalization, wars, and relocation have made youngsters vulnerable to labor. Child labor elimination is a national priority and challenge. Global child labor is a societal issue. World surveys show that every percent rise in poverty promotes 8.7% of child labor in all nations. One in 10 kids work. The globe has 152 million child laborers in 2016. In 2020, there were 160 million juvenile laborers, up 8 million in four years, with 6.5 million working in dangerous jobs. COVID-19's economic impact 19 epidemic and school closures have made child employment a coping method for disadvantaged households, with almost 8.9 million child labourers globally by 2022 (ILO & UNICEF, 2021).

Myanmar has ratified two ILO agreements to eliminate child labor. The country became the 178th ILO member state to ratify ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour on 18 December 2013. This treaty requires prompt and effective action to end slavery, human trafficking, and hazardous child labor. Myanmar ratified ILO Convention No. 138 on 8 June 2020, which sets minimum employment age requirements and promotes the gradual elimination of child labor through national legislation and policies. These actions demonstrate Myanmar's commitment to international labour standards and child rights. As the lead agency for child labor issues in the country, the Ministry of Labour works with other government departments, employers, labor organizations, the ILO, and UNICEF to implement protective measures across the economy.

Myanmar's largest city, as a focus area on North Okkalapa Township, one of the most densely populated and low-income areas of Yangon, provides a strategic and meaningful context for studying child labour in urban Myanmar. The township is home to many migrant families and informal settlements, where economic instability and precarious living conditions heighten the risk of children entering the workforce. Many households rely on unstable or insufficient incomes, making it more likely that children are required to contribute financially. Additionally, limited access to quality education, particularly in the poorer wards of the township contributes to high dropout rates or lack of school enrollment altogether. This educational deficiency and socioeconomic poverty render youngsters more vulnerable to exploitation and labor. North Okkalapa is a key location for studying urban child labor's causes and effects. This study is essential for increasing awareness, guiding future initiatives, and supporting Myanmar's efforts to protect and develop children in accordance with international human rights norms. The research used data and samples from numerous densely populated locations in North Okkalapa Township to explore urban child laborers' problems.

1.2 Objective of the study

The Objective of the study are

- To describe the current situation of the child labour in Myanmar
- To investigate the causes and consequences of child labour in North Okkalapa Township, Yangon

1.3 Method of the study

This survey was conducted in North Okkalapa Townships. Survey results were interpreted descriptively. Secondary data were acquired from academic journals, research papers, books, reports, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and

Population, INGOs, UNICEF, and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement. Primary data were collected via structured questionnaires.

1.4 Scope and limitation of the study

The research examines North Okkalapa Township child laborers. North Okkalapa Township randomly chose 265 responses. Survey respondents were from electronics and hardware stores, rice and oil shops, teashops, restaurants, street vendors, vehicle workshops, bazaars, metal refining, water purification, glue grinding, building sites, and other North Okkalapa Township shops. The survey did not question owners or managers or consider parent sentiments. It exclusively covers North Okkalapa Township under-18 child labor.

1.5 Organization of the study

The thesis has five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study's premise, objectives, method, scope, constraints, and organization. Chapter two discusses child labor worldwide, its causes, effects, and definition. Chapter three covers child labor, its regulations, and Myanmar's present child labor operations. Chapter four covers survey profile, design, and outcomes. Chapter five concludes with observations and suggestions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Situation of Child Labour in Countries around the World

Child labor persists worldwide. In 2024, 138 million children worked worldwide, according to projections. Over a third, 54 million, labor in dangerous conditions. Most child labor occurs in low-income nations, although more than half happens in middle-income ones. Children work in difficult, hazardous, and exploitative conditions due to poverty, lack of adequate education, insufficient labor law enforcement, and recurrent violent conflicts that relocate families and damage livelihoods. The highest rate of child labor is in Sub-Saharan Africa, where families must rely on their children's labor to survive due to economic hardship and limited access to schools. In India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan, particularly in South Asia, children work in brick kilns, carpet weaving, garment factories, street vending, and domestic work, where they face long hours, dangerous tools and chemicals, physical and emotional abuse, and sometimes trafficking and bonded labor. Many children in Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Cambodia are forced to work in agriculture, fishing, construction, or informal markets, and vulnerable groups like ethnic minorities, migrants, and displaced families are especially at risk, especially in conflict-prone or disaster-stricken areas.

Although progress has been made in Latin America and the Caribbean, many children still work in coffee and sugar plantations, mining, and domestic service, missing school and being exposed to physically strenuous or life-threatening conditions, especially in rural areas where legal protections may not be effective or monitored. In Syria, Yemen, and parts of North Africa, armed conflict has destroyed public infrastructure, torn families apart, and forced large numbers of children into dangerous jobs like begging, street hawking, and even armed groups. Refugee children, especially those displaced across borders, are often exploited in informal economies without legal protection or access to basic services. Migrant and undocumented children may work in hidden and unregulated environments in areas like agriculture, food processing, and domestic labor, where legal loopholes and lack of oversight allow child labor to persist despite laws protecting minors.

Globally, rural areas have greater child labor, mostly in agriculture. Most boy and girl child labor is in agriculture. 61% of child laborers work on farms or in agriculture. Most of this work is on smallholder farms and for family sustenance. Services including household work, small-scale commerce, and others account for 27% of child labor. The remaining 13% is industry—construction, manufacturing, and mining. Child labor affects economies differently per area. In sub-Saharan Africa, child labor is mostly agricultural. As well as farming, children in Northern Africa and Western Asia sell commodities, clean homes, and conduct other service jobs. Latin America, the Caribbean, and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia also have additional services. Central and Southern Asia has double the world average of 25% of children in child labor in industry and services. Boys work more than girls at all ages worldwide. Girls in child labor work in services like domestic work, while boys work in construction, mining, and manufacturing. 9% of 5- to 17-year-old boys work, compared to 7% of girls. Young children have the narrowest gap, which expands with age. Domestic duties, which females undertake more of in most civilizations, are not considered child labor. When child labor includes 21 hours or more of home duties each week, the gender difference closes.

Child labor persists in developing and, to a lesser extent, developed nations due to chronic poverty, lack of access to free, quality, and inclusive education, limited job opportunities for adults, social norms that tolerate child work, and government failures in law enforcement and child protection. Many countries have signed international agreements like the ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age of Employment, but implementation is uneven, and in many regions, poverty, corruption, and social inequality keep children in exploitative work. Stronger enforcement of child protection laws, social protection programs to reduce household vulnerability, accessible and quality education for all children, awareness-raising campaigns to shift harmful cultural norms, and international cooperation to address root causes like global inequality, displacement, and climate-related livelihood disruptions are needed to end child labor. The world pledged to abolish child labor by 2025 in Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 in 2015. That timetable ended. Nearly 138 million children work globally.

2.2 Definition of Child Labour

A person under the age of eighteen is considered a child under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182 (1999). All people between the ages of 5 and 17 are

included in the target population for this survey, which measures child labor by counting the number of years since the kid's last birthday (UNICEF, 2017).

According to the definition used in this survey, child labor is defined as working children of the following types, as per the resolution of the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (18th ICLS), the amended articles of the 1951 Factory Act, and the 2016 Shops and Establishments Law.

(i) Children under the age of 18 who work in hazardous jobs for money or profit for at least an hour a week or who labor at night (6 p.m. to 6 a.m.;

(ii) Being employed for at least one hour a week for compensation or profit and being between the ages of five and fourteen;

(iii) Between the ages of 14 and 16 and working more than twenty-four hours a week for compensation or profit.

(iv) Aged 16 to under 18 and working more than 44 hours each week for compensation or profit.

The Convention on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment was approved by the International Labor Organization in 1973. The minimum working age is fifteen years old, however in emerging nations, it is fourteen years old for light labor. The convention established an 18-year-old age limit for employment in dangerous jobs. Work that involves an unacceptable physical state that existed in the workplace just before the accident and had a substantial role in causing it is considered hazardous (ILO, C138-Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138)). Children between the ages of 15 and 17 may typically work alone if they are not involved in hazardous working conditions, such as frequent labor for long hours (UNICEF, 2017).

Table 2.1 Minimum Age for Admission to Employment or Work by Countries

Type of works	Developed Countries	Developing countries
Regular work	16 years	16 years
Hazardous work	18 years	18 years
Light work	15 years	15 years (or 14 years subject to exceptions allowed by the ILO)

Source - ILO convention No.138

2.3 Causes of Child labour

There are a number of primary causes and contributing factors that lead to children being forced into child labor worldwide. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of government protection, migration, inequality, and family size are some of the primary factors.

