Chapter: I

INTRODUCTION

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I.1. Concept of Household Industry:

The term "industry" refers mainly to manufacturing activity. Agriculture, mining, and most other services are excluded from it. “Household Industry” is defined as an industry run by the head of the household himself/herself and/or by the members of the household at home or within the village in rural areas, and only within the premises of the house where the household lives in urban areas. The larger proportion of workers in a household industry should consist of members of the household including the head of the family. The industry should not be run on the scale of a registered factory. The main criterion of a household industry is the participation of one or more members of a household. This criterion is applied in urban areas too. Even if the industry is not actually located in the house but is located somewhere within the village premises, there lies a greater possibility of the members of the household participating in the industry.

A household industry is one that is engaged in production, processing, servicing, repairing or making and selling (but not merely selling) of goods. It does not include professions such as those practiced by a pleader or doctor or barber, musician, dancer, dhobi, astrologer etc. or merely trade or business, even if such professions, trade or services are run at home by members of the household. (Indian District Database, October 1, 2000, Reeve Vanneman).

Household Industries have an important place in India’s industrial development. Household industries are generally associated with agriculture and allied activities with social & economic perspective. Gandhiji had opposed to modern large scale, mechanized manufacturing industries mainly because they were from alien soil, instrumental in liquidating the handicrafts and household industries of traditional India. Hence, to rationalize the relevance of Gandhian approach to present day economy, it should not lose sight of the fundamental change that has taken place since independence. In the present strategy of economic development therefore, both the urban based large industries and rural based small scale Household & cottage industries need to be functionally related. What is the need today is a balance & equitable terms of trade between these two sectors.

Prior to the beginning of the colonial rule i.e. 1757, rural based household industries enjoyed an important position in India’s rural economy. At that time India was a leading nation exporting silk fabrics, ivory works, handicrafts etc. to different
parts of the world. During 1857 to 1925 rural industries mostly declined because of the unfavourable policy of the British rule. British Government in order to feed their own industries in their own country, destroyed India’s industrial base. From 1925 to 1947, efforts for the revival of rural industries were made under the guidance and leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The “Swadeshi” movement had helped a lot in this regard. After independence a new era of development of rural industrialization has emerged in which planned efforts are being made for their rapid development in the context of an all round economic development with active Government support and involvement. The Government of India has setup DIC (District Industrial Centre) at the district level during the 5th Five Year Plan for the promotion and development of small scale village & household industries. Financial support for setting up of rural industries is provided by NABARD and entrepreneurial training programme are organized by SIDCO through Small Industries Service Institute and their branches.

The objectives of rural based household industries are

(i) to make a frontal attack on poverty as well as rural unemployment practically during lean periods, when there is no agricultural work,

(ii) to provide subsidiary employment opportunities to the local people by utilizing local potential raw-materials into processed goods,

(iii) to diversify the rural economy but also to help the further development of agriculture, animal husbandry & forestry.

As per the definition of Census of India 1991 “A person who is engaged in production, servicing, repairing or making and selling of articles or goods such as handloom, weaving, dyeing, carpentry, beedi rolling, pottery manufacturing, cycle repairing, blacksmiths, tailoring etc. in any unit which is conducted by the head of the household himself/ herself and/ or by the members of the household at home within the village in the rural areas and only within the precincts of home in case of urban areas” is called a worker in household industry.

Some of the typical household industries are:

**Foodstuffs:** such as production of flour, milking or dehusking of paddy, grinding of herbs, production of pickles, preservation of meat etc.
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**Tobacco Products:** such as beedi, cigars, Textile cotton, Jute, Wool or Silk, Manufacture of Wood and Wood Products, Paper and Paper Products, Leather and Leather Products,

**Footwear:** such as making foot wear from torn tyres and other rubber footwear,

**Chemical and Chemical Products:** such as manufacture of toys, paints, colours, matches, fireworks, perfumes, ink,

**Service and Repairing of Transport Equipments:** such as cycle, rickshaw, boat or animal driven carts etc.

**Murshidabad District as a Centre of Household Industry:**

Murshidabad district has a historical significance in case of household industry. During ancient period, rural based household industries & crafts were admired by the Hindu emperors as well as the Nawbabs. Being the then capital of Bengal, the district got advantage of favourable trade facility with good waterway connectivity and abundant labour. As a result, Murshidabad was famous for ivory & sandal wood craft, Shola pith, Silk saree, Jute, Shell (Sankha), Bell-metal and brass utensils. ‘Murshidabad Silk’ was so famous that it was exported to different countries. But now, the district has lost its glory. Ivory work has been completely abolished and other renowned household & cottage industries are in dying stage. Instead, beedi industry is flourishing during last three decades centering Jangipur Sub-Division in this district. Loss of agricultural land due to the Ganga erosion and Farakha barrage feeder canal, easy availability of labour and minimum requirement of skill have made the industry more popularized.

According to 2001 Census 7.30% people are engaged in Household Industry in West Bengal, where in case of Murshidabad district the percentage is 20.42% (out of 20.42% workers 7.23% are male and 64.66% are female). The district has placed first position in West Bengal in case of workforce engaged in the household Industry. It is observed from the 2001 Census that 46.47% of the total workforce is cultivators and agricultural labourers. But as per 1971 census the rate was 71.51% and in 1991 it was 60.99%. So, it is clear that the rate of workforce engaged in cultivation and
agriculture is decreasing during last three decades and it has decreased by 14.52% during 1991 – 2001. Moreover, it is also observed that the decrease rate of cultivators is higher than the agricultural labourers. During 1971 – 1991, the rate of decrease of cultivators accounted to 5.77%, whereas it has decreased by 13.09% during 1991 – 2001. Now the question arises, where has the huge no of workforce (cultivators) gone? From analysis it is noticed that 6.73% workforce is increased in household industry sector and 7.76% in other works during last 1991 – 2001. So, people are more and more engaged in household industry to earn their primary livelihoods. Though it does not specify in which household industry they are being engaged, but it is not difficult to infer that they are mostly engaged in beedi industry as it is quite clear from the district information that beedi industry is the predominant among other household industries in Murshidabad district. The present study concentrates on beedi industry only. The current status of important household industries in the district is stated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Household industry</th>
<th>Area of location (Prime) – Block</th>
<th>Workers engaged (Numbers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brass metal (Decline)</td>
<td>Berhampore, Murshidabad-Jiaganj</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory &amp; Sandal wood</td>
<td>Berhampore</td>
<td>Banned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving (Silk &amp; cotton)</td>
<td>Khargram, Raghunathganj-I, Nabagram, Beldanga &amp; Raninagar-I</td>
<td>16,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamboo &amp; Wood Craft</td>
<td>Nabagram, Sagardighi &amp; Msd. – Jiaganj</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jute</td>
<td>Raninagar-I &amp; II</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sankha</td>
<td>Domkal</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beedi</td>
<td>Suti-II, Samserganj, Suti-I, Farakka, Raghunathganj-I &amp; II</td>
<td>4,00,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Murshidabad Zilla Gazetteer, 2003 & DIC, Murshidabad
Figure No. I.1A(i): Industrial Map of Murshidabad District

Source: Murshidabad Zilla Gazetteer, 2003
I.2. Importance of Beedi Industry as Household Industry:

In India, tobacco was chewed along with betel and offered to guests. It was routed into India in medieval times when it was presented to Emperor Akbar as a medicine for an illness (not documented) by some European doctors. Historically, tobacco use has been prevalent across the class, caste, creed, gender and other social divisions. Poorer people used cruder forms of tobacco but the rich used more refined tobacco products.

