9.0 INTRODUCTION

This last chapter is aimed at concluding the research work by presenting the major findings of the study. This is followed by some suggestions extended for the abolition and mitigation of the practice of child labour and amelioration of situation of the children and their families. The same form the basis for drawing up the implications of the practice of social work and in suggesting appropriate intervention. These are based on the responses of the sample respondents, views of lawyers, social activists and social workers and also the researcher’s own experiences during the research work.

The present study encompassed an in-depth study of child labour issues confronting the society. It aimed at providing a detailed description about the determinants and dimensions of child labour as it prevails in the context of Delhi. An attempt has also been made to critically examine the various child labour legislations in India as well as policy initiatives undertaken by the Government of India. Besides this, it has also presented the grounded theory based on narrative analysis of child labourers.

The study incorporated a quantitative analysis of the data gathered from the responses of child labourers, their parents and employers through interviews, coupled with a qualitative analysis sourced from the narratives from child labourers which uncovered some important aspects related to the problems of child labourers employed in small scale commercial establishments in Delhi.

The present chapter is divided into two sections. Section-I deals with major findings of the study and Section-II presents various recommendations as well as implications for social work practice.
SECTION-I

Section-I presents the major findings of the study under the following sub sections:

9.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents
9.2 Child Labour Legislations in India: A Critical Analysis
9.3 Determinants of Child Labour
9.4 Dimensions of Child Labour

9.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

9.1.1 Demographic Profile of Child Labourers

Nearly 43% of the children were 13 years or above, the remaining were less than 11 years of age at the time of data collection. It is significant to note that 7% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 7-9 years.

The sample comprised of a mix of children from Hindu and Muslim families, though a majority of them 73(60.8%) were Hindus. The findings of the study are in contrast with the study of Patil (1988). His study revealed that a large percentage of children were from Muslim and Christian families.

24.10% children belonged to the Upper Castes, 18.3% to Other Backward Castes and 17.5% to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. So, it can be said that children, irrespective of religion and caste, were engaged in menial jobs in various small scale commercial establishments in Delhi.

The study revealed that 65.8% respondents belonged to nuclear families, while the remaining belonged to joint or extended families. So, it can be said that a large percentage of the child labourers come from nuclear families as against the common belief that larger families contribute more to quantum of child labour.

The study found that 37(30.8%) of the respondents had two siblings and 31(25.8%) respondents had more than three siblings. Only 18(15%) were the single child of their parents. Four children did not have any information regarding their families.
As far as the engagement of the siblings in petty jobs was concerned the study revealed that in the case of 75(62.5%) respondents, their siblings were also engaged in petty jobs and further out of this group 23(19%) respondents reported that their siblings were engaged in the same work as them.

The study found that 34(28%) respondents were the eldest among the siblings, 33(27.5%) were in the middle position and 31(25.8%) were the youngest in the family. It is significant to note that despite the fact that 18(15%) were the ‘only child’ in the family, yet they were engaged in petty employment probably due to poverty.

The study reported that, a majority of the respondents 103(85%) had both parents alive. The remaining 14(11.6%) respondents had only one parent. It was in three cases that both the parents were dead.

The demographic profile of child labourers showed that a majority of the children were from outside Delhi and belonged to the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Regarding migration of the respondents it was found that a majority of them had migrated before the year 2009.

The educational profile of child labourers as found by the study revealed that 58(48.3%) of the respondents were illiterate, 25(20.8%) had only literacy skills and 36(30%) of them had dropped out somewhere in the primary classes, or at the most completed primary schooling. Only one respondent had studied further i.e up to class seven. This reflects the extremely low educational attainment of these children and the low emphasis on education for them & their families.

As far as the occupational status of the parents of the child labourers was concerned, a majority of the children reported that their parents were wage labourers and were engaged in jobs which were by and large covered in unorganized sector. In few cases parents were found to be self employed. 17(14%) children reported that their parents were not doing any job and were mostly dependent on their earnings.

In keeping with the nature of occupation in which parents were involved it was noticed that the monthly earning of parents was also very low. Almost a negligible number of respondents (3) reported that their parents earned more than Rs.5000/ per
month. The low income of the parents could be a major reason for migration of families/children in search of jobs in metropolitan cities and their compulsion to work in small scale commercial establishments.

9.1.2 Profile of the Parents of Child Labourers

The age wise distribution of respondents (mostly fathers) revealed that a majority of the parents were less than 45 years of age. The family structure of the respondents revealed that a majority 36(90%) belonged to nuclear families. The mean size of the family was found to be 4 members. As far as the siblings’ engagement in job was concerned, a majority of the respondents reported that their other children were also engaged in work. The parents of the respondents were either self employed in petty vocations like hawking, rickshaw pulling and fruits and vegetable selling or they were engaged in menial jobs like working as construction workers or employed in dhabas, tea stalls and garages. The study revealed that most of the children came from poor economic background with monthly earning of less than Rs. 5000/. The educational status of parents also presented a very dismal picture as 25(62.5%) of fathers had no education, 11(27.5%) had only basic education, 3(7.5%) had studied up to primary level and only one respondent was found to have studied up to middle level. In a manner of speaking, the poor educational attainment of parents may have reinforced the less than optimal desire within them to provide their children with education.