2.3.1 Poverty

Social issues including child labor, prostitution, unemployment, starvation, low living conditions, corruption, and crime stem from poverty (Owolabi, 2012; Ekpenyong & Sabari, 2011). Households experiencing poverty typically have low incomes and larger family sizes, which makes it challenging to provide sufficient care, education, and resources for all members. Child poverty, in particular, is distinct from adult poverty, as it affects a child's access to essential rights and services from birth. According to UNICEF (2016), child poverty is defined by the deprivation of basic needs such as adequate nutrition, clean water, proper sanitation, healthcare, education, and access to information. Khan (2001) emphasizes that poor parents often cannot meet these basic needs and are compelled to send their children to work to support household income. As a result, children are deprived of education, leisure, and a healthy childhood, all of which become privileges accessible only to wealthier families. Poverty, therefore, not only disrupts children's present well-being but also jeopardizes their future development and opportunities.

One of the most powerful motivations behind child labour is poverty, particularly as it relates to how households allocate their children's time. Poor families, often characterized by large numbers of dependents and limited income sources, face overwhelming economic pressures. In such households, education is frequently seen as an unaffordable luxury, leading children to drop out of school and enter the labour market at a young age. These children work not by choice, but out of necessity, and their earnings are often sent directly back to their families to help meet basic living expenses. According to the World Bank Group (2018), eliminating poverty alone is not enough; effective poverty reduction strategies must also include incentives that encourage children to remain in school or pursue vocational training. Without such measures, poverty will continue to trap future generations in cycles of hardship, where survival takes precedence over education and personal development.

2.3.2 Lack of Education

Poor education is a major cause of child labor. Lack of education prevents children from learning important skills for personal growth and jobs. Education is crucial for economic transformation, increased wages, and improved living

conditions, hence Osment (2014) claims that the lack of higher education restricts children's potential and undermines national advancement. Poor households have higher illiteracy rates, and many children drop out of school owing to financial pressures. These include not only tuition fees but also costs related to transportation, school uniforms, textbooks, meals, and mandatory private tuition, all of which become unaffordable for low-income families. The physical distance to school can also be a major barrier. Consequently, children often leave school prematurely and enter the labour force to help support their families.

The availability and quality of schooling also play a crucial role in influencing child labour. In many developing countries, schools are either insufficient in number, poorly equipped, or lack trained teachers, which discourages enrollment and attendance. Households led by individuals with low educational attainment tend to pass on similar disadvantages to the next generation. For many families, the decision to send children to school involves weighing perceived benefits against opportunity costs the income a child could earn if they worked instead of attending school, even when education is technically free. Moreover, traditional gender norms often reinforce these dynamics. In some communities, girls are seen as better prepared for adult responsibilities through work rather than formal education, leading to an even greater dropout rate among female children. As a result, many children enter the unskilled labour market at an early age, often remaining illiterate and lacking the foundational skills necessary for a productive and dignified life (ILO, 2025).

2.3.3 Lack of Protection from the Government

Child labor persists in low- and middle-income nations due to ineffective government protection. Poor child labor enforcement, monitoring, and social assistance programs leave many vulnerable youngsters unprotected. Laws are often inadequately administered owing to lack of resources, corruption, or political will. This allows exploitative practices to flourish without punishment. Child labor endures because governments lack the infrastructure, legal enforcement, and financial assistance to keep children in school and out of the job, according to the ILO (2021). In unregulated areas including agriculture, household work, and small-scale enterprises, employers abuse youngsters.

In addition to weak enforcement, the absence of social safety nets further exposes children to labour exploitation. In many cases, governments lack comprehensive child protection policies or fail to provide financial assistance to families living in extreme poverty. As a result, poor households, with no government support to cushion their hardship, are left with little choice but to rely on their children's income for survival. Furthermore, the lack of free and accessible education

often a responsibility of the state makes school attendance difficult for disadvantaged children. The government's failure to invest in inclusive and equitable education systems contributes to school dropouts and fuels the cycle of poverty and child labour. As the ILO (2021) notes, addressing child labour requires more than laws; it demands strong institutions, coordinated social services, and dedicated funding to protect children's rights and promote long-term human development.

2.3.4 Migration and Inequality

Migration has long been considered one of the oldest strategies for poverty reduction, offering individuals and families the opportunity to improve their livelihoods and escape poor socio-economic conditions. People migrate both internally and internationally for various reasons, including employment, education, family reunification, marriage, or to seek better living standards (Griffiths & Ito, 2016). Migration is widely recognized as a catalyst for human development and economic growth, often leading to cultural diversity and innovation. Among the different types of migration internal, external, and net migration internal migration remains the most common, especially in developing countries where rural populations move to urban areas in search of opportunities (Heberle, 1955). However, while migration may help alleviate poverty in some cases, it also presents serious social challenges, particularly for children. Migrant families often settle in overcrowded slums, where they face limited access to clean water, sanitation, education, and healthcare. Children in such environments are more vulnerable to exploitation, including child labour, due to a lack of supervision and insufficient government support.

The consequences of migration, especially in urban slum areas, can be severe for children and families. The influx of migrants into cities increases pressure on housing, infrastructure, and social services, often resulting in poor living conditions, including inadequate hygiene, unsafe environments, and a lack of basic amenities (World Bank, 2016). Migrants particularly those who are uneducated face high unemployment and underemployment, leaving families in a cycle of poverty that forces children into labor to supplement household income. As noted by Markova (2005), migration can lead to family separation, weakened traditional structures, and the neglect of children and the elderly. These social shifts heighten the risk of trafficking, exploitation, and abuse, particularly when child protection systems are weak. Moreover, children in migrant communities often suffer from poor educational outcomes, limited recreational and developmental opportunities, and increased psychosocial stress. As a result, migration, while offering economic opportunities, can

also exacerbate child labour and social vulnerability if not supported by inclusive and protective policies.

2.3.5 Family Size

Family size is a significant factor contributing to the prevalence of child labour, especially in low-income households. Larger families often face financial strain, as limited income must be divided among more dependents. In such contexts, children are frequently compelled to work in order to support the household's basic needs. According to Basu and Van (1998), poor families with many children are more likely to send them into the workforce, as the marginal contribution of each child can make a critical difference in household survival. The cost of raising and educating multiple children becomes overwhelming, particularly when parents lack formal employment or stable income sources. As a result, instead of attending school, children are often pushed into informal or hazardous labour to help contribute to food, shelter, or other daily necessities.

In addition to economic pressures, larger family sizes can reduce the amount of individual attention and care each child receives, making it more difficult for parents to prioritize education and well-being for all children equally. According to Edmonds (2007), in large families, older children are especially at risk of being withdrawn from school to look after younger siblings or engage in income-generating activities. This dynamic reinforces the intergenerational cycle of poverty and educational deprivation. Moreover, in rural and agricultural communities, where family labour is often required for farming and subsistence activities, having many children may be seen as an economic advantage, further normalizing child labour. Without sufficient family planning, social protection, or educational support, large family size continues to be a structural driver of child labour in many parts of the world.

2.4 Consequences of Child Labour

Child labor has economic, social, health, education, and physical, psychological, and environmental effects.

2.4.1 Economic and Social Impact of Child Labour

Child labor has long-term economic effects on both the workers and the economy. When children enter the workforce prematurely, they are often deprived of education and vocational training, limiting their ability to acquire the skills necessary for higher-paying and productive jobs in the future. As a result, these individuals tend to remain trapped in low-income and unskilled employment, reinforcing the cycle of poverty across generations (ILO, 2021). At the national level, widespread child labour

reduces a country's human capital development, which is essential for sustained economic growth. A poorly educated workforce undermines innovation, lowers productivity, and limits competitiveness in the global market (UNICEF, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting economic crisis have significantly increased the risk of child labour, pushing millions of vulnerable children into hazardous work environments (ILO, 2020). Furthermore, the economic burden of child labour extends to increased public spending on health and social services, as many child workers suffer long-term physical and mental health problems due to exploitative working conditions.

Child labor is as harmful socially. Children who are compelled to work from a young age are typically deprived a proper childhood, having the ability to play, study, and develop emotionally and socially. This can result in social isolation, low self-esteem, and an inability to form healthy relationships later in life. Additionally, child labour frequently exposes children to physical abuse, exploitation, and hazardous environments, which can cause lasting psychological trauma (UNICEF, 2016). It also contributes to the breakdown of family structures, especially when children migrate alone or are trafficked for work. At the societal level, child labour perpetuates inequality by disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, particularly girls and rural children, thereby widening the gap between social classes (ILO, 2021). As child labour continues, it weakens the foundations of social cohesion, hinders community development, and obstructs efforts toward achieving inclusive and equitable societies.

