Chapter 1

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

“Only as we move closer to realizing the rights of all children, will countries move closer to their goals of development and peace”

Kofi A. Annan, Secretary General of U.N.

The Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000 by all countries (including India) as a blue print for building a better world in the 21st century was a landmark document. It captured the aspirations of the International community for a world united by common values, striving to achieve peace and a decent standard of living for every man, woman and child; an effort to build a world in which all children are healthy, protected from harm and surrounded by loving and nurturing adults who help them grow and develop to their full potentials (UNICEF Report, 2005).

A child is the most precious and valuable gift of God to man. The future of a family as well as the country directly depends upon how well its children are looked after. Children should be considered as the centre of love and source of pleasure for the parents and, at the same time, a valuable asset. A child is supposed to have a moral obligation to provide for the parents in their old age. But the parents also have some sort of moral obligation to the child.

The child being the family’s future’s hope, determines the kind of status, the family would acquire in the future course of time.

A healthy child is an essential requirement for a healthy nation, because children are the nation’s builders. Once, Pandit Nehru remarked: but somehow the fact that ultimately everything depends the human factor gets lost … in our thinking of plans and schemes of national development in terms of factories
and machinery and general schemes. It is all very important that we must have them, but ultimately of course it is the human being that counts and if the human being counts well, he counts much more as a child than as a grown up (Gangrade & Gathia, 1983).

Justice P.N. Bhagwati, former Chief Justice of India defined child as,

“A soul with a being, a nature and capacities of its own, who must be helped to find them, to grow into their maturity, into a fullness of physical and vital energy and the utmost breadth, depth and height of its emotional, intellectual and spiritual being; otherwise there cannot be a healthy growth of the nation” (V.V.G.N.L.I, 2003).

Child labour has been defined in various ways by various thinkers and organizations.

Homes Fold, the chairman of the United States National Child labour committee defined child labour as “… any work by children that interferes with their full physical developments, their opportunities for a desirable minimum of education, or their needed recreation” (quoted in Labour Problems in America).

According to the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1959), “when the business of wage earning or of participation in itself or family support conflicts directly or indirectly with the business of growth and education, the result is child labour”.

International Labour Organization (ILO) defines child labour as “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 (V.V.G.N.L.I, 2003).

1.1 Differentiation between child labour and child work

The differentiation between child labour and child work has always been a controversial issue. According to various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) survey, a child who is engaged in any kind of work is considered as child labour whether he gets wages or not. International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines ‘child labour’ as ‘work’ that deprives children of their childhood and their dignity, which hampers their access to education and the acquisitions of skills, and which is performed under deplorable conditions, harmful to their health and development.

Child work has been defined by ILO as all paid and unpaid work for the household or for the market, whether it is full time or part time. Participation in household activities on a regular basis and for several hours in a day to relieve adult for wage employment is also included in this definition (Burra, 2005).

Labour hampers the social physical as well as mental development of a child. Due to involvement in child labour, the child is deprived from proper socialization and physical and mental development.

While child work is good for the health of a child because there is no exploitation in it in terms of working hour and wages. World Bank defines ‘child work’ as that which does not involve an exploitative relationship and this should be distinguished from child labour. It further argues that in some instances work done by children within the family may even contribute to the development of the child. “Not all child labour is harmful. Many working children who are within a stable and nurturing environment with their parents
or under protection of a guardian can benefit in terms of socialization and from informal education and training (Burra, 2005).

Child work may be a positive step in a child’s development, while child labour hampers, the healthy development of the child. The kind of works in which children are engaged in household activity must be considered other than child labour due to the non-availability of proper definitions of child work and child labour. The controversy between these two terms should be removed. As Leiten (2002) rightly says, in his article published in *Economic and Political Weekly* that “painting India as a huge child labour camp” (Lieten, 2002).

Due to lack of proper definition of child labour and child work there is great variation in the statistical data provided by the Government of India and various NGO’s. Richard Anker (1999 ILO) warns about the overestimation of child labour as “purposely dramatizing the magnitude of child labour and can have an unexpected negative effect of making the problem appear too weak to solve”. All encompassing estimate of child labour is misleading since different types of child labour are combined into one resulting in the proverbial mixing of apples and oranges (Lieten, 2002).