India was the second largest tobacco producer in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Tobacco was used primarily for domestic consumption in different forms, including beedis, cheroots and hookahs. In 1999, India was the third largest tobacco producer in the world\(^1\). The main growing states are Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. More importantly, the bulk (80 per cent) of the tobacco is grown of the non-cigarette types. Apart from earning revenue for the State, the tobacco industry generates substantial employment.

Beedi, deemed to be the “poor man's cigarette” or the “poor man’s smoke” in India, is made by rolling about 0.2 grams of tobacco flakes of tendu leaf. In India, 34 per cent of tobacco is being consumed in the form of beedi. Snuff and chewing tobacco account for 35% whereas 22% of tobacco used in the form of cigarettes. This shows that the size of the market for beedi is much bigger than the market for cigarettes. Smokers, mainly in the low-income categories, consume beedi, while cigarettes are consumed by the relatively rich sections of the population. Beedi primarily caters for the domestic market although it is also exported in small quantities. About half of the total exports are made to the United Arab Emirates (49%), followed by the United States (10%), Singapore (7%), Afghanistan (6%), Saudi Arabia (5%) and Panama (4%). The manufacturing of beedi is a highly labour intensive process. It employs large numbers of unskilled workers. In the beedi industry, a large number of unregistered and home-based enterprises exist with factory-based manufacturing enterprises.

According to the nature of the beedi production, there are two types of manufacturing units: one is factory based and other is home based. In the factory based production system, the workers produce beedi in the factory premises. The raw materials are supplied to them and at the end of the day they are paid wages on the

\(^1\) Making ends meet: Beedi workers in India today, A study of four states, ILO Report, 2003
basis of number of beedi rolled. As there is no scope for division of labour, the production of beedi becomes less resulting less earning. Mainly, the workers who do not have their helping hand at home are engaged in the factory. In the Jangipur Sub-Division, home based production is popular. In this system, workers are being supplied with raw-materials through Munshi (middle man) and all the family members including children contribute their labour to roll maximum number of beedi. The finished products are handed over to the Munshi in the next day within the prefixed time schedule. This ensures more income; it is two times more than their natural production ability only because of division of labour. Children are gradually becoming efficient workers as they are also involved in the process with their elder family members most of the time. The female members of a house take vital roles in the home based process of production. There is no need for strict vigil from the corner of Munshi as the wages are being paid according to the rate of production. On the other hand, workers try hard to maximize their production by devoting longer time during a day, especially women workers for maximizing their income. Normally a worker requires 4 to 5 hour time for production of 800 beedis, but it totally depends on efficiency of efficiency of the worker.

The centre’s income as cess in 1988-89 was Rs.1.17 cores, which increased to Rs.1.26 crores in 1989-90 and Rs.1.38 crores in 1990-91. In 1999, the Indian beedi industry generated Rs.165 million as excise and Rs.200 million as foreign exchange revenue for the Indian Government, where about Rs.50 – Rs.55 crores had been collected as excise duty in the last financial year in Murshidabad district. This collection was made mainly from 25 big beedi companies of Jangipur Sub-Division of Murshidabad district.

In view of the above, it is well established that the beedi rolling is a household industry as per definition of Census of India and the definition itself includes beedi as household industry. The beedi industry is predominated in the country as household industry as well as in the study area. It is very difficult to find any household, which is beyond the periphery of beedi rolling activities. Now it becomes a social activity along with economic activity. The following table (No.I.2A) also shows the

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2 Child labour in beedi industry, Murshidabad district in W. Bengal by Jasodhara Bagchi, Ashim Mukhopadhyay, Jadavpur University, School of Women Studies, 1996.

3 Raj RD. Beady-eyed giants take aim at India’s beedi industry. Asia Times online (Hong Kong), India Pakistan; 2000.
percentage distribution of beedi workers across the country, which also envisages the importance of beedi industry as household industry.

Table No.I.2A: The percentage Distribution of Beedi Workers (Industrial & Home Workers by Sex)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Industrial Premises (in %)</th>
<th>Home Workers (in %)</th>
<th>Total (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A. Pradesh</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kerela</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>M. Pradesh</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Tamilnadu</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>U. Pradesh</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>W. Bengal</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As per 2001 Census percentage of Household Industry Workers to Total (Main+Marginal) Workers in the county was 4.22, in West Bengal 7.37 and in district was 20.40, whereas the percentage in Samserganj block & Suti-II block were 72.59% & 70.60% respectively. There are more than 3 lakhs home based beedi workers in Murshidabad district, while the factory based employees account for 6000 (approx.)². It is already mentioned that from the corner of production, volume of workers and payment of Government excise duty, other industries are far behind from the beedi industry in the district. So, beedi industry as a household industry has a special impact in the district, both from economic side as well as social perspective. A flow chart of beedi making process is shown in the next page, which is describing the whole process at a glance.
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Diagram No. 1.2A(i): Flow Chart of Beedi Making

BEEDI COMPANY

- There are 50 registered & about 7 unregistered beedi company in Jangipur Sub-Division of Murshidabad district
- The Process of beedi rolling is mainly running in the household and only counting, testing, toasting & packing are done in the factory.
- Company supplies raw-materials to the Munshi for 50000 -100000 beedi.
- Munshi backs the beedi after rolling within one day

MUNSHI (Middle Man)

- Any people from any area can join any company as Munshi.
- A Munshi deposits Rs.8000/- to Rs.10000/- to the beedi company as security.
- A Munshi can join more than one company at a time.
- A single Munshi able to cover 1 – 2 villages at a time.
- Munshi also engages Sub-Agent to cover more villages.
- Munshi distributes the raw materials to the beedi workers and collects the rolled beedi within 12 hours.
- The Munshi pays the worker on 7 days interval after checking the same.