2.4.2 Health and Education Impact of Child Labour

Child labor can permanently damage children's mental and physical health. Child laborers in agricultural, mining, construction, and manufacturing face dangerous machinery, chemicals, long hours, and physically hard activities. These factors can lead to accidents, respiratory diseases, chronic weariness, and even lifelong impairments (ILO, 2017). Child laborers generally lack sufficient nourishment, medical care, and cleanliness, making them more susceptible to sickness and developmental delays. Mental health is also significantly damaged, since youngsters working in stressful, abusive, or exploitative circumstances are at increased risk of developing anxiety, despair, and trauma. Without support, these health issues can persist into adulthood, limiting their productivity and happiness. Sexual exploitation, including rape, early pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS, affects girls' health and future (JSI Research & Training Institute & Services, 2017).

The Lack of education leads to lack of better skills and education that continue their life in poverty. Children without higher education hinder the nation's

growth by lacking the capacity and technology skills needed to restructure the economy for increased income and better living standards (Osment, 2014). Children who are obliged to work often miss school or drop out completely, as their duties leave little time or energy for academic study. According to UNICEF (2016), child labour is both a cause and a consequence of educational exclusion, particularly in low-income families where school-related expenses are seen as a financial burden. Even when working children attend school, they typically underperform due to exhaustion, absenteeism, and lack of focus. This educational disruption limits their future opportunities, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and unskilled employment.

2.4.3 Impact of Physical, Psychological and Environmental factor on Child Labour

Child labour exposes children to physically hazardous and demanding environments, often leading to serious injuries and long-term health issues. In sectors like agriculture, mining, construction, and manufacturing, children frequently handle heavy loads, sharp tools, toxic chemicals, and dangerous machinery without proper safety equipment or training. These risks can result in fractures, cuts, burns, respiratory problems, and even permanent disabilities (ILO, 2017; Australia, Carers, & Deloitte Access Economics, 2015). For example, child labourers in agriculture may face pesticide poisoning, while those in mining confront the risk of mine collapse and chemical exposure. Studies show that children's developing bodies especially their lungs, hearing, and musculoskeletal systems are more susceptible to harm, and early work exposure can lead to stunted growth and long-term illnesses (Castro, 2010). Additionally, a lack of nutrition and healthcare intensifies the physical burden placed on these children.

The psychological toll of child labour is equally alarming, particularly for children subjected to abuse, isolation, or exploitation. Long working hours, separation from families, and lack of nurturing environments contribute to mental distress, depression, anxiety, and emotional trauma. Girls are particularly vulnerable, often facing sexual exploitation, early marriage, or being forced into domestic work where they suffer in silence (UNICEF, 2016). In many cases, working children show signs of behavioral issues such as aggression, sleep deprivation, or substance abuse, especially those working over 20 hours per week (Australia et al., 2015). These children are also more likely to drop out of school and less likely to pursue higher education. The absence of support systems, combined with repeated exposure to unsafe environments, erodes their self-esteem and emotional well-being, with long-term consequences into adulthood.

Environmental conditions significantly affect the well-being of child labourers. Many children work in poorly ventilated, overcrowded, or unsanitary environments such as brick kilns, garbage dumps, or informal factories. These settings expose them to extreme temperatures, harmful fumes, dust, and waste materials that pose serious health risks (JSI Research & Training Institute & Services, 2017). A lack of clean water, hand-washing facilities, and sanitation further exacerbates the problem, increasing vulnerability to disease. Children often start working as young as 5 or 7 years old in such conditions, and in sectors like agriculture, they are five times more likely to suffer injuries than children in other industries (Castro, 2010). The cumulative impact of these hazardous environments disrupts children's social lives and education, depriving them of leisure time, friendships, and personal development. Over time, these environmental hardships reduce their capacity to participate meaningfully in society and contribute to long-term cycles of poverty and exclusion.

2.5 Reviews on Previous Studies

Previous research examined child labor. Thet Su Nadi (2021) investigated “A study on causes and consequences of child labour of the ages 10 to 17 years old in Insein township. Quantitative and descriptive methods were employed in this investigation. Teashops, factories, shops, vehicle workshops, bazaars, building sites, and service industries in Insein Township provided respondents. Child labor cannot be solved by one issue alone; societal conditions must also be considered. Declarations are answered by economic growth and work for everybody.

Another study was carried out by Kay Thwe Myint Aung (2019) provided information of the Livelihood of Child Labour and this study also found that income is the most important for their life because they born in poor families. Cross-sectional survey data and descriptive approach from Pathein Township, Ayarwaddy questionnaires. Respondents work in stores, clothing factories, building sites, brick manufacturers, and all economic sectors. Poor families need capacity building to support their families. The remedies include empowerment of disadvantaged people, free education and awareness.

May Thu Kyaw (2018) used descriptive research to examine child labor in low-income homes in Insein Township. Respondents were mostly teashop workers. According to their responses, they believed that if the government could support their parents or household heads through measures such as microfinance loans, job creation

initiatives, and vocational training schools, their families' living conditions would significantly improve compared to the past.

Than Than Swe (2017) studied "the situation of child labor" and concluded that it is not enough to solve the child labor problem with a single solution. Social factors should also be considered. Economic growth answers the questions and benefits everyone.

Kyaw Myat Khaing (2012) determined that education is one of the finest long-term investments a country can make and the basis of human resources development since it promotes economic growth and nation-building. To create an education system which is equitable with the cultural, traditional and social values of the country and in harmony with the economic system, this would assist national development and nation building.

Simon Mathias Makwinja (2010) studied child labor. The author highlighted that international agreements, notably the CRC, diverge from the universal vision of childhood, treating children worldwide equally and demanding their rights. Every culture values child differently. The thesis contends that education as a solution to child labor is controversial since its goals and values vary among nations.

Joanna Rea (2015) found that child labor denies children their right to education. Child labor elimination and full-time formal education are connected. Actively integrating all "out of school" children into formal education systems, removing all barriers to local schools, and providing the necessary financial and infrastructural support for quality education are the priorities. The convention on the rights of the child and other international agreements affirm the right of all children to live in freedom from exploitation.

CHAPTER III

OVERVIEW ON CHILD LABOUR IN MYANMAR

3.1 Child Labour Situation in Myanmar

Child labor in Myanmar is pervasive and expanding. The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that over one million children aged 5 to 17 work, with over half in dangerous conditions. After 2021, poverty, displacement, and inadequate labor law enforcement are the primary factors. Many youngsters undertake perilous tasks in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and domestic service. A recent ILO survey in 2023 found that over 70% of working children said poverty was the main reason they had to work, and many never return to school once they begin working (ILO, 2023). Despite Myanmar's ratification of international child labour conventions, enforcement remains limited, particularly in conflict-affected areas (UN Myanmar, 2023).

Table (3.1) Working children and child labour by age sex and urban/rural

Categories	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total
Total children population (million) by age	6.10	6.19	3.15	9.14	12.29
5-11	3.28	3.28	1.62	4.94	6.56
12-14	1.45	1.51	0.78	2.18	2.96
15-17	1.37	1.40	0.75	2.02	2.77
By sub-categories (million)					
Working Children	0.25	0.21	0.06	0.40	0.46
Child Labour	0.20	0.16	0.05	0.31	0.36
Hazardous Child Labour	0.18	0.13	0.05	0.26	0.31
By sub-categories (% of total child population)					
Working children as the percentage of total child population	4.2	3.4	1.8	4.4	3.8
Child Labour as the percentage of total child population	3.2	2.5	1.6	3.3	2.9
Hazardous child labour as the percentage of total child population	2.9	2.2	1.5	2.9	2.5

**Table (3.1) Working children and child labour by age sex and urban/rural
(Continued)**

Categories	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total
Child Labourers by age (million)	0.20	0.16	0.05	0.31	0.36
5-11	0.00*	0.01*	0.00*	0.01*	0.01*
12-14	0.02*	0.01*	0.00*	0.03*	0.03*
15-17	0.18	0.14	0.05	0.27	0.32
Child Labourers, by age (%)					
5-11	0.0*	0.1*	0.1*	0.1*	0.1*
12-14	1.2*	1.0*	0.0*	1.4*	1.1*
15-17	13.1	9.7	6.6	13.1	11.4
Child Labourers, by education(million)					
Less than primary school	0.04*	0.03*	0.00*	0.07	0.07
Completed primary school	0.15	0.12	0.04*	0.23	0.27
Completed middle (or lower secondary) school	0.01*	0.01*	0.01*	0.01*	0.02*
High (or upper secondary) school (completed first stage, or passed high school)	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*

Source: Myanmar Annual Labour Force Survey, 2019

The Myanmar Annual Labour Force Survey 2019 reported 12.29 million children aged 5-17, 6.10 million boys and 6.19 million girls. Moreover half of the children were aged 5-11 (53.4%), followed by 12-14 (24.1%), which made up less than half of the first group. Only 22.5% of the kid population was 15–17 years old, with fewer males than girls. The youngest age group has equal numbers of males and girls. The bulk of youngsters (74.4%) resided in rural settings. At the Union level, 0.46 million of 12.29 million youngsters were working, 3.8% of the total, 4.2% males and 3.4% girls. Most lived in rural regions.