1.2 Extent of child labour

It is very difficult to have exact scenario of prevailing child labour because there is high differentiation in statistical data provided by the Government as well as NGOs. Out of the total world’s workforce participation, India has one third workforce population in child labour. India is the largest country in the world having highest number of child labour.

The latest statistics show that about 250 million child workers exist in the age group of 5-14 all over the world. A recent survey conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) states that out of these 61 per cent are
Share of Workers (5-14 years) in the Respective Population Total
in Asia, 32 per cent in Africa, and 7 per cent in Latin America. India has the largest number of child labourers. It is also true that child labour in India is more of a rural phenomenon, with more than 90 per cent children working in agricultural and allied activities (Bhargava, 2003).

According to government figures the number has decreased over the past 20 years, from approximately 21 million in around 1980 to 9 million in the year 2000, with a child workforce participation rate that has decreased from 11.2 per cent to 4.8 per cent (Lieten, 2006).

Some states have shown decreasing trend while some show increasing trend.

Table 1.1

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Source: V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida
Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu show a decreasing trend of child labour, while Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh have shown a highly increasing trend of child labour and rest of the states, Assam, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Punjab have a smaller proportion of child labour (Sekar, 2007).

A number of NGOs as well as most western source state that India has more than 100 million child labourers, which is to say that about half of all children between the age of six and fourteen are engaged in child labour (Lieten, 2006).

The Government of India considers that it is not necessary that a child who is not in school must be engaged in labour. And every kind of work can not be categorized as labour. The kind of work which is hazardous and hampering to the physical and mental development is defined as child labour, while NGOs conclude that every child who is not in school and engaged in paid or unpaid work will be considered as child labour. Due to this controversy there is differentiation in the statistics regarding child labour. We have an incredibly large number of child labourers (13.6 million to 44 million) in our country. Child labour constitutes 5.2 per cent of the total labour force and is more of a rural phenomena with more than 90 per cent children working in villages (Bhargava, 2003).

1.2.1 Extent of Child Labour in Sitapur District (Research Area)

Sitapur district consists of a considerable population of child labour. And child labour is prevalent in every sector of the district. But the main concentration of child labour can be found in dari (cotton carpet) industry followed by hand embroidery work, dhaba, general stores and so on. The
overall child population in Sitapur district is 1015093. Out of this, 21856 children are main workers. (Main workers are those whose working period are six month or more than six months). It constitute 2.15% of the total child population, 18109 constitute marginal workers (marginal workers are those who working period are less than six month), that is 1.78% marginal child worker population (ILO Census Report, 2001).

1.2.2 Industrial and Agricultural Child Labour

Although child labour is banned in hazardous industries, it still consists high concentration of child worker’s population. In industries like, dari (cotton carpet) industry, lock industry, glass bangle industry, beedi industry, the exploitation of child labour is found in the form of low wages long working hours. Poor working condition have severe negative impact on the health of a child. The working condition and the temperature in Firozabad bangle industries in which children work is very harmful for the children health.

Studies conducted at the Maulana Azad Medical College in New Delhi, showed genetic damage in the body cells of the labourers working with furnace heat for three years, which seems to be true, as many a child suffers from mental retardation (Sekar, 2007).

According to the Government of India, there are 2 million children working in hazardous industries. Examples of hazardous occupations include brick manufacturing, stone quarrying, firework manufacturing, lock making and glassware production. An ILO study on hazardous child labour in Bangladesh found that more than 40 types of economic activities by children were hazardous to them. The survey also revealed that except for light work,
child labour usually had harmful consequences on the mental and physical development of children (internet google.search).

According to the census 2001, out of the total workforce of our country, children between 5-14 years have a 3.15 per cent share, totaling 12.6 million children. While there has been a decline in the number of children, as main child workers range from 9 million to 5.7 million, there has been a significant increase in the number of children engaged as marginal workers, from 2.2 million to 6.8 million. Children working in the agricultural sector constitute two third of the child labour force in India and their percentage in the rural child labour force is more than 75 per cent. According to the National Sample Survey, estimates of 2004-2005, around 5.6 million children work in agriculture, of whom 2.75 million are girls.

It was argued all along that child labour in agriculture was harmless and therefore could continue. Their work was never seen as hazardous by policymakers and adults. It seemed that these children blended with nature so well, working on farms and fields, that there was no need to disturb the poetic vision of these being nature’s own children who led lives of harmony and peace (Sinha, 2007).

