CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

Large proportions of child labour actively working in different areas of the economy – primary, secondary and tertiary sector, both in rural and urban areas. Though the problem of child labour and its exploitation had long been the subject of sporadic concern it has been only recently that the probable extent and incidence of this long standing phenomena could be brought to the full view of the general public.

In recent time, the phenomenon of child labour draws the attention of social scientists at the international level as it is considered to be a serious social problem in the third world countries. It also exist in developed countries but in a lesser extent. It may be, therefore, viewed as a universal problem challenging the human rights. It may be stated that the chances of child worker to become full-fledged citizens seems mentally depressed in the year to come.

Work is a part of socialization, however, work that is repetitive, mechanical, physically arduous and done for long hours is termed labour and is often injurious to a child’s development and in extreme circumstances is exploitative and enslaving. Since all work is not considered bad for children, the definition of child labour becomes crucial. The two major indicators considered are exploitation and age. In general however, exploitation refers to economic exploitation (low wages) and physical exploitation.

Although it is difficult to obtain single definition of child labour, but operationally the term “child labour” may refer to children engaged in all types of activities whether these be industrial or non-industrial, but which are detrimental to their physical, mental, moral and social well being and development.

Child labour is a social-economic phenomenon. It is generally conceded that illiteracy, ignorance, low wages, unemployment, poor standard of living, stark poverty, large family, absence of social security measures, absence of unionisation, poor implementation of the child labour act, deep social
prejudices and appalling backwardness of the countryside are all, severally and collectively, the root cause of child labour.

In India, as per an estimate made by the Planning Commission, there were about 17.4 million working children in the country during 1981 and the number is expected to increase to over 20 million working children by the year 2000. Both male and female children in the age group of 5-14 years constitute the child labour force, with more girls working in the household, and not truly recognized as child labour while a male child is seen and noticed as employed and engaged in outside home activities.

In India, the child labourers are sharply increasing in various fields. Compared to 1981 survey we find that it has increased from 13.64 million to 17 million.

1981 census disclosed that 78.71 percent of child labour is engaged in cultivation in agriculture. 6.3 percent in fishing, hunting and plantation, 8.63 percent in manufacturing, processing, repairs, household industry, 3.21 percent in construction, transport, storage, communications and trade and 3.1 percent in other services.

Out of 100 million children employed in the unorganized sector more than two million children work in hazardous industries, posing a great risk to their health.

As per 1991 census the state with highest child labour population in the country is Andhra Pradesh which has 1.66 million working children. It is also the state with the maximum number of drop-outs. Other states where the child labour population is more than one million are Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

In terms of absolute size Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka had a larger number of male as well as female child workers in 1961 than any other state of India. Between 1961 and 1991, the fastest growth of full time male child labourers (0-14 years) occurred in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and was slowest in Kerala, Haryana, Punjab and Orissa.
Almost 90% of the child workers (main) are in rural areas even though according to the 1991 census, 74.3% of the population is in the rural areas. Thus a disproportionately higher percentage of workers are located in the rural areas. Child workers in the rural areas are engaged in agriculture and allied occupations like cultivation, agricultural labour, livestock, forestry and fisheries. In the urban and semi-urban areas, they are engaged in a wide variety of production processes and services in different parts of the country.

Between 1981 and 1991, according to our estimates, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Haryana registered a small decline in the incidence of full time male child labour in urban areas. It increased in all the other states, the lowest being in Kerala and the highest in Uttar Pradesh.

The incidence of child workers in urban India has been getting worse since 1961. The only states where there have been improvements between 1971 and 1991 are Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Gujurat. The situation got substantially worse in Uttar Pradesh and Orissa during the same period. The situation got worse in West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. In other states, there are marginal changes in view of growing urbanization and expected increases in urban population. Unless these trends are checked through state policy, the problem of child labour will continue to get worse particularly in the states which witnessed an explosion in the use of urban child labour between 1971 and 1991.

Child welfare can only be achieved when, what the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, the community too wants for the children. Important thing however is awareness. The effective enforcement of the law is the only panacea to root out this evil. The innocence of the childhood days must not be allowed to wither away.

There is no doubt that the present definition of the term ‘child’ provided in Section 3 is not at all exhaustive in the sense that it merely provides that child means a person who has not completed his age of 15 years.

With regard to family businesses the enabling provisions should be incorporated in Section 3 of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act,
1986 so that the State may be in a position to take regulatory measures even in case of family businesses or domestic work where child is required to work. There are small scale urban employments engaging number of children for various activities such as shoe shining, car washing, newspaper selling, automobile workshops, restaurants, tea vendor shops, dhabas, etc., wherein child labour is exposed to excessive exploitation, same is the position with regard to domestic servants. It is urgent need of the time that such informal sectors of employment of the child labour in rural as well as urban areas should be covered within the purview of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 by introducing suitable amendment in this regard.

Article 24 of the Constitution of India prohibited employment of Child Labour only in factories, mines or other hazardous employments and permitted their employment in other professions and vocations.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 has been enacted and enforced in order to overcome the lacunae and ambiguities involved in the employment of Children Act, 1993, for that purpose this Act has been repealed by the recent legislation, namely, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. Undoubtedly the present legislation is more comprehensive and meaningful but unfortunately it also suffers from few basic drawbacks. First of all, it may be pointed out that the scope of the Act is quite limited and the remedies available under it are quite few mainly due to the fact that unorganized labour has not been covered within its ambit or in other words continues to be outside the provision of the Act, consequently the benefit of the statutory protection is denied to the unorganized labour, in particular, the child labour.

