The interest of the author in labour problems is primarily the outcome of his belonging to a place which is one of the most important industrial centres of the State of Haryana. The town, viz., Yamuna Nagar, has the proud privilege of having one of the biggest sugar factories of the country and so is the case with the paper mill located in the town. Besides, the town has a large number of big, medium and small scale industrial units. Jagadhri, the adjacent industrial town, popularly known as 'Metal City', abounds in a large number of metal units manufacturing steel, aluminium and brass utensils which are known for their quality all over the country. His home town, thus, has provided him with ample opportunity to be in close touch with the industrial workers, both organised and unorganised ones, and thus he knows a lot about the real problems of this poor lot of the society. With this background and having an intense desire to contribute whatever he could, after completing his M.A. (Economics), he joined the Post Graduate Diploma in Personnel Management and Industrial Relations which further enriched his background and exposure in the field of his interest. During the course of his aforesaid P.G. Diploma, he had the privilege of developing his contacts with Dr. R.C. Sharma, now the supervisor of the present thesis. Since Dr. Sharma is the author of scores of research articles on labour problems and personnel management and has also written some books in the present field, the author got further impetus to go ahead. He also got an opportunity of writing a research paper titled 'Labour Policy in India Since Independence', with Dr. Sharma's collaboration, which was published in the 'Haryana
It is rather unfortunate that the people who practically produce everything that the society needs, suffer the most. Even after achieving independence in 1947, the working class is still looked down upon by the society in general and the elitists in particular. The situation is still horrible in the case of unorganised workers, who constitute not less than 90 per cent of the total working force of the country, and are primarily engaged in agriculture, small scale industrial units, cottage industries, hotels, domestic services, etc. The lot of woman and child labour is equally bad and, in some cases, difficult to believe unless one happens to see the entire scenario with his own eyes. So, and in some cases even the worst, is the position of bonded labour. When such is the case in the independent country of ours which believes in democratic socialism, social justice, fraternity and equal rights, and all such other good things, one wonders as to what would have been plight of this section of the society when it used to be in the clutches of feudal lords, kings and emperor, and foreign rulers. All this led the author to think about studying the labour policy of the rulers from time to time and evaluating the effectiveness of such a policy during different regimes in a chronological manner. The present study, therefore, has been taken up by him with the aforesaid background.

The significance of the labour policy hardly needs any elaboration. A good labour policy and its proper and effective implementation leads to the creation of industrial harmony and thereby enhances production of goods and services which are vital to the progress of any country. In the case of our country, it is all the more important because ours are primarily labour-intensive
industries. Therefore, it will be in the fitness of things if all concerned, primarily the workers' representatives, employers' representatives and the Government's representatives, ponder over the blunders committed by us in the past and taking a clue from them, improve upon our past labour policies and make the 21st century an era of industrial peace, mutual goodwill and trust, resulting in genuine industrial prosperity.

In order to undertake the aforesaid exercise, it is essential to make a beginning from the ancient period and study and evaluate the lot of the working class through different periods of history as to find out: "What was the position of different industries?", "What were the working and living conditions of the workers?", "What was the attitude of the society towards the working class?", and "What was the approach of the governments, rulers or the people who mattered in this regard, towards the workers?", during different periods of Indian history, including the present phase and also to visualise the future, specially the 21st century, in this regard. Hence, in the present study all sorts of sources have been made use of to collect the relevant information and having compiled and analysed it, to present it in a comprehensive and chronological way as a composite picture of labour policy and its effectiveness both in the past and present and also to visualise its future and offer a few suggestions to make it more meaningful and effective.

Although an all out effort has been made to make the present work a true success, yet some of the lapses and omissions cannot be ruled out altogether as the topic deals with human factor and comprehends a vast circumference.
Obviously, such a consummate work as this was beset with various difficulties, as the path of independent research is always strewn with thorns, especially in Indian context. Anyway, in the final preparation of this research work, a number of libraries and institutions, individuals, both official and non-official, ungrudgingly extended their cooperation and help to the author at various stages. The author is thankful to all of them. The author is thankful to a large number of authors, of both published and unpublished literature, specially to Dr. M. Kuttapan and some other writers on labour problems, from whose work quite a good amount of material had been made use of in order to reach certain conclusions and make suggestions.

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The author shall deem his efforts duly rewarded if his conclusions and suggestions can be of some use in improving upon the present labour policy of the Government of India and its implementation in the times to come.

Kurukshetra.

(Vinay Kumar Shori)