1.3 Child Labour as a Subject of Public Debate

Child labour should be debated, at least among children whom we are talking about. Children must be made aware of their rights. Child labour debates only take place between the various social, political and economic organization, child right activists and so on. The debate regarding the child labour takes place among literate people. While the population which is taken into the consideration for national and international debates should be
sensitized and mobilized about their own rights and conditions, every child must be made aware of his/her rights so that he can raise questions regarding his/her exploitation. Asha Bajpai (2003) points that “right to education of any child is clearly a human right”. Education is the basic right of every child. Education is important as it enables the child -

a) To develop and realize her/his full potential as a human being.

b) To develop the ability to think, question and judge independently.

c) To develop a sense of respect, dignity and self confidence.

d) To develop and internalize a sense of moral values and critical judgement

e) To learn to love and respect fellow human beings and nature (Bajpai, 2003).

The perception that poverty is the main cause of child labour is not appropriate in the context of India.

There are many more factors which are responsible for promoting child labour. Due to socio-cultural and traditional reasons, children get engaged in work. If there is a culture of child work in particular area then the economic condition of child’s family has nothing to do with it. Sometimes the child automatically learns his traditional family occupation and make it his career option.

To improve the working conditions and rights of the children. There should be awareness among the parents also. And emphasis should also be given on the awareness of the parents regarding education.
The Government of India has given a particular emphasis on elementary education and on its expansion and it is included in the five year plan of National Programme of ‘Minimum needs’.

“The situation of elementary education is indeed improving (as in most other countries). The pace of improvement is slow. The primary education system in the country is one of the largest in the world

<table>
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This table shows an increasing trend in primary education from 1950 to 1997 (Bajpai, 2003).

1.4 Controversies about Abolition of Child Labour

As there is controversy between child labour and child work, again there are two controversies regarding child labour abolition. There are two lobbies, one lobby emphasizes that the abolition of child labour is possible only through education. The supporters of this lobby are Neera Burra, Shanta Sinha, Pramila Bhargav, Cini Asha etc. According to these scholars, children should get enrolled in educational institutions rather than engaging themselves in work, while the supporters of the second lobby (Sussan Bisell, Kaushik Basu, N.
Van) argue that the earning of child for the subsistence of the family is necessary because their income is a good source of financial assistance to their family. To ameliorate the condition of child labour, the working conditions and wage labour system should be regulated rather than forcing the children in getting enrolled for educational attainment. Because without the financial assistance of these child labourers to their families it is very difficult to maintain their daily livelihood.

1.4.1 Abolition of Child Labour through Education

The followers of this lobby assume that illiteracy is the main cause of persistence of child labour. Children do not attend school, therefore, they engage themselves in economic activity. In India child labour perception is based on poverty. If children will not earn for the assistance of their family then their family may face starvation.

She says that “Abolition of child labour was closely linked with the introduction of compulsory primary education. It is then of course expected that once the legislation is in place, child labour will disappear. Compulsory primary education means that for at least a part of the day children would mandatorily have to remain in school (Burra, 1995).

She further says that compulsory primary education should be strictly implemented because the long term solution of the problem is only education. She adds that “if there is at all a blueprint for tackling the problem of child labour, it is education” (Burra, 1995).

Education used as a weapon to abolish child labour in Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh. She successfully achieved her goal. “In the long run, literacy is the only solution to the problem of child labour. The best way to prevent the
evil of child labour from spreading its tentacles any further is by insisting on primary education and strict family norms” (Bhargava, 2003).

On study of students of central and east Calcutta it is found that inspite of financial constraints, parents send their children to school. “A substantial majority of poor families accept the opportunity to send their children to school and keep these children in school despite the economic burden” (Asha, 2003).

The long term solution to the problem of child labour however, lies in the government passing an act guaranteeing education as a fundamental right to every child. In other words, passing the act on compulsory education, enrolling children in formal schools and retaining them there is probably the best way of withdrawing children from the work force (Kabeer et al., 2003).