It is well recognized and universally accepted fact that the basic reasons for the exploitation of child labour has been non-implementation of existing Labour Legislation in an effective manner.

Child labour is a modern concept and is a worldwide phenomenon, the problem is more acute in developing countries. Children are universally recognized as the most important asset of any nation. The problem of child labour is drawing fresh attention in the light of concentration of child labour
in decentralized prominent industries. It is important to understand the nature, intensity, types and consequences of child labour in India. Since informal and unorganized sector are having high intensity a child labour, so, the social-economic aspect of child labour in the urban informal sector have to be given a fresh look. These includes the nature of work, the condition of work, working environment and the employment relationship.

The subject of the study has been dealt with critically in order to have a fresh look from analytical point of view on the legislation dealing with child labour in order to point out deficiencies and lacunae involved therein to make concrete suggestions for accomplishing the task of mitigating the suffering of the child labour. Although, much work has already been done on the subject and still more is in pipe line, to combat the problem of child labour at national and international level. In this work an effort has been made to highlight and explore the reality about child labour and the much needed possibility of improving the lot of child labour.

**THE PROBLEM AND DATA**

The study is descriptive in nature. The statement of problem is as follows:

(i) To find out the socio-economic characteristic of child labour and the circumstances forced them to do so

(ii) To study the hour and nature of work done by them, their physical and psychological exploitation and the nature of relationship with their employers

(iii) To study the living and working condition of the child labour

(iv) To evaluate the policy legislation and welfare measures adopted by the government

(v) To suggest measures and policy issue for the upliftment of the child labour.

The inquiry is descriptive in nature. The following hypothesis is formulated on the basis of review of literature.
It is presumed that the major cause of child labour is poverty and illiteracy. Poor working condition associated with ill treatments and economic exploitation by the employer is found in child labour practice. Further child labour is drawn mainly from lower caste group. These are few assumption that are been made in the present study.

The universe in the present study is thus composed of child labour employed in sports industry (small scale) of Meerut City and its outer skirts and nearby villages. The universe is also crucial because state government had declared sports work under hazardous industries.

Since the exact number of the universe (number of child labour) was difficult to enumerate, so the exact sampling frame could not be traced. The main reason for this was that no relevant survey, either by government or by non-government agency was conducted in this field (sports industry). According to D.I.C. Meerut (District Industry Centre) official record, there were approximately 1200 small scale industries engaged in production of sports goods, out of which 475 units were registered in this office, these 475 units were the focus of our study.

Child labour was assumed to be employed more outside city (due to less frequent survey by government officials) than in Meerut City. So it was planned to classify the units and respondents under two heads – “Meerut City Area” and Surrounding Areas” (Consisting outskirts of Meerut City + nearby villages).

The universe of the present study consist of child labour employed in sports industries (475) registered in the D.I.C. office. 48 units (10% of the total registered units i.e. 475) were selected by using systematic sampling method. Sampling interval $K=N/n=475/48$ was nearly 10. The first item between one and ten was selected randomly, it was ‘9’. So we do on adding ‘10’ and selected sample. They were serially 9, 19, 29, 39, ..., etc.

Thus every tenth case was taken from the D.I.C. official register (having list of registered units serially), and these 48 units (34 in city + 14 in surrounding areas) were surveyed for tracing child labour. Number of child labour in these units (48) were difficult to identify, so the respondent (child labour) in these
units were taken randomly by using purposive sampling method. In all 312 child labour were selected on random basis which formed the sample for the present study. On further investigation it was found that in 34 units (located in Meerut City) only 117 respondents were available, while in 14 units (located in outskirts and nearby villages of Meerut City) 195 respondents were found. Small number of child labour in units located in Meerut City (although the ratio of registered unit in city and surrounding area was 17:7 respectively) may be due to strict enforcement of act and frequent vigilance by the labour department in the city, (when the field work was under process) as compared to the surrounding areas.

The following are the major findings of the study.

(A) **SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE WORKERS**

Personal background of 312 respondents (195 surrounding areas + 117 Meerut City) is as follows:

(I) **Age**

It is evident from table 5.1 that majority (70.19%) of the respondent belong to 11-14 years. It is followed by 22.11% child worker in the age group 8-11 years. The reason for the majority of child workers in 11-14 years age group is that, the children at this age were more competent in working with technical skill. The finding of the present study on age is similar to the study conducted in Sivakasi (1989) match factories and fireworks, where the age group in majority were 12-15 years and Satish Chander & Lali Devi (1980) indicating age of child labour from 9-14 years.

(II) **Sex**

It is evident from the table 5.2 that majority of the respondents (83.65%) belongs to the male group in both areas, whereas 16.34% of child workers were from fair sex. The female child labour works in household and units run by their relatives. They were found to be engaged in light jobs like packing, counting, shifting of goods, etc.