9.1.3 Profile of the Employers of Child Labourers

The age wise distribution of employers revealed that a majority of employers were in the age group of 36-45 years. The study reported that most of the respondents 29(72.5%) were Hindus with remaining being the Muslims. Majority of the employers who were Hindus either belonged to the Upper Castes or the Other Backward Castes. As far as the educational qualifications of the employers was concerned, a majority of the employers 24(60%) were found to have studied up to the primary level and very few of them 2(5%) had studied up to the middle class.
9.2 CHILD LABOUR LEGISLATIONS IN INDIA- A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The review of literature revealed that child labour was prevalent in India even in ancient and medieval periods when children were engaged in agricultural and domestic activities. It was also found that during this period no significant initiatives were undertaken for the abolition of the problem of child labour. During the British rule (1757-1947 A.D.) under the patronage of the East India Company, certain specific industrial organizations grew in the 18th and 19th centuries which involved the employment of large number of artisans especially in weaving, carpentry, silk and other sectors. The prolonged scarcity of food, extreme poverty caused by famines, lack of education and absence of compulsion for education of children and large scale unemployment of adult workers resulted in the entry of children into the labour market. However, due to the pressure of social reformers, the British government enacted a few protective legislations for the child labour in India. The Indian Factories Act, 1881; Mines Act, 1901; Factories Act, 1911; Factories (Amendment) Act, 1922; Indian Factories Act, 1931; Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1935 and Employment of Children Act, 1938 were enacted with a view to prohibit the employment of children in factories carrying out hazardous work.

The major thrust of these laws was on regulating the conditions and hours of work of children. Moreover, these laws were mainly confined to factories and mines. Also, there was no effective process of verification and strict enforcement of rules. As per the Labour Investigating Committee Report (1946), the main cause of this was the inadequacy of the inspecting staff to enforce the provisions of those welfare legislations. It is also important to note that no unified attempt was made by the British government to prohibit child labour as such. Hence, child labour continued to exist as a means of providing cheap labour.

After independence, numerous provisions ensuring justice to children were envisaged in Part-III and Part-IV of the constitution. The Government of India enacted important legislations from time to time such as the Factories Act, 1948; the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958; the Motor Transport Workers Act, 1966; the Plantations Labour Act, 1951; Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 and Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.
The basic aim of all these enactments was to prohibit the employment of children in certain employments and regulate the conduct of the employers of child labourers so that the latter were not exploited.

The major points of criticism of the child labour legislations enacted after India’s independence are as follow:

- It is noteworthy that despite the fact that laws exist to regulate and prohibit employment of children in hazardous employments, there is neither a blanket prohibition on the use of child labour, nor is there any universal minimum age set for child labourers. This provides avenues for employment of child labourers. Therefore it would not be fallacious to say that inadequate legislation, as well as insufficient enforcement, is responsible for the continuation and perpetuation of the phenomenon of child labour.

- A major criticism of the legislations on child labour is the lack of uniformity. The various acts define the term ‘child’ differently. As already mentioned these legislations do not conform to a single agreed minimum age which differs from Act to Act, state to state and industry to industry. The same is also true with regard to the working hours, rest periods and night employment. Moreover, even where legislations apply, the employers do not conform to them. There is also hardly any case when the government took the employers to courts for disregarding the various stipulations. Even if they were caught violating the provisions of the child labour laws, the judicial punishment given to them has been limited and is most often nominal. As a result, the legislation does not act as a deterrent and the tendency to employ children continues. Besides that, the administrative authorities have no powers to suspend or cancel the license of a factory violating these laws. This conveniently ensures that no effective steps are taken to alleviate the presence of child labour.

- Another major defect of child labour related laws is that they prohibit employment of children only in hazardous occupations. However, a large number of working children do not come under the term "hazardous labour" as they work in unorganized sectors like agriculture, cottage industries etc. All of
these sectors provide inferior conditions and which are unsuited to their physical development (Weiner, 1996). The legislation also fails to include ‘new’ hazardous occupations and is unclear about the criteria that shall be used for defining what is ‘hazardous’ (Burra, 1986, Fernandes, 1986).

- The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986 emphasizes regulation rather than prohibition of child labour. The legislation bans the employment of children in factories, but children are otherwise permitted to enter the labour force at any age. They can be legally employed in small workshops. They are free to work in numerous fields. For example, rag picking is not classified as hazardous, though thousands of children collecting scraps of iron, glass, paper and rags often pick up bits of food to eat and are prone to tetanus, skin diseases and other hazards. It is important to note that the legislation for child labour in the so called 'non-hazardous' occupations without regard for age is a violation of Articles 24, 39 and 45 of the Indian Constitution, which ban child labour and call for compulsory schooling. Incidentally, in the Unnikrishnan and others Vs the State of Andhra Pradesh (1993) case, the Supreme Court had argued that free and compulsory education should be considered as a Fundamental Right.