1.4.2 Indian Lobby

The proponents of this lobby assume that poverty is the main reason of child labour. Poverty compels the parents to send their children to work as child labour. The main question before the poverty stricken families is of subsistence. The basic need of every human being is ‘bread’. The families who are poverty stricken and have meager income to arrange their daily bread don’t think about sending their children to schools for attaining education. In such conditions, family members are compelled to send their children for child labour as they do not have sound economic condition to spend on education. They want the earning income of their children, whether the amount is less or more.

The followers of this lobby consider that the rights of child labour should be protected and their working condition should be improved. There should be no force on the parents for sending their children to school or for work. This
right should be given to the parents and not to the state or other organizations like NGO’s. Because for their subsistence the income of their children is very necessary. The proponent of this lobby, Susan Bissell, Kaushik Basu and van say that children work out of necessity and without their earnings the standard of living of their families would decline further. They, therefore, argue that it is not easy to eliminate child labour all of a sudden due to the existing socio-economic situation. Regulation of employment in selected industries, improving working conditions, reducing working hours, ensuring minimum wages, providing facilities for health and education could reduce the plight of child labour (Agarwal, 2004).

1.5 Profile of Dari (cotton carpet) Making Industry

In the beginning the process of dari (cotton carpet) making was done manually. Only one dari (cotton carpet) was made in one day by the support of all family. Due to the changes of technology and yarn the quality of dari (cotton carpet) were improved day by day. Earlier there were no industry in Sitapur. In remote areas some people installed, the looms in their own houses. The dari (cotton carpet) hawkers sold the dari (cotton carpet) on the bicycle. The first dari (cotton carpet) making industry established by Makka Mia Hafiz Wajid Ali is no more. Approximately after 27 years of this, actual industry flourished on a large scale. Cotton mats are the main speciality of this industry, woolen mats and shahneel mats (refined form of cotton) are produced on small scale.

Muslim constitute 20-25 per cent of total population in Sitapur. Among the muslims 40 per cent are from the Ansari community, and 80 per cent of them were involved in the dari (cotton carpet) making industry. 10-15 per cent
Hindu population are involved in the *dari* (cotton carpet) making industry. No dalit was found in the *dari* (cotton carpet) making industry.

1.6 Review of Literature

This section deals with the review of some important literature related to the problems of child labour in India. In order to attain an insightful account, various books, articles, periodicals magazines, journals, and other published and unpublished material have been taken up. This is necessary for assessing the magnitude of the problem. Review of literature is an important step of research work which enables the researcher to understand and frame original research problems. Children are important assets of any nation, they are the future citizens, the destiny of a country directly depends on how its children are nurtured to fulfill the requirements of its society. In India, education is the joint responsibility of both the state and central governments, and the constitution of India envisages free and compulsory education for all children till the age of 14. Ironically, in reality, large numbers are deprived of this fundamental right and are subjected to back breaking labour in pathetic conditions. The result is illiteracy – a factor inseparably linked with child labour (Bhargava, 2003).

This section is divided into two parts on the basis of school of thoughts on child labour, child labour is a global phenomenon but it has assumed serious dimensions in developing countries. India, Pakistan, and Bangaladesh account for the highest percentage of child labour in the world. Nearly 25 per cent of the world’s working children are in India. It is difficult to get accurate figures on the working children in India because estimates of the population of working children differ from agency to agency. The estimates of child labour
vary. The difference in their estimation is due mainly to the adoption of different meanings of working children” (Singh, 1997).

The latest statistics show that about 250 million child workers exist in the age group of 5-14 all over the world. A recent survey conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) states that out of these, 61 per cent are in Asia, 32 percent in Africa, and 7 percent in Latin America (Bargava, 2003).

As mentioned earlier, there are two schools of thought. The supporters of the first school of thought suggest that child labour ought to be banned and primary education should be made compulsory. According to them, this is the only way to eradicate child labour, while the supporters of the second school of thought propose that the working condition should be regulated instead of banning child labour and education should be given together with the work, because banning child labour amounts to injustice for the family because the income of the children is necessary for the survival of the child labourer’s families. Therefore, banning of child labour would lead their families into greater misery.

The study further indicates that almost all children like this occupation and very small proportion disliked weaving. The reasons for unliking were that it was poorly paid, on the other hand the most important reason for liking were that the industry offered good employment prospects and opportunities of work for juvenile locally (Kambargi, 1991).