(III) **Education**
The table 5.3 shows that majority (58.33%) of workers are illiterate, followed by primary level education (33.97%) and middle school (7.05%). The findings are similar to the findings of Sivakasi (1989) match factories and fireworks, Singh and Verma (1987) and few other studies like - Bombay (Musafir Singh, et. al. 1980: 41), Bangalore (Patil, 1988: 32) and Delhi (Barooah et. al. 1977: 46) who states that more than 1/3\textsuperscript{rd} of the child workers were illiterate. Singh & Verma (1987: 205-7) states that majority of children are illiterate or studied upto 5\textsuperscript{th} standard.

(IV) Religion

It is stated in table 5.4 that in sports industries child workers were drawn mainly from Hindu religion [66.98% (60.00% and 76.63%) in Meerut City and Surrounding areas respectively]. It followed by 30.44% Muslims and 2.56% others. The finding is similar to findings by Juyal (1985), Baroda (1987) and Bombay (1980), Singh and Verma (1987: 205-7) who states that the majority of the child labour belonged to non-tribe Hindu.

(V) Caste

Table 5.5 clearly shows that majority of workers (61.85%) were O.B.C. followed by 34.29% S.C. and 3.84% General Category. On whole, the weaker section dominated (96.14%) over the General category workers. The findings are similar to the findings by Chickavenkate Saiah (1987), Babani (1882) and Singh & Verma (1987).

(VI) Literacy Level of Heads of Households

Table 5.8 shows that in surrounding areas the literacy level of family heads of child labour ranges from education – upto to primary level (40.51%) to illiterate (36.92%), upto middle school (21.02%) and (1.53%) beyond middle school. On contrary, the education, of sampled family head in city areas is upto primary level (36.75%) followed by illiterate (33.33%), upto middle school (22.22%) and (7.69%) beyond middle school. So it is clear that majority of education of the heads of child labour is not very good, only few have middle and higher education. This is the probable cause for promoting child labour. The findings of study are similar to other studies by Gargrade (1979) and others who emphasize on illiteracy in families of child labour.
(VII) Level of Monthly Income in the Household of Child-Labour

Table 5.9 indicates that in surrounding areas the monthly income of household of child labour varies from Rs.2001-3000 (40.51%), Rs.1001-2000 (21.53%), Rs.501-1000 (16.92%) and below Rs.500 (12.82%). In City areas too, the same pattern exist, except few variation in higher and lower side of the income. In urban areas the household income of child labour above Rs.5000 is 1.70%. While it is absent in surrounding areas, on the other hand the monthly income of household of child labour below Rs.500 is 12.82% in surrounding areas but 8.54% in city areas. So it may be concluded that most of the families income is not sufficient to run family well so it directly forces child to go to work rather than education. The finding is similar to findings by Chickavemkatesaiah (1987), Singh and Verma (1987), Singh M (1979), Kulshreshta, Gangrade, K.D. (1979) and Babani (1982). These studies mainly highlight the household belonging to poor families, poor classes, etc.

(VIII) Family Size and Working Children

Table 5.6 reveals that majority of sample workers (45.51%) were having family members in the range 6-9, it is followed by family size 3-6 (42.30%). It is found that more cases of 6-9 members were in surrounding areas. Few cases of 9-12 members (9.93%) were found in surrounding areas, followed by 12-15 (1.28%). This indicates that large family size compel child to work as these families have few earning adults. Singh & Verma (1987: 205-7) in their study of 14 villages of Nainital district noted that the majority of the child labourer belong to large size nuclear families & Chander and Lali Devi (1980: 13) also states the same. The Bombay (M. Singh et. al. 1980, 46), Delhi (Baroah et. al. 1977: 20), Madras (Patil: 1988) and Ahmedabad (Singh 1992: 19) studies indicate that the average size of family of working children was 5.5 members or more. This study also affirm large size of the child labour.

(IX) Occupations of Family Head

Table 5.7 reveals that the majority of family heads of child labour in surrounding area have agriculture as occupation (41.02%) followed by home based work (40%), business (12.85%) and only few have factory work (5.12%) or service (1.02%). Whereas in city area majority of occupation of
heads are home based work (29.05%) in the same field (i.e. sports), followed by business (27.35%), factory work (24.78%) and service (10.25%). Few have agriculture occupation (8.54%) practiced in outerskirts of the city. On an average majority of heads of child labour practise home based work, related to sports goods. This forced their children to follow the traditional occupation.

(X) **Reason for taking up the Work**

The table 5.10 shows that in surrounding areas majority (47.17%) of workers adopted child labour due to traditional work of the family. It is followed by 27.69% adopting the child labour because of financial constraints in the family and 20% adopting child labour due to lack of interest in studies. Only few of them (3.58%) were engaged in the malpractice due to school holiday (1.53%) of the child labours was due to other factors like – lack of parental care, illiterate parents, disabled parents, etc.

In city areas majority (50.42%) of workers adopted child labour because of financial constraints in the family. It is followed by (26.49%) adopting child labour due to traditional work in the family and 12.82% adopted child labour due to the lack of interest in studies. Only few of them (8.54%) were engaged in this work due to school holidays (1.70%) of the child labours was due to other factors. 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), M. Singh (1980: 77), Ghosh (1984: 11), Nangia (1987: 175), Srinivasan (1987: 6), Patil (1988:70), Sinha (1991: 36) and Singh (1992: 25). This study also reflect the financial constraint in the family but it slightly drift in the sense that more cases for taking the work were due to traditional work of the families (as in the study by Mendelevich, 1979).