- Again Section II of the 1986 legislation stipulates that a register must be maintained of all children employed in the establishment and the same should be scrutinized by inspectors. But the stipulation only applies to children employed on regular basis. Since a majority of child labourers are employed on a casual basis, these children do not show up in the official registers. Also, the provisions do not apply 'to any establishment wherein any process is carried on by the occupier with the aid of his family' and this somewhat subjective phrase provides a convenient loophole.

- Again a major chunk of the girl child labourers do not come under the definition of child labour because according to these laws there must be an identifiable employee and an identifiable employer. But most of the girl children are mainly confined to domestic sphere and are normally invisible. Moreover, children
working as part of family labour do not come under the purview of Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act.

- Additionally, the governmental machinery to implement these laws is inadequate. Inspectorate system does not work at all and partly as a result of this, children are often not aware of their rights. For example, under Section 12 of the 1986 legislation, every establishment where children are employed is supposed to prominently display some of the provisions of 1986 legislation through notice, both in the local language and in English. Virtually no establishment complies with this provision. The employers are not punished as the inspectors never turn up. In fact, the jurisdiction of individual inspectors is also too extensive for them to keep a regular watch on activities within their purview. The labour inspector, whenever he gets a chance to book any violation, has difficulties in collecting evidence for proper prosecution.

- The government in the Act of 1986 claimed that it would abolish the serious problem of child labour within ten years. Despite the fact that it has enough powers to deal firmly with employers violating the provisions of the various child labour legislations, this abhorrent exploitation continues. The enforcement of the legislation of 1986 was again left in the hands of inspectors who have proved rather ineffective through all these years (Shandilya and Khan, 2003).

- The new Act of 1986 does not specify how the welfare, health and safety of child labourers are to be protected. The government has taken upon itself the task of providing all welfare measures, leaving the employers rather free of this responsibility.

- In addition to various legislations, the Government of India implemented the National Child Labour Projects Scheme in 1988 to rehabilitate the child labourers. An assessment of the projects revealed that no suitable mechanisms have been evolved for monitoring the implementation of the project either at the district level or at the state level. Also a number of defects were found in the implementation of the project.
• Besides formulating numerous legislations and welfare programmes for the children, the Government of India has also ratified various United Nations Conventions which put focus on three main issues (a) minimum age of employment, (b) medical examination of the working children, and (c) prohibition of night work by children. Most of the Conventions and Recommendations of the ILO show that only a few of them are relating to agricultural and non-industrial occupations; they are mainly concerned with industrial employment. In other words, they are more relevant to industrially developed countries. In a country like India where the bulk of the work force is in agriculture, their relevance is limited. It may not be wrong to say that these Conventions and Recommendations have been framed and adopted with reference to the conditions prevalent in the industrialized countries and not much thought has been given to the needs of child labourers in non-industrialized countries. The Indian Government has not adopted and ratified all the Conventions of the ILO, which is also one of the important reasons for the unbridled growth of child labour in India.

9.3 DETERMINANTS OF CHILD LABOUR

9.3.1 Children’s Responses

9.3.1.1 Determinants of Child Labour

The study revealed that the most important factor which led the children to work was to supplement their family income. About 62(52%) children started working only because their parents wanted them to work since the economic background was very poor for the entire family; they joined work so that they could provide extra income to the family. Some of the respondents also informed that since their father did not get any job throughout the year, they had to face financial crisis. So, in order to support the family, they joined in remunerative work Poverty of the household was an important factor and 48(40%) respondents started working due to the absolute poverty in which they and their families were placed. Again 59(49%) child labourers reported that they started working due to the family pressure only because their parents wanted them to work. This was due to the illiteracy and ignorance of the parents. Besides
these, lack of interest in studies; dropping out of schools; migration of parents; desire for having a better living standard; to earn some pocket money and death of parents were also emerged as determinants of child labour.

9.3.1.2 Reasons of leaving Schooling

The study revealed that about 54% of the drop outs were those whose parents could not afford to send them to schools due to financial constraints. These children reported that they had been pulled out of schools in order to supplement the family income. Thus, the poor income of the parents was an important factor for the children dropping out from schools. It was also found that around 46(38.33%) of the total drop outs were not interested in studies and considered work more beneficial than study. A majority of these child labourers 54 (45%) dropped out because of parental pressure to get engaged in either remunerative work or in family occupation. A significant number of respondents 38(31.66%) also dropped out due to the migration of their parents to Delhi. Thus, the underlying cause of dropping out of the school of the children was also rooted around the poverty of the parents.