BEEDI WORKER

- Beedi worker acts as an individual or as family and accordingly Munshi enlisted the name in his register for payment purpose.
- A beedi worker selects the company from her/his choice. The choice depends on quality of kedu leaf & mode of payment.
- In a family two members can selects two separate companies.
- The name of any children not at all registered as worker, but children are very much associated with this work. So, there is no separate income of any children and her/his contribution includes in the total income of the family.
- Worker only invests their labour. All the members in a family including children are engaged in the process directly or indirectly and spent time partly or fully.
- Beedi workers take raw materials from the Munshi and deposit the rolled beedi to the Munshi in the evening of the same day.

- Rolled beedi enters to the Company every day through Munshi.
- Counting, testing, toasting & packing are only done in the factory.
- A net consisting of 1 lakhs beedi is used for counting & toasting of beedi.
- After toasting, labeling & packaging is made for marketing.
- Only few direct labour are engaged for this whole work and side by side some office staffs also engaged for management.
- The Munshi pays the worker on 7 days interval after checking the same.

- Munshi receives 550 gm. Kendu leaf & 250 gm. Tobacco for 1000 beedi from the beedi company.
- Munshi collects avg. 1000 beedi (900 beedi & 100 beedi as chat/Patty) and pays Rs.40/- to Rs.42/- instead of Govt. rate Rs.46/-.
- A Munshi earns Rs.2.75 from the beedi company as commission.
- Beedi Company rejects 25-50 beedi as bad quality per 1000 and takes 100 beedi per one lakhs for smoking purpose of the company staff.
- The company pays the Munshi on 15 - 30 days interval after checking the same.
- The Munshi pays the worker on 7 days interval after checking the same.

- Beedi worker receives 500 gm. Kendu leaf & 250 gm. tobacco per 1000 beedi, which is insufficient.
- So, 50gm. Kendu leaf & 10 gm. tobacco are in short supply by the Munshi.
- There is no target of production and try to roll as much as possible for sustainable income. A worker can roll average 600 – 700 beedi/day.
- Munshi reject 50 – 100 beedi as chat/Patty (bad quality) per 1000 beedi.
- Workers also lose 50gm. Kendu leaf & 10 gm. tobacco, which is sufficient for rolling 40 – 50 beedi.
- The Govt. Agreement Wages for 1000 beedi rolling is Rs.46/-. But actually the workers have been paid Rs.40/- per 1000 beedi rolling.
- Workers get wages as much as they roll beedi on every 7 days interval.
I.3. Child Labour: A Historical Perspective

“...under the early factory system, the employment of masses of children was the foundation of industry”

- - - - Hammond and Hammond

Child labour in some form or the other has always existed in societies all over the world. Children used to accompany their parents while working in the fields. Moreover they were also expected to help with household chores as well as taking care of the sick and elderly. As most of the work was being done under the watchful eyes of the parents, instances of exploitation were rare. Even today, work of this sort is not considered exploitative. The worst forms of the exploitation of children started during the Industrial Revolution. It was at this time that machinery took over many functions formerly performed by hand and was centralized in large factories. There was a large scale structural shift in employment patterns. Many artisans lost their jobs and were forced to work in these factories. But the owners of these factories realized that operating many of these machines did not require adult strength, and children could be hired much more cheaply than adults. Many of the jobs that these children specialized in were very dangerous, e.g. the youngest children in the textile factories were usually employed as scavengers and piece workers. Scavengers had to pick up the loose cotton from under the machinery. This was extremely dangerous as the children were expected to carry out the task while the machine was still working.

In India child labour has always existed in the agricultural sector. Children and their parents used to work together in the farms. Moreover the task of taking the cattle to graze was always allotted to children. Although this work was hard and tiring, it did not lead to a worsening of their future prospects. Schooling was not available in most villages and most of the jobs were still in the agricultural sector. So this work served as training for their future. Large scale exploitation of children in India began with the arrival of the British. The new industrialists started hiring children who were forced to work in ruthless conditions.

To understand the nature of children’s work in the context historical economic literature in which development is considered to be the movement from a pre-
industrial to industrial to post-industrial economy. In today’s advanced industrial economies, industrial development was the major factor in the initial increase in the incidence of child labour. Although it is unknown whether children worked more in the pre-industrial or industrial period, economic historians agree that during the early industrial period, children’s share of the workforce in many key industries grew significantly. In other words, the nature of children’s work changed with the expansion of the factory system. Not only were children performing their household tasks and contributing their time to household production, but as the economy began to shift from production for consumption within the household to productions in the market, they became significant wage earners. In industrial areas, children’s earnings were a central component of family income.

From the supply side, child employment is a key sector to improve the standard of living of their household. In this case, child labour is not necessarily a facet of poverty. Rather, sending children to work is a means by which low income families could supplement household income by taking advantage of the wage opportunities resulting from a greater demand for all labour. Although the nature of children’s work during this period is debatable, the current consensus is such that the incidence of child labour increased during the early stages of industrialization.

The historical experience of today’s advanced industrial countries suggests that the structure of demand determines the nature of children’s work. Under the early factory system, children’s work was crucial to the success of certain key industries. Children were found in labour-intensive sectors, limited to low-skill, menial and often dangerous jobs. Their labour was cheaper, and could potentially drive down adult male wages. As children are substituted for adult male labour, the wages of adult males fall resulting from a decline in the demand for their services. Thus, the supply of child labour reduced the need for technological advancement.
I.4. Child Labour and Child Worker:

“Children do not constitute anyone’s property: they are neither the property of their parents nor even of society. They belong only to their own future freedom.”

--------- Mikhail Bakunin

The first issue which needs to be addressed is: what is the legal definition of a child? According to Article 1 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, ‘a Child’ means a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the Law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. The Indian Majority Act, 1875, defines a minor as a person who is below 18 years of age and in case where a minor is under superintendence of the Courts of Wards, the age of majority is 21 years. Under the Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian & Parses Laws, a person attains majority at 18 years of age. For purposes of activities like kidnapping, abduction, related offences, age fixed for a child is 16 years for boys & 18 years of girls. Under the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of children) Act 2000, the age is 18 for both boys & girls. For the purpose of the present study, as per the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, a ‘child’ means a person who has not completed his 14 years of age, i.e. age below 14 years is treated as Child Worker.