Myanmar Annual Labour Force Survey 2019 found 0.36 million child laborers, 2.9% of the 12.29 million child population. We discovered 3.2% of boys and 2.5% of girls working in child labor. Additionally, 3.3% of rural children worked. The urban rate was 1.6%. It suggested rural regions had more child labor than cities. Rural locations have more child labor than metropolitan areas owing to poverty, inadequate education, and weak law enforcement. Rural households frequently depend on agriculture or informal jobs, and children are expected to help. Schools are generally remote or poor, making education less accessible. Remote places have less government surveillance and enforcement of child labor rules. Rural child labor rates are also higher due to cultural acceptance of early child labor.

Most child laborers were 15-17. Boy child labor was 13.1% and girl child labor 9.7% in that age range. Child labor was greatest in the 15-17 age group (11.4%), second in the 12-14 age group (1.1%), and lowest in the 5-11 age group. Out of 12.29 million youngsters, 0.31 million were working in dangerous situations, 0.18 million boys and 0.13 million girls. Most child laborers had barely finished basic school.

Table 3.2 Children in Child Labour, by economic sector and sex, 2020

Age/Sex	Agriculture (%)	Industry (%)	Other Services (%)	Domestic work (%)
5 to 11	76.6	6.0	12.8	4.6
12 to 14	75.8	7.5	13.7	3.0
15 to 17	47.6	24.0	22.8	5.7
Girls	70.3	5.5	17.3	6.9
Boys	69.9	1.34	13.8	2.9

Source: ILO & UNICEF Child Labour Global Estimate, 2020

Global estimates and trends in 2020 statistics showed that child labor was most widespread in the agriculture sector across all age groups and sexes, notably among 5–14-year-olds, where over 75% worked in farming, livestock, or associated activities. As children grow older, particularly those aged 15 to 17, their participation in industry 24.0% and services 22.8% increases, showing a shift toward more physically demanding or skilled work. Gender differences are also clear: girls are more likely to be found in domestic work 6.9% and services 17.3%, while boys are more involved in industrial work 13.4%. These trends highlight how child labour is shaped by age, gender roles, and economic necessity, especially in rural areas with poor access to education and weak enforcement of labour protections.

3.2 Child Labour Related Laws in Myanmar

Myanmar has enacted several laws and regulations to prevent and regulate child labour. These laws aim to protect children from exploitation, ensure their access to education, and safeguard their health and well-being in the workplace. They are

Table 3.3 Child Labour Related Laws in Myanmar

Sr. No	Years	Child Labour Law
1	1951	The Leave and Holiday Act
2	1999	Overseas Employment Law (Myanmar Version)
3	2011	The Labour Organization Law
4	2011	The Labour Organization Rule
5	2012	The Settlement of Labour Dispute Law & Rules
6	2012	The Social Security Law
7	2012	The Social Security Rule
8	2013	The Minimum Wages Law
9	2013	The Minimum Wages Rule
10	2013	The Employment and Skill Development Law
11	2014	The Edited Settlement of Dispute Law
12	2014	The Amended Law for Leave and Holiday Law
13	2016	The Amended Law for Factory Act
14	2016	The Payment of Wages Law
15	2016	The Amended Law for Shop and Workplace
16	2019	Child Rights Law

Sources: Ministry of labour

According to the the Factories Act (2016) and the Labour and Employment Law (2016) provide detailed regulations to control child labour in Myanmar. According to these laws, children aged 14 to 16 are permitted to work only if they have a valid medical certificate, which must be renewed every 12 months. Their working hours are limited to a maximum of 4 hours per day, and the total time, including rest, must not exceed 5 hours. They are strictly prohibited from lifting or carrying heavy loads that could cause physical harm. Such youngsters can only work in non-hazardous factories like manufacturing, production, maintenance, or printing. Sunday must be a holiday, and each youngster can work at one factory. Overtime, night hours, and dangerous jobs are prohibited for children under 16. Employers must

retain detailed records of all workers under 18, including their names, parents, employment duties, shifts, and medical fitness.

The Minimum Wage Law (2018) covers all workers, including youth. The minimum salary is MMK 6,800 per day (with an MMK 1,000 daily allowance) for an 8-hour workday in 2024. All children are entitled to free basic education under the 2019 Basic Education Law. The law also promotes their transition to technical and vocational education following basic education. Myanmar's Child Rights Law (2019) defines a child as anybody under 18. Child trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, and forced labor, including the recruitment of minors for armed combat, are strongly prohibited under Article 3 of the legislation. It also prohibits using, buying, or providing children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic acts, as well as narcotics manufacture and trafficking. Worst child labor includes work that harms children's health, safety, or morality. Article 48 safeguards children from these worst kinds and sets a minimum legal working age of 14 years, enabling minors above 14 to work under certain situations. Article 103 protects all children against abuse, exploitation, discrimination, and bodily and emotional injury, underlining Myanmar's commitment to children's rights and dignity.

3.3 Protection and Elimination of Child Labour

Government, civic society, international organizations, and communities must work together to end child labor. Eliminating poverty and illiteracy is crucial. Child labor may be decreased and eliminated by effective legislation and community-based programs, providing every child with a safe and dignified upbringing. Myanmar has several groups against child labor. Some groups address urgent issues like trafficking and child soldiers, while others address service sector, industrial sector, and youth job difficulties.

- (i) Myanmar's National Action Plan (NAP) for the elimination of child labour spans from 2019 to 2033, divided into three five-year phases: **First Phase (2019–2023)**: Focused on collecting reliable data, raising awareness, creating educational opportunities, strengthening legal frameworks, and improving livelihoods for families. **Second Phase (2024–2028)**: The government will focus on raising awareness, enforcing child labour laws, and guiding children into safer alternatives. Awareness campaigns will be expanded through community activities, media outreach, and vocational training to shift public attitudes and improve understanding of child labour harmful effects. At the same time, legal measures will be strengthened to prevent hazardous child labour and ensure compliance with minimum

age requirements. **Third Phase (2029–2033):** The government will also support children already involved in labour by helping them access vocational education and safer, formal employment. These efforts aim to reduce reliance on child labour and break the cycle of poverty. To ensure effective implementation, all departments will create annual work plans and report their progress regularly to the national committee.

- (ii) The ILO's Myanmar project (MyPEC) aims to eliminate child labor through pilot projects that increase awareness and improve regulations. It strengthens national and local capacity and encourages families to take their kids to school. Child labor awareness will be raised through the media and directly involve schools and communities. (ILO, My-PEC Project, 2020)
- (iii) UNICEF encourages Myanmar to improve child rights legislation. UNICEF is improving the national child protection system to safeguard all children, particularly the most vulnerable. It entails training policymakers, families, communities, and civil society to detect, prevent, and address child rights abuse.
- (iv) As Save the Children established new initiatives to increase children's access to basic health and nutrition and excellent education, NGOs and INGOs exist.

Since December 2013, the Myanmar Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (My-PEC) with U.S. Department of Labor funding has achieved substantial progress against child labor in Myanmar. As of 2025, the initiative has received USD 9.65 million, including USD 1.1 million in 2024. My-PEC has provided over 3,920 children with education and vocational services, including school supplies, non-formal education, and skill training, and 1,462 households with livelihood training and business support, including agriculture, fishing, skill, financial management, and business kits to start their businesses. OSHA initiatives reached 123,999 community members. It taught 385 stakeholders on OSH, 500 teachers on child labor, and identified and referred impacted children in intervention regions such Ayeyarwaddy, Yangon, and Mon State.