However, the study reported that 16 (13.3%) respondents expressed unhappiness due to dropping out from school because they wanted to continue their study and wanted to stay in their village. One of the respondent said, “Jab kaam karte-karte disturb ho jaata hun to kaam chhod kar padhna karne ka mann karta hai, magar kya karu hamare is kaam ke alaawaa kamaai ka koi jariyaa bhi to nahi hai, isi liye main kaam karta hun. Jyada padhne ke liye jyada paisa chaahiye, mere poore pariwaar mein koi naahi padha hai”. Another respondent said, “jab mann mein padhaa ki khayaal aa jaataa hai to kaam mein mann naahi lagta hai.” In contrast, 25(20.80%) respondents opined that they felt very much relieved after dropping out. These respondents reported that they became economically independent and they preferred that.

9.3.1.3 Reasons of Migration

The study found that 59(49 %) children reported that financial problems of their families was the most important reason of migration. 47(39%) children reported that they had come to Delhi because of family problems. These children reported that their
parents used to quarrel and they felt neglected and uncared for. 8% children said that they were allured by the city’s charm and better job prospects, so they migrated from their home towns. One of the respondent replied, “Har saal baadh ke kaaran kheton aur gharon mein paani bhar jaataa hai aur hamein bahut pareshaani hoti hai, kai baar to saari fasal barbaad ho jaati hai.” Thus, as the study reveals, the main reasons of migration included financial problems, family problems, natural disasters and pressure to search for livelihood opportunities. This is in tune with the findings of other studies like NIPPCD (1978), Gangrade (1978) and Khandekar (1972).

The study found that 64(53.3%) child labourers joined work force between the age group of 9-11 years followed by 27(22.5%) who joined between 7-9 years and 21 (17.5%) who started work at the age of 11-13 years. Only 8 (6.7%) started work at the age of even less than 7 years.

A majority of the respondents 58(48.3%) had never attended school before joining their work followed by 25(20.8%) who had done schooling up to 2nd standard and 36(30%) who had education up to 5th standard.

9.3.1.4 Aspirations of Child Labourers

The study reported that a majority of the respondents 94(78.3%) had never thought about their future. One of the respondent replied, “ghar mein sabse badaa beta to main hi hun, isi liye kuchch kaam seekh kar kamaanaa to paedega, aaj kaam seekhungaa to paanch saal baad jaakar khud ki kuchch aamdani hogi.” Another respondent said, “Abbaa jo chaahenge main wo hi banungaa.” Their immediate concern was only to fulfil their immediate basic needs. Besides that, a significant number of respondents had very low ambitions as they wanted to continue that work in the future also. The finding of the study is in contrast with the study conducted by Pant, 2006. His study revealed that the child labourers wanted to be doctors, police men, photographers, cricket players and actors.

9.3.1.5 Awareness about Compulsory Education and Legal Provisions

The study revealed that most of the child labourers were not aware of child labour legislations which ban employment of children below 14 years. These children also
did not have any knowledge about free and compulsory education and the Right to Education Act. However, a significant number of children were aware of various non-governmental organizations working nearby for the education and empowerment of child labourers.

9.3.2 Parental Perspectives

9.3.2.1 Determinants of Child Labour

The study revealed that 22 (55%) parents sent their children for work because of poverty. 6 (15%) parents reported that they had sent their child to work as he was wasting his time. 8 (20%) parents reported that their child was not interested in studies and 4 (10%) viewed that children were sent to work to learn skilled work so that in future they would get employment easily. So, it was evident that poverty was the predominant factor which compelled the parents to send their children for remunerative work. The same was articulated both by the parents as well as the children.

9.3.2.2 Poverty and Inadequate Income of the Parents

In the present study, 40% of child labourers reported poverty as the main reason for their engagement in work and 55% of parents also reported that poverty was one of the important causes for sending their children for work. This finding is also supported by the studies conducted by Mishra and Mishra (1990), Patil (1988), Kulshrestha (1978), Rao (1996), Singh (1990) and Shah (1992).

9.3.2.3 Illiteracy of the Parents

The present study revealed that literacy level of the parents seemed to have a relation with the incidence of child labour as 25 (62.5%) of the parents were found to be illiterate. Thus, parental illiteracy was also a contributory factor for existence of child labour. Majority of the child labourers came from illiterate families. Many other studies have also showed that the incidence of child labour has been found to be more in families where the father or the mother was illiterate. Sharma and Sharma (1997)
also brought out with a similar result in their study on child labour in the glass industry of Firozabad. The study of George (1977) revealed that most of the children who came to the labour force belonged to families in the lower literacy group. His study reported that parents of 44% of child labourers were illiterate.

9.3.2.4 Occupation of the Parents

The study reported that a significant number of parents 21(48%) were either engaged in petty jobs or unemployed, which was of course an important contributing factor for the incidence of child labour. The study of Savitri (1985) also stated that unemployment of adult members in the family was also one of the reasons which contribute towards child labour.

9.3.3 Employers’ Responses

9.3.3.1 Reasons for Hiring Child Labourers

As per the present study, 13(40%) employers reported that children were engaged in their establishment only because they wanted to learn the trade. 7(17.5%) said that the parents had requested them to give employment to their children. It may be that their parents were financially very weak and unable to fulfill the basic necessities of life. Again 7(17.5%) employers reported that children were very obedient and never complained on any issues. They work hard and were happy with their wages. However, 6(15%) employers reported that the children themselves had approached them directly for job due to family pressure to supplement family income. 4(10%) viewed that the work was basically child centric and the children could do these unskilled jobs efficiently.