Child labour has become one of the main issues of political and academic discourse in last two decades. This has led to critical debates on the approach to the issue. During the 90’s there has been a debate on the definition of child labour that spans the range from all work done by a child being considered as child labour, to a narrow concept, which takes in to account only exploitative, hazardous employment of children. This debate on the definition of child labour has led to the difference between ‘Child Work’ and ‘Child Labour’. The term Child Labour is more common than the Child Work. Children are engaged in varying forms of activities ranging from helping to the domestic work; work in the household enterprise or farm, to wage work. All these works are not necessarily fall under hazardous categories. The Ministry of Labour, Government of India has employed the term ‘child labour’ only in the context of children doing ‘hazardous’ work. By implication, children who are not doing ‘hazardous’ work are not considered to be child labourers and are said to be child worker. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 can only protect the children with age group 5 – 14 engaged in hazardous industries. However
this problem can be solved from the Child Rights perspective. Though there is a debate between the two terms Child Labour and Child Work but now this is well established that children engaged either in hazardous job or not, or they may be paid any wages/incentives or not, or they may be engaged either on casual basis or regular basis if their work challenge the basic rights of the children that must be Child Labour or Child Work – which may be the term.

The important characteristic of child labour in India is that about 90 percent of the working children are concentrated in the rural areas. They not only work in farm sector but also in various non-farm activities in rural areas. Further they remain as reservoir of cheap labour supply to be migrated to urban areas along with their families in the event of any distress in rural areas. Thus, the problem of child labour in India is essentially a rural problem.

The rural areas of India are home to a large number of children who remain outside portals of school, either a small wage to supplement the family income as workers in fields, quarries, brick-kilns, cottage industries, household industries or petty business, or, what is even more common, as unseen hands – unpaid and unacknowledged – that facilitate the work of adults men and women. These large numbers of children are denied their rights to childhood in all its connotations – the freedom to play, to learn and to develop their fullest potential and, as such, must be classed as child workers whether or not they are formally recognized as child labour. In the rural situation, a child who does not go to school is a working child. Collection of water, fuel, maintenance of the house and taking care of younger siblings, all constitute an important element of his or her life. While these activities do not necessarily fall under the definition of hazardous activities, until they interfere with the normal development of the child and the child’s ability to reach his/her potential. In the context of rural India, therefore, a non-working, non-school-going child simply does not exist (Sinha, 1996)\textsuperscript{4}. As Schildkrout (1980)\textsuperscript{5} puts it as ‘any activity done by children which either contributes to production, gives adults free time, facilitates the work of the others or substitutes for the employment of others, can be termed as Child Work’.


Work may become a serious burden and risk to children while their social and educational role is neglected. In such case, work predominates and places the children under severe stress, becomes a danger to their healthy development and future prospects. It is in this context that child work is exploitative and abusive. In other words, work that impinges on children’s right to education, play, leisure, and mental, physical, and spiritual development is child labour. Throughout the country, many young children help out in their families or do part time jobs for pocket money. Here they mix education and play with work. Taking on such responsibility helps to build self-esteem, confidence and initiative of young people. But work becomes a risk to children when it interferes with their education and play. This type of work is exploitative and abusive and a danger to the children’s healthy development and future prospect, and it is called ‘child labour’. Work done to help the family in the fields, learning traditional crafts or doing the household chores is also child labour if it hampers the child’s healthy physical and mental development.

Here some of the definitions of child labour are cited

• “Child labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development, sometimes separated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful educational and training opportunities that could open up for them a better future.” – International Labour Organisation (1983)\(^6\)

• “.........recognizes the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.” – UN stipulation in article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child\(^7\)

• “All children out of school are child labour. Being out of school is equal to worst form of child labour ‘hazardous’ ‘intolerable circumstances’ and ‘harmful to the overall growth and development of the child.” – Government of Andhra Pradesh\(^8\)

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I.5. **Magnitude of Child Labour:**

"Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are not tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children."

------------------------Albert Camus

Irrespective of what is shown in the official statistics, we say that the phenomenon of child labour is significant because, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 is a legislation to address hazardous industrial child labour in a limited way as the purview of the Act covers only the organized sectors of production. As it is inbuilt in the law, this Act has excluded a vast section of toiling children in the unorganized sectors, as over 90% of the labour force in India is accounted for by the unorganized sectors of production. The political weight behind the initiatives towards government legal intervention has been very dissimilar across states of India. In fact the magnitude of child labour has increased in absolute terms by about one million between 1991 and 2001 (Census 1991 & 2001).

The Census and the National Sample Survey are the two major official sources of data on child employment. According to Census of India, 2001, there were 12.26 million working children in the age group of 5-14 years as compared to 11.3 million in 1991 revealing an increasing trend in absolute numbers though the work participation rates of children (5-14) has come down from 5.4 percent during 1991 to 5 percent during 2001. 36.43 lakh children in the age group of 5-14 years are working in non-agricultural sector in the country, out of which 12.19 lakh children are working in hazardous occupations. More than 2.5 lakh children are associated with Pan (Beetle leaf), Beedi & Cigarettes industries.

As far as the percentage share of child labour across the states, Uttar Pradesh accounts for a larger share (about 15%) having child workforce in India followed by Andhra Pradesh, with 10.8%. The share of Uttar Pradesh has shot up from less than 13% during 1991 to 15.2% in 2001, which is a cause of serious concern. Over 53% of the child labour in India was accounted for by the five states namely UP, AP, Rajasthan, MP and Bihar (Census 2001). Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal together had about 20% of the child labourers in India. It is also to be noted that there
is a general increasing trend in the magnitude of child labour in the North-East region of the country.

Table No. I.5A: Changes in the Magnitude of Child Labour and Work Participation Rate between 1991 and 2001 (Children in the age group of 5-14 Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>711691</td>
<td>857087</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>11285349</td>
<td>12666377</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>(Source: Census of India 1991 and 2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As per the data of International Labour Organisation, 2002 economically active children in the world to be about 211 million out of which 111 million are estimated to be involved in hazardous work. Whereas, incidence of child labours (5 – 14 Years) in India are 11.28 million and in West Bengal it is 71,1691 (6.31%). The 61st round of NSSO data, 2004-05 reported that there were 9.07 million working persons in the age group of 5-14 years, of which 4.76 millions are boys and 4.31 millions are girls. Due to definitional problems, as discussed is this paper, a substantial proportion of child labour may remain uncounted. Census data shows that there is a decline in the absolute number as well the percentage of Main workers of children (5-14 to total population in that age group, from 4.3 percent in 1991 to 2.3 percent in 2001. But there was a substantial increase in marginal workers in every category of worker irrespective of sex and residence. As a result, despite the number of main workers declining from 9.08 million in 1991 to 5.78 million in 2001, the total number of children in the work force increased.

