Studies on child labour cover reports of various types prepared by various government, semi-government or voluntary agencies of national and international statuses. These reports are based on primary/secondary data and are about urban/rural; industrial/agricultural areas. There are few nationwide studies on child labour, the earliest study being conducted by Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour (1954). The study was based on secondary information and a few on the spot investigations in industries, e.g., mines, plantation, cottage industries (Handloom, weaving leather tanning, carpet making, tailoring, potteries, etc.).

Studies on child labour have been conducted by researchers of diverse social science background. Since child labour is a social problem, the main emphasis of the researchers has been applied one, in that most of them have tried to suggest ways to solve this problem or to lessen its intensity. In such studies, the theoretical aspect of the problem usually gets a secondary emphasis. The studies have mainly covered the following areas, viz., (i) the background characteristics of the working children; (ii) their working conditions with an emphasis on varying problem arising from different industries; (iii) the adverse consequence of child labour; (iv) the manner in which these adverse consequence can be lessened or removed and the legislative solutions and their limitations.

Child labour studies conducted in big metropolitan cities e.g. Bombay (Musafir Singh et. al. 1980 : 40), Bangalore (Patil; 1988 : 27), Delhi (Barooach
et. al., 1977 : 29), Delhi Region (Nangia, 1987), Varanasi (Juyal et. al., 1985 : 58), Calcutta (Ghosh, 1985 : 10), Calcutta (Sinha, 1991 : 68-69), Jammu and Kashmir (Kitchlu, 1987 : 51), Baroda (Srinivasan Kamla, 1987 : 4), Bhubaneshwar (Tripathi, 1989), Ahmedabad (Singh, 1982 : 16) shows the predominance of male children. Their percentage very from 65.2 to 100 percent in these studies but in Siwakasi (Menon, 1987 : 27) 67% of working children were female. These studies also indicate that more than 60 percent of the children are above 10 years of age at the time of entry in the labour market. Patil (1988 : 45) further reveals that the percentage of girl child worker decreases with the increase in their age indicating that they start working earlier than the boys do.

In almost all these studies, large percentage of working children belongs to Hindu religion, but the percentage of SC and OBC children among them is quite significant. As found in Bombay (1980 : 41) and Baroda (1987 : 7) studies, their percentage were 58 percent and 55% respectively. Let us discuss the various studies on child labour under the following heads:-

**STUDIES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE CHILD LABOUR:**

A study of child labour in the city of Madras revealed that nearly three fourth of the child labourers started employment to supplement the family income, 23 percent were forced to take up employment on account of the death of their father and 17 percent of them began employment on the insistence of their parents. This shows the poverty amongst these people. (George, K.N., 1977 : 167).
Child labour based on a survey of four villages in two districts of West Bengal, it is the children of the rice who go to school. According to him the total number of non-enrolled children from three lowest agrarian classes such as the agricultural labourers, amounts to as high as 89.65 percent of the age group of 6 to 16 years. Again 87.67 percent of the child labour forces come from the class of poor peasants and agricultural labourers. Only 10.95 percent of the child labour force belonged to middle peasants. And there was only one case of child belonging to a jotedar family who was playing truant and was working in a nearby township. Acharya (1982 : 18-19). Needless to say, the poor and middle peasants belong predominantly to the scheduled castes and tribes while the richer land owners are mostly from the upper castes.

Thus, child labour and illiteracy are both a symbol and mode of maintaining the caste, class division of Indian society. Sabita A. Babani (1982 : III) mentions that child labour comes from the poor classes. Mehta Manhor Bhai (1983 : 1475) noted that the child labour belongs to poor families.

A scientific survey of 200 families in four villages of Rewari tehsil of Haryana conducted by Dr.Satish Chander and Miss Lali Devi (1980 : 43) stated that irrespective of caste, the child labour has severely mauled children of 9 to 14 years, totaling 90 percent of the sample population. They largely belong to the large sizes nuclear families. Prof.Chickavenkatesaiah (1987 : 13) made a study of 9 few selected villages in Bangalore north taluk of Bangalore district, the finding are revealing in the sense that the child labour comes primarily from poor and labour class, i.e. (scheduled caste). It
could also be inferred that certain patterns of obligations and norms might have influenced their children as labour.