Myanmar's child labor problem persists despite these attempts. The 2015 Labour Force Survey indicated 1.125 million youngsters worked, 616,815 of them were in dangerous conditions. According to the 2022 Endline Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) survey, growing poverty caused by the COVID-19 epidemic and Myanmar's political turmoil has boosted child labor. My-PEC's holistic approach to policy lobbying, capacity building, and community assistance continues to combat

child labor in Myanmar. Every kid in Myanmar is protected by national legislation and UN organizations including ILO, WHO, UNICEF, ASEAN, and others.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY ANALYSIS

This chapter covers the survey profile, design, and outcomes. The following chapter summarizes a survey on child labor in North Okkalapa Township and its causes and effects.

4.1 Survey Profile

The 28.3-square-kilometer study was undertaken in North Okkalapa Township in eastern Yangon. This 19-ward township borders Hlegu, Mingaladon, North Dagon, Kamaryut, Mayangone, and South Okkalapa to the north, east, west, and south. About 9 miles north of center Yangon and near the Yangon International Airport, it has become a lively metropolitan district with many residences, flats, and stores. With 45 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, and 7 high schools, the township is noted for its prominent universities, including the University of Pharmacy and the University of Medicine (Yangon). North Okkalapa General Hospital, a large medical university hospital, situated there. Economically, North Okkalapa is a vibrant center of business activity, particularly in the wholesale, retail, and small manufacturing sectors. Family-run retail shops such as grocery stores, clothing outlets, and mobile phone vendors are commonly found along main roads like Thudhamma and Waizayandar. Wholesale businesses distribute dry food, beverages, and garment materials to nearby areas using informal delivery networks. Additionally, small factories and workshops, especially within the North Okkalapa and Shwe Paukkan Industrial Zones, produce garments, plastic goods, furniture, and snacks, providing essential employment opportunities and contributing significantly to the local economy.

There are 2556 business sectors, including 1596 Wholesale and Retail shop, 213 teashops, 338 restaurant, 90 workshops, 175 small business, 39 construction material shop, 105 other services and 10 official bazaars in North Okkalapa Township.

Table 4.1 Distribution of Respondents in the study

Job Category	No. of Business	Employee	Percent (%)
Electronics and hardware store	25	15	5.66
Store	35	27	10.19
Rice and Oil shop	25	9	3.40
Beverage store	14	12	4.53
Clothing store	15	13	4.91
Cosmetic store	24	8	3.02
Shoes store	18	4	1.51
Pastry shop	32	15	5.66
Teashop	100	46	17.36
Restaurant	70	44	16.60
Beauty Saloon	12	3	1.13
Construction material shop	25	18	6.79
Workshop (repair of motor vehicles)	40	20	7.55
Metal refining industry	10	8	3.02
Water purification industry	20	9	3.40
Glue grinding industry	5	2	0.75
Other Services	30	12	4.53
Total	500	265	100.00

Source: Township Development Committee (2023)

4.2 Survey Design

This survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire through face-to-face interviews with children under the age of 18 who are working in business establishments within North Okkalapa Township. It was selected as the survey location due to its status as a densely populated urban area with a diverse population in Yangon. The township also has a high concentration of informal sector businesses, making it a suitable area for random sampling and analysis of child labour in informal workplaces. Data collection was carried out during the months of March and April 2025.

Survey questionnaire was prepared for thesis goals. This study employed descriptive methods. This survey questionnaire is divided into five sections: demographics, literacy and education, child labor causes and effects, job environment, and quality of life.

First, the poll asks about the respondent's name, age, gender, and monthly income. The second segment of the survey investigates the educational level of working students and dropouts. Dropouts must answer more questions about why they left school. But all responders must say why they work. The final portion of the questionnaire covers child labor causes and effects, family size, number of children, socioeconomic situations including migration, and living conditions. The fourth part includes the respondent's type of work, the workplace's state, working hours, work benefits, and whether they have to carry heavy goods. The final part measures health-related quality of life, including physical, mental, emotional, and social functioning, using a 5-point Likert scale.

Current Myanmar child labor regulations and effect measurement are in the last section. Questions include their awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and their social interactions in the surroundings.

4.3 Survey Results

Based on survey results, survey conclusions include basic quantitative data and tables and figures. This section discusses demographics, literacy and education (attending school and school dropout replies), reasons and workplace scenario of child labor, effects of child labor, and quality of life.

4.3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographics in this survey include age, gender, and education. This survey has 265 participants. Table (4.6) shows demographic survey results. 98 of 265 respondents are women and 167 are men.

Table 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

No	Particular	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	98	63.02
		Female	167	36.98
		Total	265	100.00
2	Age Distribution	Age 10-12	56	21.13
		Age 13-15	79	29.81
		Age 16-17	130	49.06
		Total	265	100.00
3	Home town	Yangon	123	46.42
		Other	142	53.58
		Total	265	100.00
4	Monthly Income (Kyat)	<100,000	10	3.77
		100,000-150,000	124	46.79
		150,001-200,000	82	30.94
		200,001-250,000	36	13.58
		>250,000	13	4.91
		Total	265	100.00

Source: Survey Data (2025)

There are gender respondents of male 98 respondents (63.02%) and female 167 respondents (36.98%). Three age groups are represented: 56 (10-12), 79 (29.81%), and 130 (49.06%). Nearly half of child laborers are 16–17. Migration responses number 142 (53.58%). 46.79 percent of respondents were paid between 100,000 and 150,000 MMK per month, 30.94 percent between 150,001 and 200,000, and 4.91% beyond 200,000. Children often replace adults at work. Employers favor children because they are inexpensive and obedient, and child labor lowers wages for everyone.

4.3.2 Attending School and School Dropout Respondents

Two categories of responders are working students and dropouts. 79 of 265 respondents are working students and 186 are dropouts. Table (4.3) shows school-attending and dropout child labor.

Table 4.3 Working Student Respondents and School Dropout Respondents

No	Particular	Category	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Working Student Respondents	Public school	79	29.81
		Drop out Respondents		
	Public school	180	67.92	
	Monastic education	6	2.26	
		Total	265	100.00
2	What grade are you in? For Working Student	Primary level	3	3.80
		Secondary level	34	43.04
		High school level	42	53.16
			79	100.00
	Drop out level	Primary level	52	27.96
		Secondary level	96	51.61
		High school level	32	17.20
		Monastic education	6	3.23
			Total	186
	3	Reasons of drop out school	To work for family living	118
Not have enough money to attend school			17	9.14
To help household chores			2	1.08
No interested to study			46	24.73
Being bullied by the classmate			-	-
Because of sickness			-	-
Other			3	1.61
			Total	186
4	Working age after dropping out of school	10	5	2.73
		11	15	8.20
		12	28	15.30
		13	29	15.85
		14	43	23.50
		15	36	19.67
		16	20	10.93
		17	7	3.82
			Total	186

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Working students make up 3.80% of primary school, 43.04 percent of middle school, and 53.16 percent of high school. 70.18% dropped out of school to support their families and natural disasters.

The data suggests that most kids quit school for family. Secondary dropouts are greatest, and most respondents attended public schools. 6 respondents (3.23%) attended monastic schools. This survey had no responders who chose “Being bullied by the classmate and Because of sickness.” Most say, “no interested to study and need to work for family living”. Some responders say both because they can't afford school. Two respondents (1.08%) dropped out of school to help with home responsibilities. In this poll, most respondents are middle schoolers and dropout rates are greater aged 12–16.

4.3.3 Causes of Child Labour

The following questions in table 4.4 address child labor causes.