So, it could be said that learning trade skills was an important reason cited by the employers for the employment of children in small scale commercial establishments. This finding is also supported by the study of Singh (1990) conducted in Varanasi.
9.4 DIMENSIONS OF CHILD LABOUR

9.4.1 Work History, Working Conditions and Terms of Employment

9.4.1.1 Age of Entry into the Workforce

So far as the age of entry into the workforce was concerned, the study found that a majority of the children 64(53.3%) entered between 9-11 years. The study also revealed that in Delhi, children of different age groups entered into some or other vocations either due to poverty, and/or large size of the families, or lack of parental care or some associated reasons.

9.4.1.2 First job of Child Labourers

The study revealed that before entering into the present work context, a majority of the children were in schools and once they entered into employment, they were continuing in that very work even when data was gathered by the researcher for the present study. So, it can be said that once the child was engaged in one type of work, he continued to be in that work for a long time frame.

9.4.1.3 Source of Getting Work

Regarding the source of getting Work, a majority of the respondents (53%) informed that, they got their work either though the help of relatives who were already employed or through friends (16%) who were working in Delhi. Some others had got employment by themselves. In some cases they were also found to be engaged in their family occupation.

9.4.1.4 Duration of Work

The study revealed that a majority of child labourers 59(49.2%) were in the present employment for last six months to one year. The children’s length of engagement was found varying from six months to three years. Only 5% children were found working for more than 3 years in the same employment.
9.4.1.5 Distance from Home to Workplace

A majority of the respondents (57.5%) reported that their workplace was within walking distance (less than 1 km.) and that they used to come to their workplace by walking. The study revealed that the distance between homes to workplace varied from less than 1 km. to 3 kms. In very few cases (5%) children used to travel more than 3 kms. to reach their place of work. Thus, the children preferred staying near the workplace by hiring cheap residential places nearby.

9.4.1.6 Employment Status of the Child

A majority of the respondents (55%) pointed out that they were having full time work whereas 33% of the respondents were occupied in part time work. 8% of the respondents reported that their work was permanent in nature. These respondents were mainly working in their family occupation or in the business of their relatives. Only 4% of the respondents reported that their work was casual in nature as they were not compelled by their parents to do the work. They were working to earn some pocket money for their personal expenditure.

9.4.1.7 Working Hours

Regarding working hours of children, the study revealed that their working hours varied from 4 hours to more than 12 hours a day. 25(20.8%) children reported that they worked for more than 12 hours per day. This confirmed the general observation that children are put to longer hours of work by the employers. This finding is also in tune with the study of Barooch (1977) and the Report of the National Commission of Labour (Government of India, 1969).

9.4.1.8 Weekly Holidays

Regarding weekly off days, it was very disheartening to note that most of the children (59.2%) did not get any weekly offs and if at all they got any, that was unpaid.
9.4.1.9 Overtime Work

The study revealed that a majority 73(60.8%) of the children were doing over time, as far as work hours were concerned. While doing overtime work, they were provided with free food and some pocket money. The children employed in tea shops/dhabas and subzi mandi were mostly working for more than 12 hours. So, it can be said that children even in that tender age were forced to do overtime work, much beyond their scheduled timings.

9.4.1.10 Children’s Monthly Earning

The study revealed that the wages of child labourers depended entirely on the mercy of the employers. Further, nearly 51(42.5%) children received a monthly income between Rs.500 to less than Rs.1000. There were 38(31.66%) children who earned between Rs.1000 to Rs.1500. 18 (15%) children reported that their monthly earnings were even less than Rs.500. Some of these children in this category were employed in family occupation and received only pocket money. Almost all the child labourers received their income in cash, either on daily, weekly or monthly basis depending on the type of work they were engaged in. Sinha (1994) in his study on child labour also found that the wages were low and they worked continuously without any interval.

9.4.1.11 Recipients of Children’s Earnings

As per the present study, 42(35%) respondents received their wages by themselves and 59(49%) revealed that the wages were given to their parents/relatives. The rest of the respondents did not receive any wages as they were placed in family work. The practice of receiving wages on behalf of the children was prevalent in almost all sectors included in the present study. However, its occurrence was greater in tea stalls/dhabas. Singh (2006) also reported that in most of the cases wages were paid to the children and daily and weekly payment system was also prevalent in auto workshops and furniture industry.
9.4.1.12 Nature of Work Performed

A majority of the respondents 87(72.5%) reported that they were doing unskilled work. 25(20.8%) were employed in semi skilled work and a few children 8(6.7%) reported that they were engaged in skilled work. Thus, most of the children employed in the informal sector were doing unskilled work.