*Singh and Verma* (1987 : 205-7) conducted a study “child labour in agriculture” in 14 villages of Nainital district (U.P.). They selected 500 families out of 2886, and noted that child labour comes from the poor families and poor class (scheduled caste and scheduled tribe). Majority of child labourer belongs to the age group of 13 to 18 years. Child labour are illiterate or study upto five class or total number of non-enrolled children are from poor classes. Mostly belong to large sizes nuclear families. The majority of children have been eldest among their brothers and sisters. The majority of child labour married age in 15 years and unmarried is 13 years. The average monthly income of the child labourers Rs.60 is very low, is far below the prescribed minimum wages.

*Sabita A. Babani* (1982 : III) mentions that child came from the poor classes. A survey conducted by *Mendelievich*, 1979: “children at work” and tried to highlight the problem of child labour in India and its causes. In fact, the problem of child labour in India may be seen as the result of traditional attitudes, urbanization, industrialization, migration, lack of schools, etc. In the ultimate analysis, main causes are extreme poverty and agriculture being the main occupation of the majority of population requiring more hands.

Child labour is essentially a problem of the poor and destitute families, where parents can not afford to provide education to their children. A study of the working children in Bombay (*Singh, M.* 1980) found that 20.6 percent of the interviewed employers were employing children because they were more amenable to discipline, some found them better suited for some types of
jobs, 30.5 percent said that their plight had greater sentimental appeal, 9.3 percent favoured because of their honesty. Out respondents (parents), the majority (170 i.e. 69.2 percent) mentioned economic compulsions as the main factor. As many as 74 (25.8 percent) mentioned that the child was idle and doing nothing. Therefore, he was put to work to save him from the demoralising effects of illness.

There were 69 (24 percent) respondents who said that the child had left the school and there was no alternative but to put him at work to keep him busy. Sixty-two of them (21.6 percent) attributed the early entry to work as the part of their children to death, disease or loss of job of the earning member of the family. A few did not mention any special reason or circumstances and said that child labour was their family tradition. Seventeen of the respondents (6 percent) said that their children were keeping bad company and slipping into delinquency so they had to put them on some job so that they might inculcate a sense of discipline. Twelve of the respondents mentioned that the child himself was keen to earn; so they did not stop him from working. A few (10 percent) said that the child was alone at home. Therefore, he was not safe to ensure his safety; they put him on some job.

The Ministry of Labour, Government of India (1979 : 10-13, 70) has mentioned tradition, poverty, lack of adequate awareness among parents for educating children, illiteracy, large size of families, inadequate schooling facilities, loss of parents or bread winner of the family, unemployment and lack of land as the causes of child labour.

Singh & et. al. (1980 : 9-12, 1987 : 80) have thrown some light on tradition and poverty as the main causes of child labour. Kulsherstha (1979 :
12-19) has mentioned poverty, absence of the family allowance, large size family, cheaper rates of child labour, absence of compulsory education, illiteracy and ignorance, slow process of protective labour legislation and inadequate inspecting machinery as the causes of child labour.

Gangrade, K.D. (in Mendelievich, 1979 : 81) has stated “the poverty of many families forces the parents to put their children to work instead of sending them to school”. Singh & Verma (1987 : 89) mention that poor economic condition of child labourers need for extra working hand that has compelled them to take up work irrespective of their age, sex and state of education. Sabita, A. Babani (1982 : III) found that acute poverty and unemployment seem to be the other causes of increasing rate of child labour.

Another study as the working children in Hissar. (Sharma, 1982) revealed that a majority of the child workers joined the labour force due to acute poverty of their family, death and chronic illness of the earning members and there was no source to supplement their family income. Children came from different states. About 4/5 of the children came from the families whose average monthly income was less than Rs.300/- and the size of the family was 8 on an average. The social circumstances which also motivated the child workers to seek jobs were company of friends, rude behaviour of fathers and lack of affection in the family, etc.