(XI) **Work Experience**

Table 5.11 shows that majority of workers (53.52%) are having experience of more than 2 years followed by (32.37%) 18-24 months, (7.05%) 12-18 months, (4.80%) 6.12 months and (2.24%) upto 6 months. Thus it is found that majority of children are quiet deep seated in this social evil (having experience in this line). The studies on child labour by Barooah, et. al. (1977:
43) and Musafir Singh et. al. (1980: 85) reveals that 2/3rd of the child workers were working for less than a year on regular basis, whereas the study Patil (1988: 74) and Kitchlu (1987: 85) indicate that ¾ of the employed children were in different employment from 1-5 years. The present study also reflect that similar findings as provided by Patil (1988) and Kitchlu (1987).

(B) WORKING AND LIVING CONDITION

(I) Type of Work

It is evident from the table 5.12 that majority (53.20%) of workers are semi-skilled in both areas, (that is 51.79% in surrounding area and 55.55% in city). It is followed by 29.48% unskilled and 17.30% skilled. The findings are slightly drifted from finding by Madras School of Social Work (1978) who emphasize that most of child workers are unskilled.

(II) Working Hours

It is evident from the table 5.13 that majority (49.35%) of workers works 6-8 hours, followed by 8 hours and above (22.43%) and 4-6 hours (20.51%). Few child workers (6.73%) works 2-4 hours and only (0.96%) works for 0-2 hours. It is clear that majority of child labour works hard, ranging from 6-8 hours and also 8 hours and above. Above findings are similar to the findings by C.S.R. (1984), Sivakasi Study (1989), Bombay study (1983) & Singh. All these studies shows working hours with 9 hours and above. Most of the studies Barooah et. al. (1977: 46), M. Singh et. al. (1980: 108), Patil (1988: 78), Nangia (1987: 131), Juyal et. al. (1958: 117), Srinivasan (1987: 15), Kitchlu (1987: 74), George (1975: 196), Ghosh (1984: 12), Singh (1992: 50) indicate that their work hour vary from 8-10 hours per day. The findings of present study is dissimilar as the working hours here ranges from 6-8 hours followed by 8 hours and above (22.43%).

(III) Work Load

The table 5.14 shows that majority (54.80%) or workers works hard in both areas, that is (55.38%) in surrounding area and (53.84%) in city areas. The main job work includes carrying of raw sports goods and working for long hours without proper rest. (39.42%) child workers find their work moderate,
while few (5.76%) find lighter work load. Moderate and light work may include counting and packing of goods, supplying parts or small items to different persons, etc. Work load of child labour is similar to that of adult workers. So it represent the cruelty on child labour engaged in various sectors.

(IV) Hours of Rest

The table 5.15 shows that majority (63.14%) of workers get very short intervals, say 10-15 minutes for rest. (33.01%) get ½ hours time for taking refreshment and rest. While only few (3.84%) got rest above ½ hours. On the basis of hours of rest the work load was found to be hard, moderate and light. The hours of rest represents the treatment of child labour as an adult labour.

(V) Type of Residential Accommodation used by the Working Children

Table 5.16 shows that in most of the cases, child labour had their house owned by parents (55.44%), while (27.88%) live in rented house. It is found that in surrounding areas, most of the child labour enjoyed parental accommodation and further most of these dwelling houses were used as working units (for manufacturing sports goods). There are only few cases (8.33%) in which accommodation is provided by the employer or child labour used to live in ‘dhabas’ or relative’s house.

(VI) Cleanliness and Ventilation at Working Place

Table 5.17 shows that majority (48.17%) were working in clean and ventilated environment, on further analysis it is evident from the table that cleanliness and ventilation is more proper in surrounding areas (53.84%) as compared to city areas (40.17%). It is found that (43.26%) child workers did not found their working place clean and ventilated, it is again found that city area workers (54.70%) are not getting healthy environment.

The finding of present study is little bit different from other studies by C.S.R. (1984), Sivakasi study (1989) and other studies showing very poor and unhygienic work environment. The reason for drift may be due to difference in occupation and location of working place.
(VII) **Health Problems Among Working Children**

Table 5.18 shows that majority (33.65%) of sample workers suffered from joint pains, this may be due to prolonged sitting hours. 17.62% workers had backache problem, followed by eye problem (10.89%), headache (9.93%), stomach (9.61%), respiratory (9.29%) and other (8.97%). The prevalence of work related disease indicates the poor working condition and intensity of work load on weak shoulders. The study by R. Kapadia on child labour and health reflects disease in 3 industries – Baloon factory: namely pneumonia, lung disease and weak eyesight; carpet weaving stunted growth and lung disease; glass industry head strokes, vomiting, fainting.

The slight difference in occurrence of disease is due to difference in occupation.

(VIII) **Employer Employee Relation**

Table 5.19 shows that majority of worker (59.61%) indicates that their relationship with the employer was moderate i.e. he was not very harsh, nor very lenient in wage payment and holidays. The owners were more interested in work performance and retaining the child labour 23.71%. Child labour said that the relationship with employer was fine. The reason for this was their direct or close relationship with the owners. On the whole, 16.66% workers said that the relationship with the employers was bitter. Most of these cases (16.66%) were child workers who had been employed through agents.

