DISCUSSION AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

The present study has resulted in some important findings. Among them some of the findings are discussed here.

One important objective of this study is to find out the reasons for the existence of child labour in the agricultural sector. Low family income is one such reason. From the data collected it is found that 62.4 per cent of male and 60 per cent of female respondents have taken up work because of the low earnings of the family. To provide additional income to their family, these children work in the agricultural land for an earning. If they do not work and earn an income, the family will experience the evils of poverty. Hence they are forced to work as child labourers.

To overcome this problem, it is suggested to have an in-depth examination of the reasons for the prevalence of child labour. Among the reasons analysed poverty is the prime cause for the prevalence of child labour in the agricultural sector, followed by family problem. That is why it is suggested to have the system of schooling for half a day and leave the children to work for another half a day, so that they
can earn income and at the same time continue their education. Family problem being the next important reason, efforts can be taken to solve family problems through self – help groups and social organizations.

In respect of the children working on part time basis in their own fields, arrangements should be made at school level to teach them some trades so that they earn by themselves.

A minimum monthly scholarship may be paid to the children performing well in the school.

Special classes to the working children may be conducted with the help of

a. Self Help Group
b. Schools
c. Parents Teacher Association
d. Unemployed graduates
e. NGOs

Education is considered as a significant tool for socio – economic development. Education helps in human resource development which includes better health and nutrition, better social and economic opportunities, better environment etc. When the child
discontinue from studies, the child will be deprived of the above facilities. From table 5.6 it is seen that 58 per cent of male and 80 per cent of female children leave studied upto middle school level only. Need for money forces them to have school and take up some wage earnig work.

Since money is the need of the family the following suggestion is made. If the child attends school regularly (with an attendance of more than 75 per cent per year) loans with low interest can be given by the government to the parents, so that the family may be freed from financial problem. This will encourage parents in sending their children to school. As a result drop out rate can be reduced to a very great extent.

Awareness programmes may be arranged for the parents regularly. Awareness about the importance of education, child labour law, and Minimum Wages Act, facilities available to children at school etc can be made known to the parents. All these will help a lot in reducing drop out rates at school level.

Child labour inspectors should be appointed in each and every panchayat. The child labour inspector should directly visit the fields to ascertain if the children are engaged by the landlords. If so the said
children may be secured and the subsidy and other facilities granted to the landlord by the government may be stopped.

Necessary laws should be enacted to avoid the children to work in the field where the deceased parents were employed. The farm owner should also be made to pay certain amount as compensation to meet the educational expenses for the children of the deceased parents in harness.

In schools, cultural programmes may be conducted periodically regarding child labour for creating awareness in them besides including the subject in their studies. For this purpose, the artists may be invited and necessary amenities and concession may be given to them. By doing so the students will become aware and the number of students discontinuing from school will be reduced to a great extent.

The impact of child labour should be taught as a compulsory subject at least for one period per week in the school to make the students aware of it.

If the suggestions given in the study are considered and suitable steps are taken by the government, the problem of child labour can be solved to some extent.