One more study on the working conditions of children employed in unorganized sector, in Sivakashi (CSR,1984) found that children were the main bread winners in most of the families there. A large number of families depended on the income from math units either as main source or as supplementary source of family income. About 36 percent of the families had
more than two children employed in match units. Most of the children were under compulsion to work due to poverty. A majority (95 percent) of them took up jobs in match units because of the poor financial conditions of their families. Another 6 percent of them were interested to continue their studies but were forced by their parent to work to support their families or to supplement the family income. Similarly, another study on child labour in Himachal Pradesh found that it was the economic necessity which compelled the families to send their children to work. Increasing incidence of debts created more pressure for sanding all possible hands to work for wages. Employers preferred child labour, because it was easy to manage them and also they have to pay less wages to them. About 14.67 percent employers expressed their opinion that children should be employed but 82.67 percent replied in negative. It was also found that in certain handicrafts like zari brocade, carpets which need training at the early age children are preferred to adults.

A review of their educational status reveals that more than 2/3rd of the working children as found in the studies of Varanasi (Juyal, et. al.; 1985 : 67), Calcutta (gbose, 1984 : 14), (Sinha, 1991 :69), Jammu & Kashmir (Kitchlu, 1987 : 52) did not have any schooling while more than one third of the child workers in Bombay (Musafir Singh, et. al.; 1980 : 41), Bangalore (Patil; 1988 : 32) and 45% in Delhi (Barooah, et. al.; 1977 : 46) study were illiterate. More than 50% working children dropped their studies during early primary school stage as depicted in the studies of Varanasi (Juyal, 1985 : 87), Jammu and Kashmir (Kitchlu, 1987 : 49), Calcutta (Ghosh, 1984 : 11), Bombay (Musafir Singh et. al., 1980 : 77), Delhi (Barooah, et. al., 1977 : 97), Bangalore (Patil,
The lack of or low level of literacy and poor educational status are likely to be due to negative attitude of the parents towards education of their wards. The Bombay (Musafir Singh et al., 1980: 46), Delhi (Barooah et al., 1977: 24), Madras (George, 1975: 166), Baroda (Srinivasan, K., 1987: 5), Bangalore (Patil, 1988: 30) and Ahmedabad (Singh, 1992: 19) studies indicate that the average size of family of working children in town was 5.5 members or more. Thus size of family is one of the positive determinants of child labour.

It is generally believed that the economic compulsion forces children to seek employment and earn for the family. This has been proved by different studies such as those of George (1975: 167), Musafir Singh et al. (1980: 77), Ghosh (1984: 11), Nangia (187: 175), Srinivasan (1987: 6), Juyal et al. (1985: 69), Patil (1988: 70), Sinha (1991: 36) and Singh (1992: 25). The studies give multiple reasons for children being in labour market. The most important reasons are death/disease of their parents, apathetic attitude of parents towards education, educational backwardness of parents; need to look after young sibling, etc. However, in Jammu and Kashmir study (Kitchlu, 1987: 57) it is not only the economic compulsion of families but need to learn the tricks of the trade is the most important reason for the children in labour market. According to the employers (Musafir Singh et al., 1980: 110) children are employed because they are more amenable to discipline are quick and efficient and better suited to some kind of job, their plight has greater sentimental appeal, etc.

**WORKING CONDITIONS OF CHILD LABOUR:**
Not all work is hazardous to children or work can in fact be beneficial to the child more recently an important study conducted in Bombay by Shah, P.M. (1985) has pointed out that working children are in fact healthier than non-working children because of the food they get to eat. A study conducted (Singh M., 1980) in Bombay city presents the working conditions of both self-employed and employed children self-employed child workers were found to be working for 10 hours a day who earned around Rs.82/- per month on an average. The lack of fixed place of shelter, inadequacy of equipment and harassment by officials were the main problems in carrying out the job smoothly. According to some parents, work developed a sense of responsibility in their children made them sober, considerate and well-behaved. The findings about the employed children revealed that none was asked to produce a certificate of medically examined. A majority of the children (68.2 percent) were getting a monthly salary of Rs.100/- and below. The children engaged in construction work, arts and craft and production received the highest payments whereas those in households and restaurants were paid the lowest emoluments in terms of hard cash.