Table 4.4 Reasons and Decision for Working

No	Particular	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Why do you work?	To work for family living	176	66.41
		Not interested to study	46	17.36
		Natural disaster	5	1.89
		Armed conflict	9	3.40
		No have enough money to attend school	17	6.42
		To give debt	7	2.64
		To help household chores	2	0.75
		other	3	1.13
		Total	265	100.00
2	Number of family member	3-5	69	26.04
		6-8	183	69.06
		9 and above	13	4.90
		Total	265	100.00

Table 4.4 Reasons and Decision for Working (Continued)

No	Particular	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage
3	decision for go to work	Parents	53	20.00
		Self	149	56.22
		Relatives	28	10.57
		Friend	35	13.21
		Total	265	100.00
4	The age of start working	5-8	9	3.40
		9-12	85	32.07
		13-16	133	50.19
		17	38	14.34
		Total	265	100.00
5	Have you ever changed jobs?	Yes	108	40.75
		No	157	59.25
		Total	265	100.00
6	How many years have you been working	Under 1 year	54	20.38
		1 year – 2 years	103	38.87
		3 years – 4 years	78	29.45
		5 years – 6 years	30	11.32
		7 years and above	-	-
		Total	265	100.00
7	Are you migrating?	Yes	142	53.58
		No	123	46.42
		Total	265	100.00
8	If Yes, with whom?	With the whole family	75	52.82
		Alone	67	47.18
		Total	142	100.00
9	Why do you migrate?	To work	87	61.27
		To study	10	7.04
		No work at hometown	20	14.09
		Financial problem	22	15.49
		Other	3	2.11
		Total	142	100.00

Table 4.4 Reasons and Decision for Working (Continued)

No	Particular	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage
10	Source of family income	Father	120	45.28
		Mother	60	22.64
		Brother/Sister	37	13.96
		Self	20	7.55
		Uncle/Aunt	8	3.02
		Grandparent	5	1.89
		Others	12	5.66
		Total	265	100.00

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Data on the motivations and choices for working are shown in Table (4.4). Children typically labor to support their families. Of the respondents, 176 (66.41%) indicated that they worked to support their families, 46 (17.36%) indicated that they were not interested in studying, 17 (6.42%) stated that they did not have enough money to go to school, 9 (3.40%) stated that there was an armed conflict, 5 (1.89%) stated that there was a natural disaster, 2 (1.75%) stated that they needed to assist with household chores, and 3 (1.13%) stated that they had other reasons. Child labor is also influenced by the size of the family. Since the primary income from adults is insufficient to support the entire family, the majority of youngsters must work. Six to eight family members make up 69.06% of the respondents. The choice to work was determined by their parents, according to 53 respondents (20.00%), their parents, according to 149 respondents (56.22%), their relatives, according to 28 respondents (10.57%), and friends, according to 35 respondents (13.21%). Some poll participants selected more than one response. A significant proportion of the participants indicated that they chose to work. A number of considerations led to the decision. Examples of push factors that encourage youngsters to enter the job early include family income, debt, and the highest school fees.

Four age categories were created in order to assess respondents' work experience, and Table (4.4) contains the survey results. Nine respondents began working between the ages of five and eight, 85 began working between the ages of nine and twelve, 133 began working between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, and 38 began working at the age of seventeen, according to the results of the age of start working survey. 157 people who responded said they haven't changed jobs.

Out of 265 responses, 142 are youngsters who have relocated; some are relocating alone, while others are moving with their parents, siblings, or sisters. The primary motivations for migration are employment and the lack of employment in their own country. The majority of respondents (45.28%) indicated that the father provides the majority of the family's income, followed by the mother (22.64%), the brother and sister (13.96%), and the self (15.38%). Some families require all members to work in order to support the family. In this instance, the family income will not be sufficient for the whole family despite the fact that either one or both parents, the mother or father have employment. This is due to the nature of their occupations. Children participate in family income-generating activities as a result, which may motivate them to work. Some kids lived with their grandparents, while others lived with their stepfather or stepmother.

Some of the children who responded to the poll said that their parents were deceased, divorced, or single parents. This suggests that some kids face financial challenges despite losing their parents and adult care.

Table 4.5 Workplace Situation of Child Labour

No	Particular	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Type of employment	Sale Helper	103	38.87
		Waiter	69	26.04
		Kitchen Helper	12	4.53
		Coolie	18	6.79
		Factory Labour	31	11.70
		Workshop helper	20	7.55
		Clerk	9	3.39
		Other	3	1.13
		Total	265	100.00
2	How many days do you work in a week	5	15	5.66
		6	224	84.53
		7	26	9.81
		Total	265	100.00
3	Do you have worker register or health certificate	Yes	13	4.91
		No	252	95.09
		Total	265	100.00
4	Do you work on a contractual (or) Verbel agreement basis?	Yes	153	57.74
		No	112	42.26
		Total	265	100.00

Table 4.5 Workplace Situation of Child Labour (Continued)

No	Particular	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
5	If yes, the agreement or contract is	3 months and above	52	33.99
		6 months and above	43	28.10
		Temporary	27	17.65
		Permanent	-	-
		Don't know	31	20.26
		Total	153	100.00
6	How many hours do you work in a day?	4-6 hours	35	13.21
		7-9 hours	96	36.23
		10-12 hours	134	50.57
		13-15 hours	-	-
		Total	265	100.00
7	Do you carry heavy thing in workplace	Yes	93	35.09
		No	172	64.91
		Total	265	100.00
8	If yes, have you ever rest after carrying heavy things one time?	Yes	90	96.77
		No	3	3.23
		Total	93	100.00
9	How many hours do you need to carry?	1 hour – 2 hour	63	67.74
		3 hour – 4 hour	27	29.03
		5 hour – 6 hour	3	3.23
		Above 7 hour	-	-
		Total	93	100.00
10	Have you ever work with hazardous things in workplace	Yes	72	27.17
		No	193	72.83
		Total	265	100.00
11	Workplace situation	Flames, Gases	-	-
		Working with equipment	36	13.58
		Dusts	22	8.30
		Insecticides and Chemicals	3	1.13
		Do not have enough air	-	-
		Near to fire/heat	11	4.15
		None	193	72.83
		Total	265	100.00

Table 4.5 Workplace Situation of Child Labour (Continued)

No	Particular	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
12	Work benefits	Day off (Weekly)	136	51.32
		Casual leave	21	7.92
		Place to stay	42	15.85
		Clothing	25	9.43
		Food	63	23.77
		Bonus	24	9.06
		Over time fees	13	4.91
		Health expenses	56	21.13
		None	13	4.91

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The respondents are employed in a variety of fields, as shown in table (4.5). Twelve (4.53%) respondents work as kitchen assistants, 69 (26.04%) as waiters or waitresses, and 103 (38.87%) as sales assistants. Furthermore, 18 respondents (6.79%) are coolie workers, 31 respondents (11.70%) are manufacturing workers, and 20 respondents (7.55%) are workshop assistants. Then, three respondents (1.13%) work as different jobs like domestic helpers and apprentices, and nine respondents (3.39%) are clerks. The majority of workshop assistants and manufacturing workers must operate machinery, while coolies must lift heavy objects at work. The poll found that while working students typically work before or after school, their working hours are less than those of child labor. They must, however, exchange their playtime or leisure time for money because they work after 6 p.m. Although most of them lack a contract or commitment to work, some respondents have verbally agreed to work for brokers for at least three or six months. To work in industries, some young people are registered with health certificates.

According to the study results, 90 respondents (96.77%) rest after carrying heavy objects once, whereas 3 respondents (3.23%) do not rest. Ninety-three respondents (35.09%) must carry heavy objects at work. It is not necessary to bear the enormous burdens, according to 172 respondents (64.91%). For safety considerations, the government has already created a list of dangerous jobs that minors are not permitted to work in.

Additionally, there are individuals who operate with equipment, close to fire or heating sources, and in environments that contain dust, smoke, flames, and gases. 13.58% of respondents said they worked with almost machinery, 8.30% said they worked with dust, 1.13% said they had to deal with chemicals and pesticides, and

4.15% said they worked close to fire or heat sources. Additionally, 193 respondents (72.83%) say that their workplace has enough air, is free of dust, fires, fumes, pesticides, and chemicals, and is close to fire or heating sources. Nonetheless, the majority of those surveyed enjoy their jobs.

51.32 percent of respondents received a day off, 7.92 percent received casual leave, 15.85 percent received housing from their employers, 23.77 percent received food assistance, 9.43 percent received clothing, 4.91 percent received overtime fees, and 9.06 percent received a bonus, according to the survey results. However, 4.91 percent of those surveyed do not understand any of it. Some employers cover medical costs but not costs. The majority of respondents receive weekly days off as a work perk, while almost one-fifth of them receive no benefits at all.

Table 4.6 Living Condition of Respondents

No	Statement	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Where do you live?	Home	166	62.64
		Shop	42	15.85
		Hostel	57	21.51
		Total	265	100.00
2	With whom?	Parents	132	49.81
		Relatives	53	20.00
		Shop owner	42	15.85
		Friends	38	14.34
		Total	265	100.00

Source: Survey Data (2025)

166 respondents (62.64%) work from home and live in shops or hostels with owners or friends. 42 respondents (15.85%) live with their store owners, 38 respondents (14.34%) live with their friends, and 132 respondents (49.81%) live with their parents.