Table No. I.5B: Changes in Work Participation Rate of Children (Main and Marginal) in Different Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 14</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(As per record of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (Study on Child Abuse: INDIA 2007, Page No.38), out of the total working
children, 23.2% were child domestic workers. Among these 81.16% were girls. On the other hand, amongst the total number of working children, 7.8% were children working in beedi rolling. Among these 83.33% were girls. Out of all children working in beedi rolling industry, 47.92% were in the age group of 5-12 years, 25% in the age group of 13-14 years and 27.08% in the age group of 15-18 years. It is noteworthy that there were a very large number of girls working in the beedi rolling sector. Almost half of them were in the age group of 5 to 12 years.

A survey conducted by the Murshidabad Authority for Elimination of Child Labour (1996 & 1999) has estimated 88,000 child workers in beedi industry alone. As per study of Jasodhara Bagchi & Ashim Mukhopadhyay, Jadavpur University, School of Women Studies, 1996, entitled “Child labour in beedi industry, Murshidabad district in W. Bengal” (Page 36), there were more than 300000 beedi workers in Murshidabad district of which 2.5 lakhs in Jangipur Sub-Division. Of these total 300000 beedi workers 65% were women, 20% male and 15% were children.

The important characteristic of child labour in India is that about 90% of the working children are concentrated in the rural areas. They not only work in farm sector but also in various non-farm activities in rural areas. The same trend is reflected in Census as well as NSSO data. Further they remain as reservoir of cheap labour supply to be migrated to urban areas along with their families in the event of any distress in rural areas. Thus, the problem of child labour in India is essentially a rural problem. Though there is a declining trend in the general magnitude of child labour in India, the concentration of child labourers in rural areas continue. Data on NSSO estimates on rural-urban magnitude of child labour will justify the statement, which is presented below.

Table No. I5C: Estimate of Trends in India’s Child Labour (Age: 5 – 14 years) by Rural-Urban, 1999/2000 - 2004/05 (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (Round)</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-00 (55th Round)</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>10.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05 (61st Round)</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>9.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I.6. **Predominant Child Labour Activities:**

"When you produce a bullet, you commit another sin against mankind, but when you make a toy or a book you bring hope and smile to a child."

------------------------Kailash Satyarthi

It is reported that more than 90% child labour force are engaged in unorganized sector, which is beyond the ambit of Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. The 1981 Census of India divided child labour into nine industrial divisions

I. Cultivation,  
II. Agricultural Labour,  
III. Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Plantation,  
IV. Mining and Quarrying,  
V. Manufacturing, Processing, Servicing and Repairs,  
VI. Construction,  
VII. Trade and Commerce,  
VIII. Transport, Storage and Communication, and  
IX. Other Services

The majority of rural child workers (84.29%) are employed in cultivation and agricultural labour. It is quite natural as 72.2% of the total population lives in rural areas (Census, 2001). Urban child labourers are distributed differently, 39.16% of them are involved in manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs.

Although more children are involved in agriculture and allied activities, human rights organizations tend to focus on the manufacturing types of child labour because it is hazardous and most children in these situations are bonded labourers. Bonded labour "refers to the phenomenon of children working in conditions of servitude in order to pay off a debt" (Human Rights Watch 1996). This is also known

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10 Nira Ramachandran, Introducing the Concept, Back Ground Notes of State Level Training Programme, ILO-IPEC Action Programme on ‘Mainstreaming the issue of Child Labour in Rural Development Programmes, January, 2003
as slave labour and is one of the worst types of labour. In fact, in 1976 the Indian Parliament enacted the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act; declaring bonded labour as illegal. However, the fact remains that this system of working still continues. Estimates place the number of bonded child labourers in India at close to one million (International Labour Organisation 1992).

Let us look at the most common labour activities involving children, across the country.

A. Child labour in agricultural sector - According to a recent ILO report about 80% child labourers in India are employed in the agriculture sector. Most children work in commercial agriculture on a seasonal basis, often full-time as part of a family unit during the harvest and seeding seasons, but irregularly or on a part-time basis during the rest of the year. Many of these children attend school when they are not working. Children working in commercial agriculture and fisheries face a wide range of health and safety risks. Because many of these children work on occasional basis, and because official statistics either do not count, or are unable to accurately counts, seasonal workers, estimates of the total number of children working in commercial agriculture are difficult to ascertain. The use of child labour in agriculture is thus, to a large degree, invisible -- uncounted, often undocumented, and little understood.

B. Child labour in domestic sector – A sizable number of children are working as domestic servants in the households all over India. Children from rural area are being hired especially for urban areas. Girl children are in heavy demand for domestic purpose; it invites trafficking & sexual abuse. These children are engaged in taking care of younger siblings, cooking, cleaning and other such household activities. These children could not go to school and eventually join the labour force. According to an estimate approximately 10 million children are engaged in domestic sector.

C. Child labour in household industry – Children are involved in various household industries with their families. As this is a traditional type and performed within the household area, children are habitually involved in the process to support their families as household activity. As this type of work is
performed within the home and parents do not consider it as child labour, so there is no reliable statistics in this regard.

D. Child labour in other industry – Children are engaged in various industries like, match, glass, carpet, rubber and other type of industries with distress condition and remuneration. Some of these activities are hazardous. According to recent estimates almost 60,000 children are employed in the glass and bangle industry, 2,00,000 child labour force in the matchbox industry and almost 4,20,000 children are employed in the carpet industry in India.

E. Street children - Children on the streets mostly work as beggars; they sell various items mainly in the trains, buses & railway station/bus stop. They go hungry for days together. In fact, they are made to starve so that people feel sorry for them and give them alms. There is also no reliable statistics of these type of child labours.

The present study concentrates only on working children in the household industry, particularly in beedi industry.

I.7. Child Labour from Economic View Point:

“All child labour, and especially the worst forms, should be eliminated. It not only undermines the roots of human nature and rights but also threatens future social and economic progress worldwide. Trade, competitiveness and economic efficiency should not be a pretext for this abuse.”


The present study focuses from the view point of social science, but the economic views regarding the issue of engagement of children in various economic activities cannot be ignored. Children remain economically active in virtually all economic sectors: in industry, agriculture, the informal sector and in the household. The term ‘economic activity’ refers to the broad nature of children’s work. It includes
all productive activities household or market-oriented, undertaken by a child in a paid or unpaid capacity. In this study, these general forms of economic activities will be referred to as child work.

Most of the researches have concentrated on the role of economic growth in reducing the economic dependence of households and firms on children. At the household level, parents send their children to work due to economic necessity. The supply of children to the labour market, in turn, perpetuates a cycle of poverty in two ways,

1. By interfering with the accumulation of human capital, child labour reduces the labour market productivity of child workers, thereby discouraging economic growth and development.

2. By depressing adult wages, child labour results in households becoming more reliant on children as income earning assets.