Burra has studied the various magnitudes of child labour in major hazardous industries of India and come to the conclusion that persistence of child labour is mainly due to the illiteracy and she states that
“India is the largest producer of non-school going child workers and most child workers in India are illiterate”.

“In India today, child labour is being justified on the grounds of poverty. If the children of the poor do not work they will starve. It is argued. But a fact that is not being recognized is that child labour cannot be justified in account where there is rampant adult unemployment and under employment.

“Abolition of child labour was closely linked with the introduction of compulsory education. It is then of course expected that once the legislation is in place, child labour will disappear. Compulsory primary education means that for at least a part of the day children would mandatorily have to remain in school”.

There are laws against employing children in factories which need to be strictly implemented and employers employing children strictly penalized. Compulsory education and strict child labour laws will go a long way to remove child labour.

“To a great extent reduce the numbers of children working full time, particularly those working in the rural areas and as part of family labour. If there is at all a blueprint for tackling the problem of child labour, it is education”. (Burra, 1995)

Bhargava has studied the Anantpur district (one of the largest district) of Andhra Pradesh in terms of area. Andhra Pradesh has the highest number of child labourers i.e. 14.3 per cent and the main concentration of child labour is in rural areas i.e. 90 percent. She tried her best to rehabilitate the child labour of the concerned area and she successfully achieved her goal with the establishment of residential camp’s bridge course center (in which she passed the student two classes in one session) and anganwadi cum crech facility. She notes:

“lack of political will, shortage of resources and the misconception that child labour supplements the family
income are some of the primary factors that lead to the failure of compulsory primary education”.

“In India, neither is primary education made compulsory nor child labour considered illegal. Primary education is the most effective way of keeping children from becoming part of the labour force”.

“In the long run, literacy is the only solution to the problem of child labour. The best way to prevent the evil of child labour from spreading its tentacles any further is by insisting on primary education and strict family norms”.

(Bhargava, 2003)

Sinha stated that child labour can only be eradicated through education, and this effort should only be made by every person because education is every children’s right. The author opines:

“Schooling in India is possible if every section of the village community works towards establishing the norm that no child must work and that every child must be in school. In the process schools get defined as institutions for the protection of children’s right against exploitation. School as an institution is strengthened, facilitating children’s access to and retention in schools”.

“The long term solution to the problem of child labour, however, lies in the government passing an act guaranteeing education as a fundamental right to every children. In other words, passing the Act on compulsory Education, Enrolling children in formal schools and retaining them there is probably the best way of withdrawing children from the work force”.

(Kabeer et al., 2003)

India is the largest producer of non-school going children, the government should take some positive step to provide education to every deprived childr. The author further notes:

“Children are deprived of their right to education because the government is unwilling to spend so much on them and their future. Children can be kept away from work only through schools. Schools are not terribly innovative or creative programme and that the government is not
equipped to handle. Increasing the supplies such as more teachers, quality teaching, better curriculum and textbooks alone is not a guarantee for the universalisation of education.

Vidyasagar, Chandra and Reddy studied the involvement of child labour in Markapur’s (Andhra Pradesh) slate industry. About 90 percent of India’s writing states are produced in this industry. The authors opine that child labour in the Markapur state industry is an outcome of the interplay of both demand and supply side factors owing to the labour intensive nature of the industry. It looks out for cheap sources of labour. Since slate making involves various processes like cutting, polishing, framing, packing etc., children are mostly employed as helpers, though the incidence is less compared to mines. Slate making is also done through subcontracting work to household units called “companies” locally. There is no direct contact with the actual mine lease holders for the workers nor do they work as employees. They are treated as subcontractors as each family is allotted a piece of area for mining, and the main leaseholder and sublease holders wash their hands off any responsibility for providing statutory benefits for the worker along with bearing the cost of tools and blasting materials. After laborious work, the actual workers are left with meager earning which forces the entire family to work hard. Thus, the organization of production in mining is an important factor in the continued exploitation of child labour (Singh, Raj and Seker, 2002).

Asha has conducted a study of school children of central and east Calcutta and found out that despite of financial constraints majority of the poor families send their children to school. She observes:

A substantial majority of poor families accept the opportunity to send their children to school and keep these children in school despite the economic burden.

Every child has the right to an education regardless of his or her family’s financial situation. No child should have to work, but low economic status and culture often
interact to force children in the slums to work rather than study.