Out of 205 children who do earning, as many as 133 (64.9 percent) received pocket money, 64.9 percent, i.e. 133 children worked on regular basis and the rest on daily wages. The minimum number of hours a child worked was 4 hours and the maximum was 14 hours, the average being 8.7 hours. Out of the total sample, 5.10 percent working children had no fixed rest interval. Similarly, 35 percent of the children did not get an off day during the week. Nearly 33 percent of the parents did not visit the work places of their children.
According to employees, protection against sun and rain was available to 79.9 percent of the working children, separate rest places to 20.6 percent, proper lighting to 88.7 percent, medical facilities to 41.2 percent, drinking water and bath facilities to 79.4 percent, protection against job hazards to 52.9 percent, proper ventilation to 83.8 percent, recreational facilities to 17.2 percent and toilet facilities to 57.4 percent. As many as 54 percent children did not express any difficulties in the performance of their jobs. Another 88.6 percent of the children were satisfied with the treatments accorded to them from their employers and only 11.4 percent were not satisfied.

Statistics show that the total employed children in two units of the crapet industry in Srinagar, wages varied from Rs.2 to 10 per day weavers. The wages were Rs.2 to Rs.4 per day when full skill of the trade was obtained. In both the units, children were required to work for the same hours as fixed for adult workers. There were no special provision for education, recreation, social security and other welfare amenities for children.

Gopunjkar (1980) conducted a study “working children in the tribal areas of Maharastra” and found that children were doing different types of job. The children participated in all the occupations/jobs available to them and activities of home/family occupations and kept themselves engaged throughout the year. The child starts’ working from 5 to 6 years of age the income from the work of the child is of two types, in cash and in kind. Wages in cash are governed to some extent, by the minimum wages (amendment) Act of 1979. But in many cases labourers are paid less than what is due to them, the wages in kind are given at rates in accordance with the local practice. Except for a few activities like saldari, children enjoy real free life
and do not feel the constraints of work. They are not over-burdened and feel free in the working atmosphere. However, proper education and health facilities are not available in the country. Diseases resulting from malnourishment and unhygienic conditions and practices are very common.

A survey report revealed that working conditions of children working in industries were unhygienic and deplorable. The work places in most cases were over crowded, dark and dingy. The workers were poor and hard-pressed and had to work for long hours to earn their livelihood, especially in view of the prevailing low wages rates.

The Institute of Psychological and Educational Research, Calcutta conducted a survey approximately 2000 child labourers, the study showed that the child labour was paid about 10 percent of what an adult would get for the same job.

The report revealed that the employ at a restaurant paying a child Rs.10 to Rs.20 per month admits that he would have to pay Rs.100 to Rs.150 per month if he had appointed an adult worker in his place. The difference between the rates of payment made to the child workers and those of the adult labourers doing the same job is 10 times at the highest and 5 times at the lowest, the difference gradually being less and less as the nature becomes more and more skill based and the general rate of payment rises higher and higher (IPER 1985: 23).

Burra, Neera (1987 : 1120) said there is no uniform wage structure in the lock industry a child earning Rs.50/- a month made about Rs.1.60 paise per day he did not come his wages were reduced. A child who earned Rs.120 a month
for a nine hour day got approximately Rs.4 per day and was not paid for the
days he was absent or the factory was closed. What come through loud and
clearly in these cases is that children are working in almost every sphere of
economic life. They are exploited and deprived this deprivation is of two
types, one is related to the impact on its health because of the type of work it
self as a result of the total environment to which he is exposed. The second,
concerns its educational status. the child working at an early age, full time is
unable to go to school, is deprived or any opportunity for upward mobility and
remains an unskilled worker all its life. We shall, therefore, go on to study the
impact work has on the health of the child and its educational status.

_Vishwapriya, Iyengar_ (1986 : 5) writes about the health hazards to
children in the match industry of Sivakashi. There are 45000 children working
here.

“Children mixing chemicals in the boiler room get lungs full of toxic
fumes, suffer high degrees of intensive heat and run the risk of being badly
injured in fire accidents. Children who stamp frames on the metal sheet too
suffer heat, toxic fumes and excessive strain on the arms and shoulders
which have to remove and place the heavy frames with great rapidity. Delay
to a second.... can cause the lite frame to go up in roaring flames which
cause instant death.

In the lock industry of Aligrah, children work on hand presses, on
buffing machines polishing rusted metal pieces, in electro plating workshops
and in spray painting units”. Most polishes suffer from tuberculosis and other
upper respiratory tract diseases. Workers in electro-plating plants complained
of breathlessness, asthma and acute head aches. There are almost 10000 children working in lock industry. (Burra, Neera; 1987 : 1119).