It is recognized that there is a positive correlation between poverty and child labour. Theoretically, the rate of child economic activity should decline with income. The empirical evidence supporting this is substantial. The implication is such that policies aimed at stabilizing current and future household income will help to reduce the need for parents to send their children to work. However, in poor settings, a positive correlation between child labour and income is observed. This may be an indicator of the significance of physical child labour and/or child labour earnings to the survival of households. As the variance in expected household income increases, the number of gainfully employed children could increase as well. Further, child labour is not necessarily a facet of poverty but rather a means by which households can improve their standard of living by taking advantage of the labour market opportunities resulting from a greater demand for all labour. Poverty leads to continuous supply of children to the labour market. As household income grows and become more stable, families can more easily satisfy their basic needs and are less dependent on the labour (earnings) of their children. They will find that they are better able to invest in the education of their children.

It is well documented that in the long run, economic growth will reduce the need for child labour. It is also possible that these very forces are responsible for the
initial increase in the incidence of child labour in development. The historical experiences of advanced, industrial countries suggest that in the early stages of development, child labour may rise with national income. Thus, the effect of economic development on child employment is indefinite. The question is of an empirical nature.

I.8. Causes of Child Work:

“Child labor and poverty are inevitably bound together and if you continue to use the labor of children as the treatment for the social disease of poverty, you will have both poverty and child labor to the end of time”

-------------------------------------- Grace Abbott

Child Labour is an age-old phenomenon, rooted in our culture and economic activities. Child labour is a symptom of large and deep gaps in the overall economic and social development in India. Some common causes of child workers are poverty, parental illiteracy, social apathy, ignorance, lack of education and exposure, exploitation of cheap and unorganized labour. The family practice to inculcate traditional skills in children also pulls little ones inexorably in the trap of child worker, as they never get the opportunity to learn anything else. As such, it cannot be eliminated by isolated interventions whether through law or compulsory primary education.

Most of the studies on child worker reveal that child worker thrives on the seedbed of poverty. Children work because their income is essential to the survival of the family or themselves as they lack means of survival. Thus, the protection of the child in the poor households can become a reality only by protecting the entire household. The percentage of the population of India living below poverty line is high. As per the data of NSSO, 1999 – 2000, 26.10% people were living below poverty line in India. Poverty has an obvious relationship with child labour, and studies have "revealed a positive correlation - in some instances a strong one -
between child labour and such factors as poverty" (Mehra-Kerpelman1996)\textsuperscript{11}. Families need money to survive, and children are a source of additional income.

As revealed by many empirical studies, most of the working children are drawn from the poorer segments of the population. However, the fact is that child worker perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty because most of the working children are either never enrolled in school or primary school dropouts. They don’t acquire any new skill that can help their development. Thus, they land up in low paid unskilled work when they grow up. Their economic levels remain poor and they push their children against into work. Thus, the vicious cycle of child worker – illiteracy – poverty – child worker is reinforced. Only by breaking this vicious cycle economic prosperity and elimination of child labour can be ensured.

Poverty itself has underlying determinants, one such determinant being caste. When analyzing the caste composition of child labourers Nangia (1987)\textsuperscript{12} observes that, "if these figures are compared with the caste structure of the country, it would be realized that a comparatively higher proportion of scheduled caste children work at a younger age for their own and their families’ economic support". Scheduled caste children tend to be pushed into child labour because of their family’s poverty.

Absence of compulsory education at the primary level, non availability and non accessibility (distance) of schools, boring and unpractical school curriculum are some other factors which encourage the phenomenon of child labour. Illiterate and ignorant parents do not understand the need for wholesome proper physical, cognitive and emotional development of their child. They are themselves uneducated, so they don’t realize the importance of education for their children.

Adult unemployment and urbanization also causes child labour. Adults often find it difficult to find jobs because factory owners find it more beneficial to employ children at cheap rates. This exploitation is particularly visible in urban areas. Adults exploiting children is also seen in many places. Elders relax at home and live on the labour of poor helpless children. According to the ‘Roots of Child Labour’,

\textsuperscript{11}Mehra-Kerpelman, K. 1996. Children at work:How many and where? World of work
UNICEF’s 1997 State of the World’s Children Report\textsuperscript{13}, “The parents of child labourers are often unemployed or underemployed, desperate for secure employment and income. Yet it is their children - more powerless and paid less - who are offered the jobs.” In other words, says UNICEF, children are employed because they are easier to exploit.

The \textbf{industrial revolution} has also had a negative effect by giving rise to circumstance which encourages child worker. Sometimes multinationals prefer to employ child workers in the developing countries. This is so because they can be recruited for less pay, more work can be extracted from them and there is no union problem with them.

Many children work because child worker has become an accepted norm within the \textbf{social structure}. In some instances the use of child worker supports the reigning social and family value system; child worker is viewed as beneficial to the child, the family and the society in general.

\section{I.9. Problems Relating to Child Workers:}

\textit{“The ability to profit should not come at the expense of the most basic right, which is the protection of the health of our children.”}

\hspace{1cm} \textit{----------------------Tim Wagner}

Childhood is the most innocent stage in a human life. It is that phase of life where a child is free from all the tensions, fun-loving, play and learns new things, and is the sweetheart of all the family members. But this is only one side of the story. The other side is full of tensions and burdens. Here, the innocent child is not the sweetheart of the family members, instead he is an earning machine working entire day in order to satisfy the needs and wants of his/her family. This practice is going on

for a long time and it not only causes damage to a child’s physical and mental health but also keeps him deprive of his basic rights to education, development and freedom. The worst forms of working children are child exploitation.

- **Health hazards of child labour:** The health hazards not only include physical disorder but also mental and emotional difficulty. The physical hazards are directly or indirectly related to their deprivation as a child labour. Health hazards are multi-faceted depending on the nature of work, they are engaged with and in case of beedi rolling it is mainly related with respiratory problem. Different grades of malnutrition were observed specially, among girls. None had undergone any systematic health check-ups. The associated ailments are anemia, gastrointestinal tract infections, upper respiratory tract infections, vitamin deficiencies, eye diseases, back pain and skin diseases. The disease or infection spreads rapidly due to unhygienic working and living condition.

- **Deprived from education, play and growth:** As per the Constitution of India, education, play, leisure and proper growth are the rights of the children, but in reality child workers are till deprived of their rights. Inadequate schools, distance of schools, or even the expense of schooling leave some children with little else to do but work. The attitudes of parents also contribute to child worker; some parents feel that children should work in order to develop skills useful in the job market, instead of taking advantage of a formal education. The Indian state of Kerala distinguishes itself from the rest of India with its educational system. Kerala’s emphasis on primary education has led to a dropout rate of close to 0% and a low child work participation rate. Weiner (1991)\(^{14}\) pointed out that "The Kerala government has made no special effort to end child labour. It is the expansion of the school system rather than the enforcement of labour legislation that has reduced the amount of child labour".