It is not clear as to which is a determinant factor of child labour. Is it poverty or access to education, because in her study she found that families with poor economic condition also send their children to school.

Families that are extremely poor can, and will adjust in a number of ways to support their children’s education. The limiting factor is for them to have encouragement and access to education. The primary issue in educating these children is giving them access to schools and their parent’s knowledge about education. Resources should be used to build better educational infrastructure in these poor areas. (Kabeer et al., 2003)

Yadav stated in his study that rural areas are the major source of child labour, children migrate from rural areas to urban areas, child labour is not considered illegal in rural areas. He writes:

Occupations depend for their survival on rural migrant child labour, indicating that rural areas are the major source of urban child labour. Child labour in rural areas is not considered exploitative since it is carried out under the protective guidance of parents or elders in the family.

A substantial majority of children in India are those who have never been to school because parents think that educating children is a wastage of time and money, education will not feed their family, but when a child learns any skill, he/she starts earning for their family’s survival, which is most necessary for them. The author notes:

“What comes through loud and clear is that children are working in almost every sphere of economic life, they are exploited both by their parents and by the employer, and above all the child is deprived. The deprivation is of two types; one related to the impact on health, the second concerns educational status (as they) are unable to go to school”.
And again

A significant factor in discouraging children from attending school is child labour and short coming of education system itself. One of the major problems with schooling, however, is its cost. Parent’s education and occupation are likely to have an impact on whether or not they support their children’s schooling. Lack of schooling reduces knowledge about health, environment, family planning etc. (Yadav, 2005)

Vidyasagar and Kumarababu conducted a study to assess the fall-out of legislation on child labour in match making industry of Sivakasi Tamil Nadu. They found that

There were more female children in child labour households than non-child labour households. The juvenile sex ratio is also higher in the child labour household. Match industry depends more on female children than male children. Child labour constitutes about 32 percent of the total workforce in the households with working children. In the sampled household, nearly 46 percent of the workers depend on the match industry and another 33 percent on agriculture.

In the non-child labour households, only 31 percent of them are dependent on match works, while a significant proportion of workers in these household have better paid jobs.

Of the working children about 15 percent are never enrolled in schools and another 62 percent are primary school dropouts. The average monthly income of a child worker is about Rs.600, average monthly income in child labour household is Rs. 2722 while it is Rs. 2116 in non-child labour households. Child labour households earn more than non-child labour household. Only 12 percent of the household is the children contribution less than 10 percent of the total family income. There was no starvation and the general economic standard are relatively better than in many other areas. All
surveyed schools have more than one teacher, However, due to the poor quality of education and better opportunity cost for children’s time at work, parents influence a high dropout rate (Singh, Raj and Sekar, 2002).

*Devi and Geetha* proposes that education is the right way to eliminate child labour and also suggests that, first of all parents should be educated. Only the governmental effort will not be enough to solve this multi-dimensional problem, if parents are educated, they would understand the importance of education. Adult employment should be encouraged also. They are of the opinion that:

“Poverty and child labour feed each other in a vicious cycle. Education is the weapon that breaks this cycle. In order to educate the working children we need to focus upon motivating the parents. Parents have to be educated to understand the importance of schooling. This plays a vital role in determining child schooling and employment. Relying on government alone will not bring success. It should be a joint effort of the entire community. Greater awareness must be created among parents is not sending children for work but rather to school. It is generally because of inadequate income that poor parents have to work at an early age to earn a living. To overcome this, adult employment must be strengthened. This to a great extent can reduce the practice of child labour. If poverty is addressed, the need for child labour will automatically diminish”. (Geetha and Devi, 2005)

Singh also conducted a survey in Mirzapur Bhadoi, carpet industry to find out nature and problems of child labour engaged in this industry. He took carpet weaving centres of Mirzapur district a sample for his study similar to findings of other. Children in this centres belongs to low socio-economic families. Poverty is the main force of motivation. The ages of these children ranges from 9-15 years and they carry the work from dawn to dusk daily. The daily earnings are Rs. 5-10. The rooms are dark and dingy, having no
ventilation and remain full of wool fluff. They suffer from diseases like lung diseases, swollen feet, weak eyesight etc. due to the nature of work and unhygienic conditions (Singh, 1986).

