I. INTRODUCTION

"......... realise that destiny of our beloved land lies not in us, the parents, but our children".
- Mahatma Gandhi

Children are the nations' supreme asset. They are the harbingers of hope for the future. On the soundness of their mental and physical health depends the prosperity of India. Therefore their nurture and solicitude are everybody's responsibility (Devadas, 1987). Therefore it is essential to pay full attention to develop their mental and physical faculties in order they may become robust and creative citizens of the country (Banerji, 1987).

Epics of the Hindu religion portray the child's contribution to the family as an individual, in terms of participation in domestic chores. Young children in the families gathered fuel, fruits, vegetables, herbs and fetched water. They looked upon these activities as play, recreation and sex appropriate roles. To the crores of agriculturists, craftsmen, artisans, this tender age forms the foundation period to train and develop skills needed to pursue and master their profession.

Along with declining economic and social conditions of the century, there was a gradual but steady increase of work responsibilities assigned to children, who were considered as economic assets. These children worked along with parents and elders in their work areas.
The United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1975 (Principle 9), states that, 'The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age'; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development (General Assembly Resolution, 1386 (XIV)). In spite of this resolution, there are now 17.6 million children working in India (National Sample Survey). This is the largest number on this planet (Patil, 1986). According to the Census of India (1981), child work participation rate (main workers) for male children was nine per cent, and for female children five per cent in rural area; and four and one per cent for male and female children in urban areas respectively.

Poverty, unemployment or underemployment of adults are factors that drive children to work (United Nations, 1985). Ignorance leads parents to make their children work under inhuman conditions for a pittance (Bouhdiba, 1981). The earnings of the children, though meagre, help to bridge the gap between a bare subsistence and starvation (Giri, 1972) and it has become a bastion of survival of the masses, especially in towns and suburban districts of large cities. Other reasons for child labour are: large families, lack of sense of responsibility in the parents; immature parenthood or age long customs or economically overburdened parents, backwardness and breakdown of families. Illiterate parents, unaware of the value of schooling and child's education, encourage children to begin
traditional work at an early age (Dogramaci, 1985), in order to prevent them from indulging in antisocial activities (Khan, 1980 and Kulshreshta, 1978).

With no school within reasonable distance. Some parents wish that their children should work to keep them occupied fruitfully. In most cases, children themselves feel obliged to work as they do very badly at school with no other alternative. Other reasons such as parental illness or death and migration are familial in nature (Mendelviech, 1980). Many schools that poorly adapt to the requirement of the societies they served, failed to provide adequate facilities for children who had fallen behind in their education to catch up contributing to child labour (United Nations, 1985). To Bequele (1985), child labour is due to poor enforcement machinery and poor labour inspection services, deterioration in employment, living standards and declining economic and social conditions.

Child workers are involved in numerous types of work. A large number of them are involved in agricultural work, the rest are in unorganised sectors (NIPCCD, 1984). Those children who are wage earners are found working in informal sectors where legal requirements such as taxes, social security, safety and health are not observed. Other concerns where children work are food, agarbathi, textile industries, tailoring, metal, wood-work shops, pottery and toy shops, shoe making, glass and construction works, tea shops, canteen/snack bars, printing press, workshops, shoe shining, hawking and
rag picking (Gathia, 1985). With fast spreading urbanization, industries in the small towns and semi-urban areas employ child workers in large numbers (News letter of the Asia Cultural Forum on Development, 1985). They include carpet, cloth weaving; beedi rolling; coir; leather and button making; match works; mica, bamboo work; waste paper reuse material such as envelope; slate pencil and brick manufacturing and host of jobs in other industries.

Most industries, being small and unregistered, make child workers work for ten hours a day and seven days a week. Work place is far from hygienic with hot, stuffy rooms that are ill-ventilated, ill-lighted and dirty. They sit on the cement floor or stand all day while working, are scolded/beaten for slow work and for mistakes committed (Boonpala, 1986). Children who work in unregulated industries, do odd jobs and at times domestic work also. These children are openly abused (Sexena, 1968). Most of the employers seldom maintain record of the children employed. As a result, workers are underpaid inspite of overtime work input. Except for an yearly bonus, no other benefits are given to children (Kothari, 1983). Such working environment may have disastrous consequences on the well being and future of the child workers and their psycho-social development. Leisure, play and recreation are absolutely essential for healthy psycho-social development (Shah, 1985). Child workers who are deprived of educational opportunities have minimum
chances for vocational training, their physical and intellectual development gets hampered (Dayal, 1985 and Cheang, 1984). They remain unskilled labourers all their lives (Pant, 1965).