Children interviewed by me in the Aligarh observation home said. They were severally beaten up by their employers for any breakage of crockery that occurred. It was quite common for children to slip on the wet loads of food and tea, thus not only incurring. The wrath of the customers and lashing from the employer but also losing their wages till they had paid for the breakage. Manohar Bhai, Mehta (1983 : 14-15) quoted the survey conducted by the Department of Social Welfare, the worst exploited are the children employed in the tea shops or dhabhas, especially the unregistered ones. These children work from 5 A.M. to 10 P.M., 64 percent got not weakly off and wages are below of 25 per month. To earn this pittance, two square meals a day and a roof to sleep under. They are one their toes from morning till night, serving customers, wiping tables, washing dishes and helping in cooking.

Rural indebtedness is one of the most important causes of child labour in India (garg, 1980) almost 73% of child labourers are put to work by their own parents or guardians (juyal et. al. 1985, Ganguly 1984 and Singh et. al. 1980). In a study conducted in the Sivakashi match factory in Tamil Nadu, Manu Kulkarni was told by one woman that the child in the ‘womb’ is pledged to the factory and consumption and maternity loans are obtained on the undertaking that the child born, girl or boy, would work for the factory (Kulkarni, 1983-85).

Gangrade and Gathia’s study (1983) carpet weavers in Varanasi reveals that: To keep the production cost low, the middlemen often suggest to the families to engage children under 12 years of age. They even pay
advances of Rs.400 to Rs.500 for some family function and thus ties the child to work for them indirectly.

The problem of bonded is vast and it also reveals the helplessness of their parents. This helplessness can also be viewed as power over their children since they can in fact trade them like cattle.

The problems of social service needs of child labour in agriculture in (U.P.) conducted by (Singh S. 1982) and found that an average monthly income of the child worker had been Rs.60.86, which came to about Rs.2 per day. A majority of child workers were engaged in carrying water, house watching, buying domestic thing, cattle grazing, working in night on irrigation and crop watching, etc. Mean monthly income of the child workers was Rs.60.86 and in the majority of cases, payment of wages was made directly by the employers and received directly by the child workers. Child workers were suffering from minor ailments only caused by seasonal variations though they were exposed to various serious diseases. A majority of the child workers stated that employers did not exploit them from undue work. The health of the majority of the child workers was poor and their guardians were illiterate without any technical knowledge. The entire monthly earning was between Rs.200 and Rs.400 only.

In the study conducted by Usha S. Naidu and Kamini, R. Kapadia on child labour and health (problems and prospects). They are: Balloon factories, carpet weaving in Kashmir and Glass industries in Ferozabad.

Balloon Factories: Children belonging to 5 to 15 years are made to work for 9 hours a day with a wage facilities exist. Inhalation of acids cause
pneumonia and inhalation of certain powers cause lung diseases. In the long run eye-sight is also affected.

A study made by Sharma (1982) on the working children to examine the extent of exploitation and socio-economic background of child labour found that 56 percent respondents had to work for 15 to 18 hours per day for earning their livelihood and 44 percent for 10-15 hours per day. The average daily working hours was 16 hours. As far as the payment of wages, 81 percent of the respondents were receiving upto Rs.50 per month whereas two percent were paid Rs.50 to Rs.100 per month while only 3 percent respondents received more than Rs.100. The respondents contributed the maximum of their earnings to support their families.

Another study (CSR 1981) conducted on working children employed in unorganized sector in Sivakashi reported that about 53 percent of the child workers had been working for more than two years. They worked for more than 10 hours per day in ill-ventilated place without basic amenities and rest which affected their health and retarded their physical and mental growth and development at this age. The employers were found to be very strict with the employed child workers. Thus, 11 percent of the children stated that they were scolded when mistakes were committed and the rest were beaten on such occasions. Primarily, this study was based on a sample of 900 child workers only. Therefore, the required information could not be verified by the parents and the employers of the child workers. Secondly, the study did not cover the problem of those children who were found to be working under carpet units.
A study (Juyal 1985) conducted on child labour in Varanasi at the suggestion of a committee on child labour appointed by the Government of India, indicated that wages paid to the child workers varied from occupation to occupation. About 36.56 percent employers said that they had child workers because they are cheaper, 27.13 percent employed them due easy availability, the hours of work and employer’s behaviour varied from occupation to occupation and depended on the nature of activities. However, in the most of the activities, the working hours ranged from 9 hours to 15 hours. The units out of 258 employers, as many as 06 (80 percent) answered that they had not ever encountered any representative of the labour laws enforcement agencies coming to the unit for an inspection.