(IX) **Monthly Inccome**

Table 5.20 shows that majority of workers (38.46%) are in the range of Rs.500-700 per month, followed by range of Rs.300-500 (28.84%) and Rs.100-300 (17.62%). Few were in the range of Rs.700-900 (10.89%) and Rs.900 and above (4.16%). There is variation in monthly income of children in studies by C.S.R. (1984), Bombay study (1983), Singh (1982), Garg (1980), Survey by Madras School of Social Work (1978), etc. This variation from present study is due to different occupation.

(X) **Mode of Payment Receive**
Table 5.21 shows that in surrounding areas majority (47.17%) of worker’s parent receive their payment. It is followed by (40.00%) receiving their payment through relatives and few (10.25%) payment is through agent followed by (2.56%) directly. Whereas in city areas majority of workers (49.57%) receive their payment through agents. It is followed by 27.35% receiving their payment through parents and few (12.82%) receive their payment directly and (10.25%) receive payment through relatives.

Overall it is found that majority of child worker's payment is received either by their parents or by agents who employ them. The reason was found to be the ignorance or small age of the children.

(XI)  Interest in Education

Table 5.22 shows the majority of workers (60.25%) want to start or continue study. On the other hand few of them wanted to continue the study along with the work. About 33.97% worker (36.92% in rural and 29.05% in urban) did not want to study, the reason was found to be economic and other circumstances.

(XII) Ambition in Life

Table 5.23 shows that in surrounding areas majority (56.41%) of workers like to continue the same work, the reason for this was that children adopted that particular occupation due to traditional work and further one’s the children were trained in particular line, they resist to change that work. The second response (31.79%) was to be a business man in the same field. Only few (7.17%) of them opted for service as their ambition. Whereas in city areas majority of workers (50.42%) opted for service as their ambition. The second response (27.35%) was to be a business man in the same field. Followed by (18.80%) workers continuing the same work. On an average most (42.30%) child labour of the sample wanted to continue the same work, it is followed by business man (30.12%) in the same line.

problems, survey of Madras School of Social Work (1978) and others. The reason for that may be the engagement of child labour in different nature and types of work.

On the basis of foregoing analysis it may be concluded that the composition of child workers in Meerut City areas includes majority of workers in the age group of 11-14 years followed by 8-11 years, male are the dominating figure in child labour as compared to females, most of the child labour are illiterate followed by education up to primary level and only few have education above primary level. It is also found that most of the child labour belong to O.B.C. categories followed by S.C. Regarding the household of the child labour, it was found that the monthly income of the household of the child labour varies from Rs.2000-3000 per month to Rs.1000-2000 per month, family heads of the households are also mostly educated up to primary level and are generally engaged in home based work or business (few were engaged in service and factory work). The family size (to which child labour belongs) varies from 3-6 members to 6-9 members. The primary cause of the urban child labour to take up this work was mostly financial constraints in the family, their experience in this varies from 18-24 months and above.

Regarding the working and living conditions of the city area child labour, it was found that most of the child labour were semiskilled, they work 6-8 hours and in few cases 4-6 hours, their work load was found to be hard (keeping in mind their age and time factors) with short intervals of rest. Their working place was found to be less clean and improperly ventilated. Their monthly income varies from Rs.500-700 per month, which was mostly received by their parents or agents who employ them. Their relationship with employer was found to be moderate and in some cases it was bitter.

On the contrast, the sample of child labour in surrounding area, also belong to the age group 11-14 years, male child labours were predominant over female, educationally the percentage illiterate child labour was higher and majority of them belonged to OBC category. Regarding the household of the child labour varies from Rs.2000-3000 per month, family heads of the household were mostly educated up to primary level and only few were educated beyond middle school (in urban areas it was higher) and most of
them were engaged in agriculture, followed by home based work (people in service and factory work were found less in percentage as compared to urban areas). The family size (to which child labour belongs) varies from 6-9 members. Most of the child were in this occupation due to their traditional work and it was followed by financial constraints, further their experience in work was more than two years.

Regarding the working and living conditions of surrounding areas child labour it was found that most of them were semiskilled, they worked for 6-8 hours (work load was high). Most of them were found to do their work in clean and ventilated environment. Their monthly income ranges from Rs.500-700 per month and the payment was received by their parents and relatives. Their relationship with employer was found to be moderate and in some cases it was fine.

On an average it was revealed that in both areas, most of the child labour belonged to 11-14 years, male child labour were more and they were mostly illiterate and belonged to lower category (OBC and SC). Regarding their household it was found that most of the heads of household were educated upto primary level and do home based work. The cause for the child labour was found to be financial constraint in the family or traditional work of the family. Most of the child labour were working for nearly 2 years and more, they were semiskilled and were doing 6-8 hours of work i.e. their work load was high. In most of the cases their relationship with employers was found to be moderate. It was also reflected that sometimes the parents, who are sociologically considered as an agent of socialization, themselves desocialize their children. Further, the villages which were considered to be simple in general terms (in contrast to cities) were also now acting as a place for encouraging this social evil. It is becoming hideout place for the law breakers and culprits, practising this social evil.