Mehta (1985) postulates the consequences of jobs accomplished in the streets in that it might expose the child to social evils such as crimes, drugs and prostitution. It is this radical transformation in the nature and forms of children's work with its concomitant harmful effects on the children concerned that makes child labour a pressing problem and a compelling cause for international concern (ILO, 1983). The effects of exertion, fatigue and overwork on the developing body is bound to hinder, counteract, retard (Challies and Elliman, 1979) or even halt growth and mental capacities (Modi, 1988). Bad working environment disturbs health, increases incidents of diseases and leads to poor working capacity (Bhargava, 1985).

Rodgers and Standings (19811) suggest the need to study the effect of child work on intellectual and physical development, sex roles and family structure of groups of specific category of workers. Naidu (1985) exhorts that child labour is a phenomenon which is likely to aggravate malnutrition and bad health among the child population and it is essential to study health needs of child workers in specific cottage industries.
Though there are studies done in the field, they do not pinpoint the impact of child labour on intelligence and social aspects of children involved in industries of specific nature. So, the present study was undertaken to explore the child labour situation in hosiery industries. This study aimed to examine specifically:

- Conditions under which children work.
- Intelligence of child workers.
- Health aspects of child workers.
- Social dimensions of child workers.
- Mothers' awareness about their child's employment.
- Possibilities to organise and evaluate educational intervention to child workers.

Limitations:

1. It was difficult to achieve optimum time for education intervention as employer was not willing to consider it as beneficial for his child workers.

2. Getting access to interview child workers and administer the Intelligence test was very difficult and demanded several attempts leading to a restricted number of final sample.
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The operational definitions for certain terms used in this study are as follows:

Cohort: Matched sample with respect to socio-economic status, age, sex and years or work experience belonging to the same cultural environment.

Child worker: An individual below 14 years old, having worked as full time worker in hosiery industry for not less than two years.

Part time child worker: An individual below 14 years, attending regular school having at least two years of work experience in hosiery industry or related remunerative works either in the industry during vacation or at home during leisure time - every day; week ends or on holidays.

Non worker: An individual below 14 years attending regular school and never involved in remunerative work.

Industry: Refers to manufacturing units where knitted materials are tailored to make garments.

Literate: Children who had attended school for at least two years and are able to read and write.

Illiterate: Children who are not able to read and write with or without attending school, and children who are capable of signing names only.
Workload at home: Includes all household tasks performed by the child per day and time consumed to perform the tasks.

Workload at industry: Includes all aspects related to remunerative work such as hours of work, overtime hours, distance to reach the industry, time taken, mode of transit, opinion about the distance and approach to work spot.

Working condition: Includes number of hours, days worked overtime hours and days service input referring previous day/week, distance travelled between home and industry, child's view regarding the distance and approach, mode of transit and time taken to travel.

Facility at the industry: Refers to the facility provided at working area, the physical set up and general facilities.

Social aspects: Includes type and number of play activities, friends of the samples and their status as child workers, part time child workers and non-workers.

Negative social aspects: Includes habits such as gambling, smoking and drinking.

Since the study had diversified samples, the following abbreviations were used:

Child workers - CWs
Male Child Workers - MCWs
Female Child Workers - FCWs
Part-time Child Workers - PCWs
Male Part-time Child Workers - MPCWs
Female Part-time Child Workers - FPCWs
Non Workers/School going Children - NWs
Male Non Workers - MNWs
Female Non Workers - FNWs
Mothers of the Male Child Workers - MMCWs
Mothers of the Female Child Workers - MFCWs

HYPOTHESES:

The hypotheses proposed in the study are enlisted below:

1. The remunerative work performed by child workers and part time child workers are equal (Sexwise).
2. Workload at home does not vary with socio-economic status, family size and ordinal positions.
3. The IQ of child workers and part-time child workers (Cohort I) are equal.
4. The IQ of child workers and non-workers (Cohort II) are equal.
5. The IQ of child workers and part-time child workers and non-workers do vary with length of service within the group.
6. The heights and weights of child workers and part-time child workers within the sex are equal.