- **Physical & mental harassments and exploitation:** For the poor, there are few sources of bank loans, governmental loans or other credit sources, and even if there are sources available, few Indians living in poverty qualify. Here enters the local moneylender; for an average of two thousand rupees, parents exchange their child’s labour to local moneylenders (Human Rights Watch 1996). So, the poor

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rural people have no other alternative to depends on the local money lenders for meeting their urgent needs and most of the cases they depends on their employer. The exploitation begins from here. So, they have to earn more and their children are the way out. Thus more and more children are forced to engage in the economic activity without proper physical & mental development. In some cases, children are engaged in the economic activity only to maintain their education, marriage and other personnel expenditure, where children perform like an adult at their childhood. Therefore, keeping the above factors in mind it can be inferred that child work is dangerous if it hampers the physical, mental and psychological development of children. In the present study it has been noticed that parents provoked their children in the economic activity (beedi rolling) without proper remuneration and engaged in work for long duration. Besides, physical and economical exploitation, there are so many substantial evidence for social as well as sexual harassment and girl children are the most victimized.

- **Working condition and terms of employment:** As the ILO notes, "children suffer from long and arduous working hours, little health and safety protection and services, inadequate diets, rest and leisure, and are further denied education even where primary school attendance is possible." Working children often work with unsafe machinery and tools that they are not always able to operate safely. The child labours are working under many different terms and circumstances. In some instances, children are hired as wage labourers and are employed on a full time basis. While children hired in this manner usually perform the same work as adult workers, only in rare instances they receive the same wages as their adult counterparts. On the other hand, the contract labour system has many negative consequences for children. Their families move frequently, often to several locations in the course of a year. On the job, they often receive compensation, medical care, overtime pay, rest breaks, rest days, nor education. So, the children are the most sufferers.
I.10. Protection of Child Labour:

"The Convention is not only a visionary document. We are reminded daily that it is an agreement that works – and its utility can be seen in the everyday use to which I have seen it increasingly being put by country after country, in policy, in practice and in law."

---------------------------------- Carol Bellamy

It is recently that a concerted movement has emerged for the elimination of child labour and protection of child’s rights. The Government protects the interest of children through various Acts, Policies & Programmes. Some of the important measures in connection with child labour are mentioned herein:


- In regard to child labour, the Indian government implemented the “The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. The purpose of this act is to "prohibit the employment of children who have not completed their 14th year in specified hazardous occupations and processes”.

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the first Universal legally binding code of child rights in history. It brings together in one treaty, all relevant child rights issues, and sets basic standards for children’s well being. It has four broad categories of rights: (I) Survival Rights (II) Development Rights (III) Protection Rights (IV) Participation Rights. The specific Rights of Children includes Name, Nationality, Food, Shelter, Recreation, survival, Education, Protection etc.

- Article 24 of the Indian constitution clearly states "No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or employed in any hazardous employment" (Constitution of India cited in Jain 1985)\textsuperscript{15}.

❖ Article 39 (e) directs State policy such "the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength" (Constitution of India cited in Human Rights Watch 1996)\(^\text{16}\).

❖ Indian parliament passed “The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE)” on 4 August 2009. The law came into effect from 1 April, 2010. The Act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14 years and specifies minimum norms in elementary schools. The present Act has its history in the Constitutional Amendment that included the Article 21A in the Indian constitution making Education a fundamental Right. This amendment, however, specified the need for a legislation to describe the mode of implementation of the same which necessitated the drafting of a separate Education Bill. It holds Government accountable for free & compulsory education for all children.

❖ The National Policy on Child Labour, August 1987 contains the action plan for tackling the problem of child labour. It envisages: (i) A legislative action plan (ii) Focusing and convergence of general development programmes for benefiting children wherever possible, and (iii) Project-based action plan of action for launching of projects for the welfare of working children in areas of high concentration of child labour.

❖ Project Based Plan of Action envisages starting of projects in areas of high concentration of child labour. Pursuant to this, in 1988, the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme was launched in 9 districts of high child labour endemic in the country. The Scheme envisages running of special schools for child labour withdrawn from work. In the special schools, these children are provided formal/non-formal education along with vocational training. A stipend of Rs.100/- per month, supplementary nutrition and regular health checkups so as to prepare them to join regular mainstream schools. The coverage of the NCLP Scheme has increased from 12 districts in 1988 to 100 districts in the 9\(^{\text{th}}\) Plan to 250 districts during the 10\(^{\text{th}}\) Plan. As per record (December, 2009) of the

Murshidabad Authority for Elimination of Child Labour (NCLP), there are 140 schools running in 6 blocks of Jangipur Sub-Division covering 7000 numbers of children.

- Introduction of Sarba Siksha Mission (SSM) & Mid-Day-Meal Programme in order to education for all and decrease the dropout rate from schools. These programmes has to have a great impact to address the child labour problem.

All the policies that the Indian government has placed are in accordance with the Constitution of India, and all are supporting the eradication of Child Labour. The problem of child labour still remains despite these policies. Enforcement is the key aspect that is lacking on the government’s efforts. No enforcement data for child labour laws are available: "A glaring sign of neglect of their duties by officials charged with enforcing child labour laws is the failure to collect, maintain, and disseminate accurate statistics regarding enforcement efforts" (Human Rights Watch 1996). Although the lack of data does not mean enforcement is nonexistent, the number of child labourers and their work participation rates show that enforcement, if at all existent, is ineffective. The entire Act, Policy & Programme are ineffective, unless it has to be culturally accepted. Only proper community awareness through social movement can stop this evil system.

I.11. Labour Welfare Schemes for Beedi Workers:

“Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other’s welfare, social justice can never be attained.”

------------------------Helen Keller

The concept of Labour Welfare Fund was evolved in order to extend measures of social assistance to the workers in the unorganized sectors particularly Mines, Beedi and cine industries. The Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976 has been

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enacted by the Parliament to set up welfare schemes to be administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment to provide, health care, education, housing and recreational facilities to the workers engaged in beedi industry. The welfare schemes have been formulated to improve the living and social conditions of the workers engaged in the beedi industry.

- **Basic Health Care** is extended to these workers through 7 hospitals and 204 dispensaries all over the country. One hospital is situated at the study area at Tarapur, Dhuliyan, Murshidabad in West Bengal.