A majority of the employers reported that child labourers mostly assisted adult workers particularly those engaged in garages/tea shops/dhabas. A sizeable number of the employers also viewed that children were able to work independently.

9.4.1.13 Degree of Work satisfaction

Regarding the level of Work satisfaction of child labourers, the study found that about 38% of them were satisfied in their present work as they felt satisfied that they had economically independent and were able to support their family financially to meet their basic needs. Those who were partially satisfied reported that they got less pay and worked for long hours. A significant number of child labourers reported that they were not satisfied with their present work because of the rude behavior of their employers, temporary nature of work, lower wages, longer hours of work, physical assaults by the employers and lack of facilities at the work place.

9.4.1.14 Attitude of Family towards Children’s Engagement in Work

Majority of the children 90(108%) reported that their family had a positive attitude towards their engagement in work. The same was reported by the parents (95%) as well.

9.4.1.15 Attitude of the Employers/Co-Workers and Customers

As reported by the child labourers, the attitude of the employers/co-workers/customers was very cordial and kind. However, a few of them reported that they were sometimes harassed by the employers/co-workers and customers on small faults and sometimes without any reason. One of the respondents said, “Ustaad mujhe kabhi-kabhar gaali detaa aur maartaat hai, par aisaa to school mein teacher bhi maartaat hai, aisaa mere abbu kehte hain”.

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9.4.1.16 Impact of Work on Health of Child Labourers

Majority of the respondents reported that no health hazard was associated with their present occupation. However, a very small number of them also reported that they had no idea whether the work that they did was harmful to their health.

9.4.1.17 Disciplinary Actions Taken by Employers

Majority of the employers (84%) reported that they used to counsel the child to work properly if his performance and behaviour was not satisfactory. However a very few of them reported that they sometimes scolded and gave some kind of physical punishment to such children.

9.4.1.18 Recruitment System for Hiring Child Labourers

The study reveals that there was no formal recruitment system for hiring children below 14 years of age. Unlike the formal sector, no such proper recruitment procedure was followed. Children were hired on the basis of recommendations of internal employees, parent’s requests for engaging the child and sometimes on the basis of children’s request and needs.

9.4.2 Living Conditions

9.4.2.1 Type of Housing

The study revealed that about half of the child labourers were staying in kuchcha houses and a few of them were even staying on foot paths and in parks.

9.4.2.2 Ownership of the House and Monthly Rent

The study revealed that the respondents mostly stayed in the rented accommodation in the slum areas and the monthly rent varied from Rs. 500 to Rs. 2000 depending upon the size of the dwelling, proximity to the market area and the facilities available in the house.
9.4.2.3 Water and Sanitation Facility

The study also reported less availability of water and sanitation were a major problems faced by the child labourers living in Delhi. A majority of them had to get water from public tube wells / community water taps or Delhi Jal Board tankers. These respondents used Sulabh Sauchalayas (public lavatories) and open spaces for defecation purposes.

9.4.2.4 Recreational Activities

The study revealed that the child labourers could hardly get time for playing or to engage in any other recreational activities. They rarely spend their leisure time in watching T.V, cinema or sleeping at their homes. One of the respondents replied, “Khelna achcha lagtaa hai, par T.V. par program zyaadaa achcha lagtaa hai. Ek din main bhi kamaakar T.V. kharidunga aur apne gaon le jaungaa.” Another respondent viewed that “hamaaraa chhotaa kamaraa hai, par T.V. par program hameshaa chaaltaa rehtaa hai, dekh ke mann ko bahut khusi hoti hai”.

9.4.2.5 Addiction

The study also found that a majority of the children were addicted to smoking and chewing gutka (tobacco) which was cheap and easily available. The researcher found that the family environment and the surroundings in which they lived and worked; the influence of peer group and sometimes curiosity to taste something new were some of the factors responsible for their addiction.

9.4.2.6 Social Interaction with Friends

The study revealed that the children hardly got any free time to spend with their friends. It was during the celebration of festivals that got relatively more opportunity to spend time with friends.
9.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ABOLITION/REGULATION OF THE INCIDENCE OF CHILD LABOUR AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

Child labour is a complex socio-economic demographic problem which can be reduced and eliminated by multiplicity of actions, both by the government and the civil society sector. On the basis of the research findings, views of lawyers, social activists and social workers and experience emanating from the research process, the following recommendations emerge for dealing with the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon.

9.5.1 Promoting Income Generation Activities

Indisputably, child labour is rooted in poverty. The progressive elimination of this problem will lead to a reduced need for the family to push their children into labour. The income deficiency can be made up by providing sustainable livelihood opportunities to the lower stratum of society through creation of more jobs/ livelihood options, agrarian reforms, and enforcement of minimum wages and social security.

Self-employment schemes should be intensified. Poor families must be provided social security including medical and sickness benefits.

Various studies have observed that the parents are compelled to send their children for work only because they had to fulfill their basic needs and repay loans. These sections of the society must be provided with easy and cheap loans returnable in small installments. This type of facility can alleviate the problem to a large extent because the debt is a big compulsion for the parents to put children to work.