As mentioned earlier, child labour in India is a multidimensional problem. Various demographic, socio-cultural, economic and legal forces were in unison to determine the magnitude of the child labour force. The problem of child labour apparently may seem to be a product of such factors as custom, traditional attitude, urbanization, industrialization, psychological causes
including neglect of children by their parents, quarrel of parents, lack of schooling, migration, poverty, indebtedness, etc. Thus socio-economic and demographic factor have compelled the children from the poor families to participate in the labour force. Most of the child labour belongs to lower categories, where poverty scores to the highest. The economic condition, associated with other factors like illiteracy, tradition, etc. weights too heavily, so that the poor parents do not hesitate in violating the laws by putting their children to exploitation. Further the government should strictly enforce the existing legislation and should also pay due attention to the poverty alleviation programmes, compulsory education to the children and creation of social awareness regarding the problem of child employment.

Child labour is really a serious problem at national as well as international level. Children are the future citizens of our country, child labour not only keeps children out of school but also contribute to the growth of illiteracy. True, Indian law prohibits the employment of children in factories but not in cottage industries, family household, agricultural etc. The tragedy is that government officials, political and social activists, and the Indian public say “We should not force poor parents to sent their children to school when society cannot provide employment for all adults”. Child labour, in itself a problem, has created two others. First, large number of adults are displaced from the labour market by child labour. Second, families have little incentive to have fewer children. Something concrete must be done to check the increasing number of child labour. The solution to the problem can’t be solved through single aspects but it should be tackled through various measures like social, economic, legal, etc.

An attempt has been made to provide suggestive measures and policy issues for upliftment and eradication of the child labour. It is assumed that practical implementation of all these may lead to the betterment of the child labour problem in the present society.

SUGGESTIONS TO ERADICATING CHILD LABOUR
Child labour cannot be approached as an isolated problem. It is a complex socio-economic-demographic phenomenon which can be reduced and eliminated by multiplicity of actions, both by government and public, at social as well as individual levels. Unless child labour is eliminated completely, there is a need to take progressive measures aimed at regulating and humanizing child work so that the young earners could be provided with some protection against conditions that hamper their physical and mental development and deny them from education and better job opportunities. These measures include the adoption and enforcement of protective labour laws and improvement in the working conditions under better welfare facilities.

Child labour is rooted in poverty and must be viewed with patience and understanding. The progressive elimination of this problem is possible through improvement in the income distribution and social awakening, the measures which may be addressed to the society as a whole and not particularly to the children. The income disparity an be removed by providing better employment opportunities to the lower stratum of society through creation of more jobs, agrarian reforms, enforcement of minimum wages, law, social security, pension to agricultural workers, etc.

In addition to that, enforcement of universal compulsory education and the provision of training and apprenticeship schemes can play a significant role in education and ultimately elimination of child labour. This measure would not only reduce illiteracy but would also provide opportunities for skill acquisition and better employment in adulthood.

The policies regarding child labour can be at two levels, viz., long-term and short-term. The long term policies should be aimed at improving the conditions of the society as a whole to such an extent that ultimately child labour is completely eliminated, whereas, the short-term policies should be aimed at improving the working and living conditions of children so long as child labour prevails. Some of these policies have already been suggested by different authors or committees.

A. LONG-TERM POLICIES
The purpose of the long-term policies is to bring about a gradual standstill to the problem of child labour, i.e. the complete elimination of this social evil. This could be achieved by raising the overall standard of society through the following measures.

(a) Removal of Poverty

Since, poverty is the fundamental cause of child labour, eradication of poverty is a lasting solution of this problem. Nearly half of the Indian population lives below poverty line, not spread evenly in all the regions. Antipoverty programmes will be helpful in uplifting the living standards of poor families who are compelled to send their children to work as a helping hand in the family income.

The programmes such as National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) should be effectively worked out in the rural areas of the State.

The poverty can also be reduced by paying family allowance to needy families which could be granted on condition that children would attend school and not carry any form of paid, family or self-employed work.

When the employment opportunities are generated for the adults and they are rewarded more fairly to raise their standard of living, children will no longer be required to work in the drudgery conditions. Therefore, there is a paramount need for the removal of adult unemployment, which will remove poverty.

(b) Eradicate Illiteracy

The uneducated parents, struggling with poverty, fails to appreciate the role of child education as a key status raiser. It is, therefore, utmost important that parents are made education conscious through concerned propaganda and publicity. Hence, emphasis should be placed not only on educating the child but the parents as well, through a greater emphasis is on the adult education programme.
National Policy on Education, 1986 aims at providing five years of schooling or its equivalent through non-formal system of education to all children who attain the age of 11 years by 1990. This has the target of having 4,90,000 non-formal education centres in the country.

Many view school education as a theoretical and academic exercise, which is not adapted to the daily working needs of the poor people. Hence, education should be imported with elements of local needs, including pre-vocational training. Starting from the elementary classes, vocational training should be given to children to train them to some productive work not under the exploitative conditions but as a socialization process, in the best possible circumstances. This kind of training would generate the feelings of the dignity of labour and enable children to find a job after attaining certain skill to earn higher wages and make a better life. Making vocational training a part of the school curriculum would add life to the dull atmosphere of theoretical knowledge and enhance the development of child through the addition of skills. Furthermore, the vocation in the schools should be adjusted to the agricultural seasons, so that public can help their parents in the lighter jobs, without missing their schools.