### Diversified Medical Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ophthalmic Problems</td>
<td>Financial assistance of Rs.300/- for purchase of spectacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>Reservation of beds in T. B. Hospitals and domiciliary treatment for IOMC workers. Subsistence allowance Rs.750/- to Rs.1000/- is paid to workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Diseases Reimbursement of expenditure up to Rs.1,30,000/- to workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney Transplantation</td>
<td>Reimbursement of expenditure up to Rs.2,00,000/- to workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Reimbursement of actual expenditure on treatment, medicines, and diet charges incurred by workers, or their dependants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor surgery like Hernia, Appendectomy ulcer, Gynecological diseases and Prostrate diseases</td>
<td>Reimbursement of expenditure up to Rs.30,000/- to workers and their dependants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Diseases</td>
<td>Financial assistance for treatment of mental diseases, diet, railway fare and subsistence allowance to workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leprosy</td>
<td>Financial assistance for Rs.30/- per patient per day for indoor treatment and Rs.6/- per patient per day for outdoor treatment. Subsistence allowance of Rs.300/- per month with dependants and Rs.200/- per month without dependants of workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity</td>
<td>Benefits Grant of Rs.1000/- per delivery to a female worker (for first two deliveries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Welfare</td>
<td>Monetary incentive @ Rs.500/- per head to the workers for undergoing sterilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral Expenses</td>
<td>Rs.1500 for funeral expenses of the diseased workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- **Social Security Schemes** - The Beedi workers are covered under the Group Insurance Scheme, wherein Rs.10,000/- for natural death and Rs.25,000/- on accidental death is paid by L.I.C. against a yearly premium @Rs.18/-.

- **Education** - Scholarships to the wards of workers studying in Class I to Professional Courses per child per annum - from Rs.250/- to Rs.8000/-.

- **Housing Scheme** - A “Revised Integrated Housing Scheme 2007” effective from 1\textsuperscript{st} April, 2007 that provides uniform central subsidy of Rs.40,000/- is being implemented through Welfare Commissioners of LWO. Worker’s contribution of Rs.5,000/- is charged after administrative approval and not at the time of submitting the application.

- **Marriage of the daughter of widow/widower** - Financial assistance of Rs.5000/- each is given for the marriage of the two daughters of the widow/widower workers on production of relevant document/certificate issued from Government Marriage Registrar.

- **Employees state Insurance, 1948** – The law provides health, medical and cash benefits for sickness, maternity, employment-related injury for employees making less than Rs.3000/- per month. Dependents of employees may also receive pensions in the case of death of employment injury.

- **Recreational Schemes** - Financial assistance of Rs.10,000/- for colour TV set and Rs.4000/- for Black & White TV Set is provided to the Beedi Workers Co-operative Societies comprising a minimum of 20 members.

- **Advisory Committees** - There are Advisory Committees both at Central as well as State level which meet at regular intervals to monitor and review the activities of the Labour Welfare Funds. In addition, the activities under these Funds are also reviewed by Senior Officers of the Division/Organization regularly and corrective measures are taken as and when necessary.

But the reality is quite different. Beedi workers are not enjoying the facilities as described in the legislation. Most of the cases, beedi workers are not informed regarding the various welfare schemes.
I.12. Relevance of the Study:

The present study entitled ‘Child Workers in Household Industry: A Study of Beedi Industry in Murshidabad District of West Bengal’ has some unique features. The characteristics as well as dimensions of the problem are different from the ‘child labour’; as emerged in various studies. It is beyond the periphery of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. The existing Laws, Legislation and Government Policies are not able to specifically target these types of child workers.

The problems of beedi rolling child workers are multi dimensional. These types of child workers are not fully involved in the economic processes as other labourer neglecting all kinds of child rights. These child workers are not paid any wages directly, though their services contribute a lot to their family income. They are not necessarily out of schools or school dropouts. These child workers are going to school and they roll beedi simultaneously; when they grow up, work load increases, the regularity in school attendance decreases. Work load compels them to bung schools and resulting in dropouts from schools. Some of these working children are also admitted in the Child Labour Schools under NCLP, but they also continue their existing work (beedi rolling). The picture is very distinct in case of girl children. These child workers are involved in the activity at their home and side by side trying to continue their schooling, play and leisure. So, without having gross negligence to all kind of child rights, laws and legislation, these children are carrying their work.

If the issue is considered from the view point of social aspect, it is a common phenomena in the study area and quite acceptable socially. Irrespective of religion, caste and social position, people are involved in the activity. Children are not the exception rather they are very much involved with their family activities. Parents also gladly accept it and most of the cases they motivate their children in order to earn sustainable level of income. In case of a girl child, the efficiency of beedi rolling is treated as a special skill and girl with beedi rolling skill has a special demand at the time of marriage, where boys are involved in the process for pocket money, girls for their marriage expenses.

The magnitude of exploitation is also different from other types of child labours. Economic exploitation is very much predominated, but it has no direct impact
on child workers, rather it affects the family as a whole. But other exploitation in terms of social and sexual harassments in the working environment as well in the household are also been noticed. Besides this, health, education and social security are also neglected. Girl children are the worst sufferer.

In this direction, the present study is unique one and the existing law, legislation and Government policies are not sufficient enough to address the problem. The study has been conducted to know the nature and extent of beedi industry and its impact on socio-economic condition of the study area. The main focus is to enumerate the effect of beedi rolling as well as magnitude of exploitation of the working children engaged in beedi rolling. It is also tries to put some feasible recommendation in order to minimize the problem of working children through this study.

I.13. Objectives of the Study:

Each research study has its own specific purpose, so every research study has its intricate objectives. The objectives of this study are furnished below:

I. To study the nature & extent of beedi industry in the district of Murshidabad and its impact on the Socio-economic condition of the study area.

II. To enumerate the effects of beedi rolling on health and education of working children in particular and family in general.

III. To reckon the magnitude of exploitation of the children engaged in beedi industry.

IV. To suggest some feasible Policy Measures & Action Plan to minimise the problem of working children in beedi industry.
I.14. Scheme of the Chapters:

The present study was unveiled through six chapters.

Chapter I consists of Introduction; includes various concepts, about the study in the perspective of the country and the district, relevance and objective of the study.

Chapter II consists of Review of Literature; includes summary of the same type of research study already conducted.

Chapter III consists of Research Methodology; includes research design, techniques and tools applied in the study.

Chapter IV consists of demographic features of the District & Study area; includes history, geography and other important features of the district as well as the study area.

Chapter V consists of Results and Discussion; includes analysis and interpretation of the primary data collected from the field.

Chapter VI consists of Summary & Conclusion; includes summary of the study and suggests some feasible Policy measures & action plan in order to minimize the problem of working children.

Chapter VII consists of Bibliography.