A large chunk of the rural population still depends on agriculture therefore it is imperative that this sector should be developed more adequately. Poor families with children should be provided free or subsidized inputs like fertilizers, insecticides and seeds. In rural areas, investment in better irrigation, credit and market facilities should be made available, so that rural people can get more out of their land. The dairy and
fisheries development programme must be given importance. Agro based industries should be promoted to all possible extent for income generation and enhancement among the rural people.

Rural Cooperatives/ Self-Help Groups should play a more vital role in giving loans, offering help in procuring raw materials and in marketing so that it could add to the rural incomes. Small-scale industries could be promoted on a large scale for reducing unemployment among adults.

9.5.2 Providing Social Safety Nets/Social Protection Schemes

Provision of unemployment allowance, and old age pension schemes should be properly and fairly implemented. Benefits should reach genuine and deserving people. Systems of social protection provided by the state or non-state agencies must be carefully designed and implemented. Microfinance schemes, organized by civil society groups at the local level can be linked into larger structures, such as banks. The state can help by providing start-up funds, and develop a supportive legislative and regulatory frame work.

9.5.3 Providing Educational Opportunities

The school represents the most important means of drawing children away from the labour market. School provides children with guidance and the opportunity to understand their role in the society. So, top priority should be given to universalization of elementary education for children between 6 to 14 years within a time frame not exceeding more than five years. Along with general education, vocational training should be imparted to the children to make them economically independent in their adulthood. Apart from that, to increase the interest towards schools, handsome incentives should be provided to children belonging to the socio-economically backward sections of society in the form of scholarships, free books, stationery, dress and nutritious meals for, at least, up to their fourteenth year of age. These incentives would not only raise the education level but also provide opportunities for skill acquisition and better employment in adulthood.
Flexible timetables and other forms of flexibility in education can also help to accommodate the needs of the child labourers and their families. Not only the child labour enrolled in schools should be given regular guidance but their parents also should be given continuous advice, guidance and financial support for continuing education of their children. This is because the poor economic conditions of parents very often make conflicting demands between work participation and schooling on the children. Thus, even the easy accessibility to schools does not necessarily increase the enrolment of children if economic status of parents does not permit it. Parents belonging to low socio economic groups should be motivated to send their children to school rather than to work place through education, publicity and propaganda.

Many parents involve their children in work because they do not understand and realize the significance of education. It is therefore necessary to develop education consciousness among them by making use of all possible means especially by effectively organizing adult education programmes and work through community based organizations. It is suggested that the government intensify the steps to achieve cent percent literacy by undertaking adult education programmes, which in turn will enable parents to realize the need and importance of education.

9.5.4 Awareness Generation

Increasing public awareness is critical for the elimination of the problem of child labour. A large number of persons are unaware of the unsafe working conditions in which children work and the repercussions of early employment on children in particular and the society in general. There is need to arouse awareness among the child labourers, their parents and employers of the negative consequences of children’s engagement in work. People, specially employers and the parents of the children should be made aware of the existing laws concerning child labour and the penalties imposed for flouting them.

The mass media has a critical role to play in communicating information about child labour. The information it conveys can have a significant influence on public policy and legislation both in terms of formulation and enforcement. Initiatives should be taken to ensure that child labourers get a fair and balanced portrayal and hearing in
the media. Mass media should be used for imparting regular information on regular basis and running educational campaigns.

Public lectures can also be organized with more emphasis on the problem and its repercussions. People, specially employers and the parents of children should be made aware of the existing laws concerning child labour and the penalties imposed for non adherence.

There is a need to bring consciousness among children so that they may become aware of their constitutional rights, which is possible with the help of radio, television, spread of education and literacy campaigns.

Efforts should also be undertaken by the voluntary organizations to involve the local public and parents/guardians of child labourers, so that they become aware of the efforts made by the government for the mitigation of the problem and enhancing the well being of the families.

9.5.5 Strict Implementation of the Legislations

The state governments should take concrete steps to strictly prohibit the employment of children in occupations, which have been banned under the Child Labour Act. The state government must activate and strengthen the law enforcement machinery to see that all the legislative measures are properly enforced. The enforcement machinery must be geared up to ensure effective enforcement of the Child Labour legislations and take effective steps to prosecute those who violate the act. There is a need to strongly view the violation of child labour laws as serious offences. The need of the hour is to apply the provisions of legislations strictly so that the employers of the child labourers must be severely punished in case of their violation of child labour legislations.

The legal system should be framed in such a way that the people violating this law may not be spared. The law can be formed in such a way that it may leave no loophole where the employer of the children may be left free.
9.5.6 Involving Local Governance Institutions

On account of the fact that child labour is a localized phenomenon, the panchayats and municipalities can play a potential role in the eradication of child labour by providing local information, enhancing communication, and evolving local monitoring and mobilization.

9.5.7 Implementing and Supporting Fair Trade Labeling Initiatives

There is an urgent need to promote social labeling. Social labeling consists in putting a label on an item- or in the shop where it is sold- which guarantees to consumers that the product has been manufactured without using child labour.