4.4 Consequences of Child Labour

These questions are asked of respondents: Table (4.7) shows how child labor affects respondents' mental and physical health and quality of life.

Table 4.7 Mental and Physical Health Situation of Respondents

No	Statement	Category	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Health problem at workplace	Injury	23	8.68
		Pain in joints	14	5.28
		Burns from heat/Fire	2	0.75
		Fatigue	42	15.85
		Other	9	3.40
		Good Health	175	66.04
		Total	265	100.00
2	Do you experience of the following?	Being Shouted or scolded all the time	27	10.19
		Being beaten or hurt	-	-
		Being Humiliated	-	-
		None	238	89.81
		Total	265	100.00
3	Do you like working	Yes	121	45.66
		No	144	54.34
		Total	265	100.00
4	The things you don't like at workplace	Carried Heavy Loads	12	4.53
		Unhappy	20	7.55
		Afraid	2	0.75
		Want to go back school	5	1.89
		Don't like work nature	4	1.51
		Low wages	3	1.13
		Tired	32	12.08
		Being Scolded	3	1.13
		Reasonable work	184	69.43
		Total	265	100.00
5	To arrange vocational training course, would you be willing to attend?	Yes	161	60.75
		No	104	39.25
		Total	265	100.00
6	Do you have future Plan & Dream job?	Yes	187	70.57
		No	78	29.43
		Total	265	100.00

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Surveys must be conducted to determine whether respondents experienced any illnesses or injuries during the previous 12 months in order to obtain a reliable study of their health condition. The information is shown in Table 4.7.

23 respondents (8.68%) experienced an injury at work, 14 respondents (5.28%) experienced joint discomfort, 2 respondents (0.75%) were burned by heat or fire, 42 respondents (15.85%) experienced weariness, and other respondents experienced dizziness or other connected health issues. The statistics showed that 15.85% of respondents said they were really exhausted. Additionally, 175 respondents (66.04%) said they had no health issues. The survey's findings indicate that the respondents seldom sustain serious injuries at work, such as broken arms or legs.

Table (4.7) reveals that 238 respondents (89.81%) had not experienced any of the aforementioned, whereas 27 (10.19%) of respondents reported always being yelled at or reprimanded. 54.34% dislike working, but 45.66% enjoy it since it allows them to support their families. There are elements about their jobs that they dislike, such as the fact that 4.53% of respondents dislike carrying large objects, 7.55% are unhappy, and 0.75% are fearful. 1.51% of respondents claimed they dislike the nature of work while using machines, and several kids at construction sites said that they were scared to work at high levels.

According to the survey, 187 respondents (70.57%) have their ideal job and future plans, and they want to be a football player, teacher, designer, singer, artist, or owner. 161 respondents (60.75%) said that they had to attend a government-organized vocational training program as part of their employment or skill development process. Some responded because they wanted to help their family become wealthy, while others said they wanted to return to school. Despite having aspirations, some responders lack a clear plan for achieving them. Nevertheless, 78 respondents (29.43%) do not have a strategy for the future or a dream career.

4.5 Quality of life

Quality of life is how people view their position in life in the context of their culture and value systems, objectives, aspirations, standards, and worries. Thus, WHOQOL-BREF has four domains: physical health, psychological, social interactions, and environment. An evaluation of respondents' lives, health, feelings, and relationships. The descriptive data are shown in Table (4.8) by mean and standard deviation.

Table 4.8 Quality of Life (N = 265)

No	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	The individual receives the kind of support they need from others.	2.85	0.97	Moderate
2	The individual is satisfied with the conditions of their living place.	2.79	0.61	Moderate
3	The individual is satisfied with their mode of transportation.	2.95	0.58	Moderately High
4	The individual feels safe in their daily life.	3.51	1.03	Highest
5	The individual is satisfied with their access to health services.	2.88	0.74	Moderate
6	The information needed for day-to-day life is available to the individual.	2.38	0.78	Moderate
7	The individual is satisfied with their ability to perform daily living activities.	2.82	0.75	Moderate
8	The individual is satisfied with their overall health.	3.11	0.62	Moderately High
9	Physical pain prevents the individual from doing what they need to do.	1.72	0.68	Not Moderate

Source: Survey Data (2025)

According to the survey results, provide insights into the quality of life experienced by respondents across several dimensions. In terms of social support, the mean score for receiving the kind of support needed from others was 2.85 (SD = 0.97), indicating a generally moderate level of perceived support. Satisfaction with living conditions showed a similar trend, with a mean of 2.79 (SD = 0.61), reflecting moderate satisfaction among most individuals. Satisfaction with the mode of transportation had a slightly higher mean of 2.95 (SD = 0.58), showing that respondents were somewhat more satisfied with their transportation arrangements. Feeling safe in daily life had the highest average rating at 3.51 (SD = 1.03), suggesting that most respondents generally feel safe in their everyday environments.

Access to health services received a mean score of 2.88 (SD = 0.74), again pointing toward moderate satisfaction. However, access to day-to-day information had a relatively lower mean of 2.38 (SD = 0.78), indicating that respondents might face challenges in obtaining necessary information. The ability to perform daily living activities was rated with a mean of 2.82 (SD = 0.75), and overall health satisfaction was slightly higher at 3.11 (SD = 0.62), suggesting that many respondents perceive their health positively. On the other hand, physical pain preventing individuals from doing what they need to do had a notably low mean of 1.72 (SD = 0.68), indicating that most respondents do not feel significantly hindered by physical pain in daily life.

CHAPTER V

CONCLSION

5.1 Findings

The purpose of the survey was to investigate the state of child labor in North Okkalapa Township. They are stuck in a cycle of low-skilled, low-paying occupations, and their income is insufficient to support the entire family. They also lack the education necessary to obtain stable work. Child labor is mostly caused by household poverty. The goal of Myanmar culture is to assist and care for one's family. For this reason, their families send their kids to work rather than education. Given that their family depends on their income, children may choose to work.

This survey found that respondents are leaving school for work. According to several replies, they have to work to support their families and their younger siblings, thus they won't be going back to school. Some responders want to return to school rather than job. Furthermore, there are distinctions between child labor and migratory children. In addition to working alone with strangers and relying on the safeguards of adults, the majority of migrant laborers left their families and lacked access to education and training opportunities. Limited employment prospects, low agricultural income, inadequate access to education in rural regions, and difficulties with family were the main causes of migration.

The majority of youngsters work in hazardous jobs despite the law's prohibition on child labor because the kids must work to support their families and pay off debt. The survey's findings indicate that the participants, who ranged in age from 10 to 17, worked long hours in tiring, low-skilled jobs. Numerous kids engaged in repeated physical activities including pushing large objects, running machinery, and working in dangerous settings. They are at serious bodily and psychological risk because of these problems. The majority of responders are in good health these days, but others may be dealing with chronic physical and mental suffering in addition to symptoms like exhaustion, nausea, and vertigo.

The majority of respondents are found to be dissatisfied with their living arrangements and to feel unsafe in their day-to-day activities. Moreover, they hardly ever receive the necessary information. Furthermore, the majority of responders do not have the opportunity to participate in training programs. Although the

respondents appear content with their surroundings, this might be a result of their inability to obtain the knowledge they want for day-to-day living. According to the study results, the majority of respondents are able to focus on their work and are comfortable with the way their bodies look. Furthermore, the majority of those surveyed are happy with their lives.

The majority of participants concluded by saying that they would not be going back to school and that they would need to keep working to support themselves. According to the findings, their money is the most significant factor in their lives. The survey's findings indicate that the majority of participants rarely receive assistance from others. They are content with their gender issues and personal connection, nevertheless. Even if there aren't many individuals to assist them, it may be inferred that the responders get along well with their surroundings.

5.2 Recommendations

Disinterest in school and the necessity to support their family are the primary reasons children work. Free, quality, and compulsory education is one of the best ways to combat child labor because it gives children the knowledge and skills, they need for a better future and takes the financial burden off poor families. It also shifts the focus from short-term economic survival to long-term human development and empowerment.

Addressing economic issues that lead families to rely on children's income is crucial to reducing child labor. The government should prioritize creating employment opportunities for adults and encourage parents to develop home-based businesses in safer environments. Providing free vocational training for children who must work will equip them with valuable skills and improve their future job prospects. Additionally, implementing comprehensive social protection programs such as financial aid, food and housing support, and universal healthcare can ease the financial burdens on low-income families. When families' basic needs are met, they are more likely to prioritize education and long-term well-being, breaking the cycle of poverty and reducing child labour.