Handsome incentives should be provided to children of the socio-economically backward classes in the form of scholarships, free books, stationery, dresses and nutritious meals for, at least, up to fourteenth year of age. Surprise checks should be made to see that these advantages are actually received by the children for whom they are meant. These incentives would raise the literacy level on one hand, and reduce the extent of child labour, on the other.

For children who are not interested in studies, there should be apprenticeship programmes through vocational training institutes, which could retain children by providing them skilled training as well as handsome scholarships, mid-day meals, free dresses, etc.

(c) Increase Public Awareness

A surprisingly high number of persons are unaware of the unsafe working conditions in which children work and the repercussions of early employment
on the child in particular and the society in general. There is a need to arouse awareness in the child workers, among their parents and employers, of the damage the early work can cause to the society, young earners and their generations to come. They should also be informed about the benefits the alternative solutions can bring forward. They should be explained the difference between light, educational work on one hand, and the exploitative drudgery on the other. So awareness generation need to be addressed separately to different group of society.

(I) PARENTS

Parents should be told about the negative consequences of early employment, which would be faced in future by these children and their coming generations. They should also be made aware of the Minimum Wages Act and should be told about exploitation of their children by their employer. The importance of education and health for their children should be highlighted.

(II) EMPLOYERS

The employers should be made aware of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, Minimum Wages Act, etc. Many employers claim that by providing jobs to these children, they are helping the poor who would otherwise die of hunger. But the guise of help, they exploit children by paying them nil or low wages taking work for more hours, not allowing them sufficient rest during the day or at week end. Morality, social and legal consciousness should be generated amongst the employers through media campaigns, trade unions, etc.

(III) GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Surveys have shown that Labour Inspector overlook the children working in a factory premises. Sometimes, the employers hide these children when inspectors visit factories and sometimes they bribe them. The police and labour inspector should be oriented to understand the problems and compulsions of early employment and behave sympathetically towards the working children.
Special workshops for government officials on problems concerned could change their overall attitude towards the down-trodden.

(IV) GENERAL PUBLIC

The general public also need to be sensitized about child labour and National Policy in this regard. They could be made aware of the consequence of early employment and legal measures adopted by the government in this regard. Public can help working children by protecting them against anti-social elements and the exploitation by their employers. Sometimes reward should be given to the person who identify and inform about child labour. The awareness could be created by mass media campaigns directed at the impact of child labour on the society as a whole.

(V) ROLE OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN AWARENESS GENERATION

Various organizations can play an important role in generating awareness regarding child labour at sectoral organizational, local or national levels. Some of these organizations and the roles they could play, have been mentioned in the following paragraphs.

(VI) MASS MEDIA

Films, television, radio, theatre and press have a great impact on the thinking of general masses. Programmes highlighting the working and living conditions of child labour could change the attitude of society towards these children. Meera Nair’s “Salaam Bombay”, Meera dewan’s documentary on child labour in glass factories of Firozabad and television serial “Hum Panchhi Ek Daal Ke” are marvellous attempts in this regard. In Delhi, Theatre Action Group (TAG) is trying to organize the lives of street children by adding fun to it through their participation in the plays. Discussions on radio and television with legal experts, trade union leaders activists, researchers and above all, working children in different occupations will create awareness among general masses on this problem and would help in modifying their attitude towards these unfortunate children.

(VII) RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS
The deep rooted research can be taken up to study the causes for the prevalence of child labour in different industries and the long term consequences of early employment, particularly in hazardous industries. National Labour Institute, Noida is an example of it.

(VIII) SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Schools and colleges can play an important role in providing part time or week-end facilities for educational and vocational training to the working children. Teachers should tell the non-working students not to look down upon working children and treat them as their friends and help them, combat their educational and emotional problems. Through child to child or child to parents approach the former can sensitize the society and can spread the message of humanizing child labour. N.S.S. camps and adult education programme should be organized by university and colleges.

(IX) NGOs

Many non-government organizations are making efforts to improve the working and living conditions of child labourers. The scope of their role can be widened by involving community in their welfare approach. They can start the awareness campaign among masses and motivate some parents to act as guardians of street children. But they should be very careful in selecting parents and should follow the cases to see that the child gets his share of affection, emotional and vocational support, rather than exploitation by his faster parents. They can also generate awareness about legal aspects of child labour among the employers. The Delhi based forum for working and street children made a unique attempt in this regard. On the eve of worker’s (May) Day, they took out a procession of child worker’s from Jantar-Mantar to Boat Club. The placards and banners held by children highlighted their deplorable working and living conditions. It also gave children an opportunity to organize themselves and but forth their demands to the government. NGO should not only be restricted to generate awareness among people but should come forward to check child labour by following steps:

(i) Identification of the child labour concentration areas should be done by the NGOs
(ii) Identification of genuine NGOs should be done by the Government

(iii) The NGOs must be actively associated in policy formulation, implementation of legislation, government programmes and monitoring the situation of working children by regular interaction at suitable intervals.

(iv) The NGOs should also be actively associated in all the antipoverty programmes of the Government.

(v) NGOs must be entrusted with the responsibility of creating awareness in the people regarding child labour. They must also educate the masses that an educated youth of the family will contribute much more to the family income than uneducated child labour.

(vi) All NGOs working for child labour must be utilized in doing special studies on child labour and they must be entrusted with the training programmes of all such child labour and their families.