9.5.8 Encouraging Trade Unions

The trade unions can play a very important role in the implementation of existing laws on the minimum age for admission to employment, minimum wages, working hours and rest intervals. Trade unions can work more effectively if they comprehend the physical and mental havoc the child labourers have to face, and the fact that child labour reduces adult wages as well as adult employment.

9.5.9 Role of Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-Governmental Organisations can also help vulnerable and marginalized groups, including child labourers, have their voices heard by government and other decision makers at local, national and even international levels.

NGOs often have a comparative advantage in piloting and evaluating alternative strategies and interventions at community level. They have also played a vital role in advocacy for the elimination of child labour by publishing materials in local languages.

Community based organizations are often best placed to ensure that programmes to combat child labour are realistic and adapted to the local context. There is a need for formation of ‘Community Surveillance Groups’ which can play an active role in
preventing the migration of children by identifying, monitoring and supporting “at risk” families and children.

It is now a challenge for the Non-governmental organizations to address the issue not just on the periphery but aim at structural reforms. Attempts like organizing the unorganized sector, reforms in the primary education system, microfinance for the weaker sections and instilling process for community participation and ownership are some of the essential issues that NGOs would have to address at the outset because lack of such systems contributes heavily to the inflow of children into the workforce.

9.5.10 Provision of Proper Housing/ Avenues for Recreation/ Purposeful Utilization of Leisure Time

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 our study, the child labourers were staying in slums, which were devoid of proper water supply, sanitation and lighting arrangement, leading to an unhealthy growth and development. Therefore, provisions should be made for housing with basic amenities. Besides, avenues for meaningful engagement of children in their free/leisure time also need to be provided to ensure that children (working and non-working) are provided stimulation for healthy growth and development of the body and the mind. Availability of recreation centres/clubs/Bal sabhas, etc. can go a long way to ensure that children are suitably engaged and also stay from delinquency and harmful activities.

In sum, there is an urgent need for attitudinal change, social awareness and an aggressive campaign against the scourge of child labour. It should be our national obligation to ensure physical and mental development of children with measures for regulating and humanizing child labour along with an attack on poverty. The eradication of child labour must be an explicit objective of development discourse and must be implemented with perseverance and as a matter of priority. In the absence of a proper development perspective, it is very difficult to keep the child labour away from the labour market. The elimination of the practice of child labour, requires
people’s participation and cooperation from all sectors i.e. from their families to society at large. The eradication of the problem is a long process, which requires intensive efforts on many fronts and also creation of general social awareness. There is also the urgent need for political mobilization to completely prevent the demand and supply of child labour. The basic strategy concerning child labour should be to gradually reduce and eliminate it through improving and enforcing legislation, promoting school enrolment and raising public awareness. The coordinated efforts of government, NGOs, employers and social workers through active public support are likely to help in ameliorating or controlling the problem.

9.6 ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE ABOLITION/ REGULATION OF THE INCIDENCES OF CHILD LABOUR

Social workers should provide guidance and counseling to the child labourers in confronting their problems and tackling them. Counseling is also needed for the families of the child labourers as well as those who are on the verge of sending their children to the labour market. Counseling and guidance are also needed for those children who are poor in studies and are truants so that they are prevented from dropping out of the school and entering into the labour market.

Social work intervention is necessary at the family level, especially where the fathers are alcoholics or drugs addicts or are unemployed. Voluntary agencies need to work closely with these families and provide counseling and referral services depending on their need. Social workers should work with children to bring about a change from an essentially welfare-based, charitable approach to a more children-centered, rights based approach. Every child of the age of 6-14 years has a right to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school till completion of elementary education. No child is liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him/her from pursuing and completing the elementary education.

Social workers should take systematic efforts to ensure that work places and communities remain child labour free. This can be facilitated by awareness raising activities by using participatory approach involving employers, parents, and adult
workers in the work places, community leaders, service providers and enforcement agencies. The social workers should ensure that the children withdrawn from work remain and complete their schooling and that new children do not enter work force. This can be done in the schools or educational centers, in the work places and in the communities.

Social workers should focus on the establishment of local child welfare and vigilance committees to oversee the welfare of the children in the community. The social workers should have participatory approach and actively involve the children, their parents, community leaders and teachers.

The social workers should mobilize the media to focus on the rights of the children when dealing with exploitation of children, and should encourage them to give ample coverage to issues related to children, and child labourers.

Children-friendly schools can provide a safe learning environment, equitable access, and also recognition of children’s rights and responsibilities. Social workers should use a multifaceted approach to prevent early dropout and involvement in job, by motivating parents, and bridging the gap between home and school.

Lets us all share the following feeling from sense of empathy:

“The child of the new age is arrived,
and a place must be made for him.
And so, we of the worn out world
Must leave bearing the debris
of the frustrated and the dead on our back.

To the new born
I give my firm word of honour.
I shall make this world
a fit place for him to live in”.