Over time, the widespread exclusion of child labourers from education undermines national development by reducing the potential of the future workforce. Investing in education and removing children from labour is therefore essential not only for individual well-being but also for long-term societal progress.

In Myanmar, the absence of an official list of hazardous work prohibited for children under 18 highlights the urgent need to strengthen legal protections. Developing and enforcing such a list, alongside strict implementation of minimum

working age laws, is crucial to safeguard young workers. The government should also promote vocational and technical training and raise awareness about labor rights among employers, parents, and children. A multi-dimensional strategy that integrates education, poverty alleviation, rural development, and disaster preparedness is necessary. Supporting the establishment of skill-based training centers and ensuring safe working conditions respecting child rights will further protect young workers.

Furthermore, raising public awareness through nationwide campaigns is vital to changing social norms around child labour. These campaigns should emphasize the harmful effects of child labour on children's health, education, and future opportunities, targeting both families and employers. Collaboration with international organizations such as the ILO and UNICEF, as well as local NGOs, can strengthen interventions by providing expertise, resources, and community outreach. Finally, establishing a comprehensive database and reporting system will help monitor and support children at risk, ensuring timely intervention, reintegration into education or training, and prevent re-entry into exploitative labour. Together, these efforts will create a safer environment that upholds children's rights and promotes their well-being.

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APPENDIX

A study on the Causes and Consequences of Child Labor in informal sector. I am Pa Pa Khaing and I am currently doing Executive of Master of Public Administration (EMPA) at Yangon University of Economics. I would deeply appreciate it if you would answer the attached questionnaire to provide required data to complete my thesis. Your name and anything about you will not be disclosed and I will use the information only for the research. So please help me by making your choice openly and correctly. I sincerely thank you for taking your time to complete the questionnaire.

Survey Questionnaire

Section (1) Demographic Factors of the Respondents

1	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Male▪ Female
2	Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Age 10-12▪ Age 13-15▪ Age 16-17
3.	Main Reason for Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Poverty▪ Lack of desire to study▪ Natural disaster▪ Armed conflict▪ Supporting family▪ Paying off debts▪ Helping with family work▪ Other (specify)
4	Are the parents alive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Both are present▪ None of both▪ No mother▪ No father
5	Number of family member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 3-5▪ 6-8▪ 9 and above
6	Number of children in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 1-3▪ 4-6

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 7 and above
7	Is your current workplace your birthplace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No (If No, Urban or Rural)

Section (2) Literacy and Education

1	Have you ever been to school/taught?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
2	Current Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attended school ▪ Not attended school
	If No, Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unhealthy ▪ Distance from school ▪ Lack of Money ▪ Parents do not think education is important ▪ Roads are not safe ▪ To learn a job ▪ To work outside the family business ▪ To help with unpaid work in the family business ▪ To help with household chores ▪ Language barrier ▪ Difficult transportation ▪ Conflict ▪ Natural disaster ▪ Not interested in school
Attending School Respondents		
3	Where did you study currently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government school ▪ Private school ▪ Monastic school ▪ Informal school

4	What grade are you in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary level ▪ Secondary level ▪ High School level ▪ University
5	Have you ever dropped out of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
	If Yes, Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cannot afford it ▪ Difficult transportation ▪ Due to conflict ▪ Due to natural disaster ▪ Unhealthy ▪ To Support family ▪ Other.....
6	If I were to arrange to go back to school, would I want to attend?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I want to go ▪ I don't want to go
School Dropout Respondent		
7	Drop out level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary level ▪ Secondary level ▪ High school level ▪ Monastic education ▪ Informal education
8	Reasons of drop out school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To work for family living ▪ Not have enough money to attend school ▪ To help household chores ▪ No interested to study ▪ Have difficulties to keep up with the lessons ▪ Being bullied by the classmate ▪ Other.....
9	Working age after dropping out of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 ▪ 11 ▪ 12

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13 ▪ 14 ▪ 15 ▪ 16 ▪ 17
10	If I were to arrange for you to attend a vocational training course, would you be willing to attend?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
	If yes,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industrial and Crafts Training School for Ethnic Youth in Border Areas (Carpentry, Masonry, Basic Bending, Construction, Basic Mechanics, Basic Electrical Welding, Automobile Mechanics, Mobile Phone Repair) ▪ Women's Domestic Vocational Training School (Advanced Sewing, Wool Knitting, Basic Handicraft, Traditional Jabberwockies, Cooking, Cake and Jam Making, Flower and Fruit Decoration, Soft Drink, Ice Cream, Jelly Making) ▪ Arts Training ▪ Beauty Saloon Taring ▪ Modelling Training ▪ Other....

Section (3) Causes and Consequences of Child Labour

1	Are you migration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
2	If Yes,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With the whole family

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alone
3	Why do you migrate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To work ▪ To study ▪ No work at hometown ▪ Financial problem ▪ Other...
4	Any problem which can cause family into financial trouble?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural Disaster ▪ Lost assets ▪ Diseases ▪ Fire ▪ Debt ▪ Other...
5	Source of family income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Father ▪ Mother ▪ Brother/ Sister ▪ Self ▪ Uncle/ Aunt ▪ Grandparent ▪ Other...

Section (4) Workplace Situation of the respondents

1. Type of employment

2. Workplaces

- Restaurant Teashop Shop store
 Construction material shop Fancy shop Construction
 Coolie Street vendor Car repair shop Motor cycle
shop Other-----

3. How many days do you work in a week?

4. How many hours do you work in a day?

- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- 10-12 hours
- 13-15 hours

5. How much do you get from work?

Daily Income -----

Weekly Income -----

Monthly Income -----

6. How do you distribute your wages?

- Supporting to parent/family
- Paying rent
- Buying food/clothes
- Paying for your school fees
- Paying off debts
- Saving money
- Other

7. Why do you work?

- To work for family living
- To give debt
- Not interested to study
- Not have enough money to attend school
- To help household chores
- Other

8. Who make the decision to work?

- Parents
- Relatives
- Yourself

- Friends
- Work broker

9. Do you want to change your current job?

Yes No

10. Reasons for wanting to change your current job?

- Current job is temporary
- Low salary
- Inconvenient to commute to work
- Get a secure job
- Work fewer hours
- Improve working conditions
- Not in line with your hobby
- Tired
- Unhappy
- Work more hours
- Other

11. Do you carry heavy thing in workplace?

Yes No

12. If yes, have you ever rest after carrying heavy things one time?

Yes No

13. How many hours do you need to carry?

- 1 hour - 2 hour
- 3 hour - 4 hour
- 5 hour - 6 hour
- Above 7 hour

14. Have you ever work with hazardous things in workplace?

Yes No

15. What kind of thing? (Work Place Situation)

- Flames, Gases
- Noisy
- Dusts

- Insecticides and Chemicals
- Do not have enough air
- Near to fire/heat
- Other

16. Do you get any health problem at workplace?

- Injury
- Broken leg/Arm
- Pain in joints
- Burns from heat/fire
- Fatigue
- Other
- None

17. Do you get any in work place?

- Being shouted or scolded all the time
- Being beaten or hurt
- Being Humiliated
- Sexual assault
- None

18. Do you work on a contractual (or) Verbel agreement basis?

Yes No

19. If yes, the agreement or contract is

- 3 months and above
- 6 months and above
- Temporary
- Permanent
- Don't know

20. Do you have work benefits?

- Day off (Weekly)
- Casual leave

- Place to live
- Clothing
- Food
- Bonus
- Over time fees
- Health expenses
- None

21. If I were to arrange for you to attend a vocational training course, would you be willing to attend?

Yes No

22. Your hobby and Future plan

Section 5. Quality of Life

No	Statements	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	Very much	An extreme amount
1	Do you get the kind of support from others that you need?					
2	How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?					
3	How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?					
4	How satisfied are you with your gender?					
5	How satisfied are you with the conditions of your living place?					
6	How satisfied are you with your mode of transportation?					
7	How safe do you feel in your					

	daily life?					
8	How satisfied are you with your access to health services?					
9	How available to you is the information that you need in your day-to-day life?					
10	How well are you able to concentrate?					
11	How much do you enjoy life?					
12	How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities					
13	How satisfied are you with your sleep?					
14	How satisfied are you with your health?					
15	To what extent do you feel that physical pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?					
16	How much do you need medical treatments in your life?					

Thank you for your participation