A majority of working children are employed on temporary basis in seasonal work. Relatively speaking, self-employed children have greater stability whereas bonded labourers are employed for life time. As a matter of fact, unlike adults, the child is the least bothered about stability of employment. The studies on child labour by Barooah, et. al. (1977 : 43) and Musafir Singh, et. al. (1980: 85) reveal that 2/3rd of the child workers were working for less than a year on regular basis, whereas the study of Patil (1988: 74) and Kitchlu (1987: 85) indicate that 3/4 of the employed children were in different employment from one to five years. The study of Nangia (1987: 121) and Patil (1988: 76) reveal that a little less than one-third of these children worked on more than one job. The reasons for frequent change of their jobs are heavy work, low wages, desire of their parents, ill-treatment of their employers, etc.
Various common forms of exploitation of working children mentioned in the studies under review are excessive long hours of work, low wages and insanitary and unhygienic conditions of work. The hours of work and the time-schedule of child workers vary considerably according to nature of establishment and in which the children are engaged. Most of the studies Barooah et. al. (1977: 46), Musafir Singh et. al. (1980 : 108), Patil (1988 : 78), Nangia (1987 : 131), Juyal et. al. (1985 : 117), Srinivasan (1987 : 15), Kithlu (1987 : 74), George (1975 : 196), Ghosh (1984 : 12), Singh (1992 : 50) indicate that their work hours vary from 8 to 10 hours per day, without or with rest interval of half to one hour daily. But in case of Sinha (1991: 65) study about 90 percent of the working children have their working hours between 11 to 20 hours per day with or without rest interval of half to one hour daily. The studies further reveal that the monthly wages paid to these children are as low as Rs.25 as high as Rs.300. The study highlights that apprentices are not paid any wages for the first few months.

Besides working for long hours on very low wages, these child workers work in most unhygienic and in sanitary environment. They are extremely vulnerable to stunted growth, infections, malnutrition and bad posture which may result in deformities of spine and limbs leading to various forms of disabilities and handicaps. Some time such environment also leads to bad habits, sexual perversions and venereal diseases. The peculiar nature of the jobs and the work procedures in which these children are involved has ill effect on their health and well being. for instance the studies conducted by Barooah et. al. (1977 : 93) and Sinha (1991 : 81) reveal that children employed in tea-shops and dhabas are exposed to vagaries of weather like
rains and scorching sun as they have to work mostly in the open without adequate clothing and food. Sinha (1991) further revealed that 80.67 percent of such children sleep on footpath which shows that their living conditions are equally miserable but in case of domestic servants their working and living conditions are slightly better than those of the children working in dhabas and tea stalls. Similar descriptions of the working children are found in studies of Musafir Singh et. al. (1980: 112), Kitchlu (1987: 79), Mitra (180: 92), Juyal et. al. ((1985: 121), Srinivasan K (1987: 17-20), Nangia (1987: 138, 140, 204) etc.

After reviewing the relevant literature on child labour, it was found that most of the studies focused and concluded the following points:

1. The age group of the child worker varies from 5-15 years, 8-10 years, 6-14 years and 12 to 15 years. So we can assume that 6 to 14 years is the average age of the child workers.

2. The working hours of the child labour was found to vary from 7 to 10 hours.

3. Main reasons for child labour was found to be poverty and illiteracy, followed by inadequate family income, employed adults and large family size.

4. Mot of the study reflects the poor working condition and ill treatment by the employers.

5. The wages of the child labour varies from Rs.75/- to Rs.200/- per month.
6. Most of the child labour come primarily from poor low caste and poor families.

7. The disease varies from occupation to occupation. The major diseases were found to be lung disease, weak eyesight, burns, joint pains and others.