(X) TRADE UNIONS

Trade unions can play an important role in generating awareness among employers about the legal aspects of child labour e.g., minimum wages, working hours, rest interval prohibited occupations, etc. They can also take measure to protect children from exploitation by their employers. They can insist upon providing health and educational facilities to children at their work sites. Provision of subsidised and nutritious food would help children combat the strain of work. Trade unions can force the employers to take measures in this regard.

(XI) POLITICAL PARTIES

The issues related to eliminating undesirable aspects of child labour can be included in the election manifestos of the political parties. The campaign would create not only awareness among the public but would make obligatory on the part of the winning party to take some concrete actions in the regard.
There is a strong need to create awareness about these undesirable aspects of child labour. Mass media, research organization, school, non-government organizations, trade unions, government and various political parties can play an important role in creating awareness about dire consequences of child labour and can help in curbing the exploitation of these unfortunate children by changing the attitude of employers, police, municipal officials and society towards them.

B. SHORT-TERM POLICIES

Though our long-term objective is the complete elimination of child labour, efforts must be concentrated in short term policies towards improving the working conditions of children through child labour laws and other welfare programmes.

(a) Prevention through Policy and Legislation as well as Implementation

The Policy framework of the Government requires a serious restructuring and the protective legislations to be made more strict to combat the child labour. Stringent penal provisions are required to be made in this regard and enforced effectively. The implementation of various laws in relax, which should be improved with all efforts at all the levels.


(II) Enforcement Machinery

For enforcement of the labour laws, the enforcement machinery is already existing and infrastructure adequately available. By appointing additional child labour inspectors, who should be responsible for the effective enforcement of the Act, would enable to speed up the implementation. Every district child labour inspector should be responsible to effectively enforce the child labour legislation. They should be assisted by Non Government Organizations (NGOs) in carrying out the inspections. Thus:

1. A special child labour court should be established in every district.

2. The child labour inspector should be accountable to the court and responsible for effective implementation of the Act.
3. The Non Government Organizations, trade unions, social activists, etc. should be authorized for inspection at work places and file complaints of violation of child labour laws.

4. The child labour inspector should be liable to fine and imprisonment for any wilful omission and commission in enforcement of child labour laws.

(b) Law for Protection of Household Labour

At present there is no legislation providing protection to the household workers. In the household sector a large number of child workers, majority of whom are females, are employed. These child workers are exposed to inhumane treatment and economic, mental and physical exploitation. A comprehensive law providing for protection of these child working in household sector is essential.

(c) Compulsory Registration of Birth

In the child labour intensive areas the provision for compulsory registration of birth of a child should be strictly enforced. This will facilitate ascertainment of correct age of child labourers and enforcement of child labour laws will become easy.

(d) Extension of Enforcement at Grass Root Level

The labour departments have not reached the grass root level and the organization has no representation at sub-divisional or block level. In order to have bigger and stronger organization, the department should also be provided a priority in budgetary allocation both at the central as well as states levels.

Child labour should be given importance in the programmes of local bodies and their budgetary allocation as well as in Village Panchayats.

The identification of child labour and scheme of its eradication must figure in the agenda of regular Development Council Meetings at the block level. The Labour Department must have a representative in all such meetings, in order to provide information of different government schemes and legislation to the
village heads and block pramukhs and seek their cooperation for funding solutions.

(e) **Health and Nutrition**

Children are more prone to occupational risks and accident and therefore should be provided with better occupational safety and health services. Gloves and other protective items should be provided to the factory workers and stone breakers. Efforts should be placed on making the working and living environment more hygienic and congenial. Actions should also be armed at protecting children from work associated diseases.

As most of the child workers hail from poor families, they often suffer from under nutrition. The long working and physical growth creates nutritional deficiencies in them. Therefore, the provision of supplementary feeding programme for working children should be given an important place in the improvement of their working conditions. Employers should be persuaded to provide nutritional food to child workers at subsidised rates, if not free of cost.

(f) **Working Conditions**

Apart from the occupational risks, children need to be protected from other organizational problems such as excessively long working hours, night work, piece rate payment system, etc. They should be provided with adequate tools and equipments and, at least, the simple protection clothings. They should also be ensured social security including medical care and sickness benefits. There should be periodical medical check-ups of the working children and this practice should be enforced through proper laws, specially in the organized industries. Emphasis should also be placed on keeping the working environment hygienically free from smoke, dust, etc.

(g) **Housing**

Proper housing is important for healthy growth, which in turn is necessary for higher efficiency. Lack of proper housing not only impairs the healthy growth of children, but also brings them in contact with undesirable elements leading to anti-social and delinquent behaviours. In urban areas, most of the working
children stay in slums, which are devoid of proper water supply, sanitation and lighting arrangements, leading to an unhealthy growth. Therefore, provisions should be made for housing with basic amenities.

There should be adequate night shelters with all the basic necessities for orphans and children who run away from their homes. These night shelters should have recreational facilities like TV, Radio, etc. and should do moral, educational and vocational training for an hour or so in the morning or evening, adjusted according to the working hours of the inmates.

To implement the recommendations relating to child employment and welfare a chain of social welfare institutions should be established. If the substitute children, who form a substantial proportion of child labour are not taken care of in a proper way, the chances of their drift into anti-social activities or delinquency are fairly high.