Bhatty suggested that child labour should not be fully taken as a result of poverty but also seen as a result of social attitudes and sensibilities. Education is the surest way to tackle the problem. She writes :

“Child labour is a phenomenon of poverty than of social attitudes and sensibilities. Learning skills through education is a sure way to break the cycle of child labour and low income. Compulsory primary education must be introduced, simultaneous with large scale improvements in the education system. This is undoubtedly the single most effective tool in keeping children away from the labour force. Simply trying to enforce the law through labour inspector is not likely to yield results, as the numerous small scale units that use child labour are highly dispersed and difficult to keep a tab on. Moreover, the law itself has loopholes that can easily be taken advantage of while there can be no substitute for tightening the law and law enforcement machine very, simultaneously adopting the principle of compulsory education could play a decisive role strengthening. (Bhatty, 1996)

Lieten also finds out that

For some it is of indignation at the social injustice which it involves, for others it is a yardstick to come down on irresponsible governments in the third world, and forget others it is a natural consequence of an asymmetrical world economy. Child labour in India when sized down to realistic proportions, remains an ignoble illustration of exploitation and exclusion but a less dramatic illustration than would appear from the exaggerated claims and studies by some western observers. In the tradition of Mamdani, it still often is assumed that children are an economic asset and that the high fertility a conscious household strategy of rural families.
Lieten has studied two villages named Upadhyaypur and Dhanaicha in the district Faizabad of U.P. and come to the conclusion that

A major point that they have established was that the economic rationale of parents behind the adherence to high fertility levels is questionable. The assumption that parents beget children as an investment device, if reflective of reality would suggest that parents foremost are to blame for low literacy and high child labour incidence.

Parents do acknowledge that ideally, in the long run, there are advantages associated with having a reasonable number of offsprings.

Education is a general wish among parents and children, but that the access remains limited due to the ill equipped and ill functioning government schools. It is generally approved that children should be sent to school, but dissatisfaction with the school functioning may induce the child and the parents to forego education of their children, enforcing them to start earning. The dropout factor is more likely to be associated with push factors intervals to the school system than to the pull factor emanating from the labour market. (Lieten, 2000)

Sekar and Mohammad conducted a study on Aligarh lock industry. They find that the manufacturing units are scattered all over the city. The main objective of the study was to analyse the impact of legislation on child labour in lock industry of Aligarh. Seven hundred households with working children and three hundred without working children were selected from eighteen Mohallas. Aligarh’s lock industry is a labour intensive, and there are around 3,000 units employing 1.25 lakh workers. The number of artisans and direct labour involved in this trade is estimated to be 60,000 and the remaining 65,000 are indirectly involved as suppliers of raw materials, sales agents, commission agents, packing and forwarding agents, advertisement agents etc.
Children in the age-group of 6-14 constitute 75.71 per cent of the workforce. 70.5 percent were employed as individual workers and the remaining 29.5 percent were working as part of their families. The incidence of child labour is much higher in the Muslim community because of the existence of home based lock industries in large numbers in the areas where the Muslim population is pre-dominant. This is also because the lock work is a traditional craft of the muslims. The incidence of child labour among Hindus is more common among the upper castes and mostly insignificant in schedule castes, about 80 percent of the family members of child labours and about 57 percent of the family members of non-child labours are illiterate. Approximately 58 percent of the family members of child labours and 50 percent of the non-child labours have been found to be working in the home-based lock industries.

A majority of the households of child labours have entered into their employment at the age of 14-20 years and been working for the last 10 years or so. About 75 percent of all the households are concentrated in income bracket of Rs.500-2000 per month, is a indicative of their poor economic condition. 90 percent households are local resident a small number of households have migrated from adjacent district. 80 percent of all the households have been working in small workshops and at their homes for several years and 99 percent of all the sample households are not aware about laws like the factories act and child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act. Although the percentage of indebtedness is very low, but there is a common practice of taking cash advances, from contractors and employers. Lock work is the primary source of income of almost all the child labours and there is no secondary source of their income. There is a lack of coordination among local level people, voluntary
organizations and government officials. The number of government schools is less than the private schools and most of these schools have less than two classrooms. Financial problems of the households are the main cause for the non-enrolment of children as parents prefer to send their children to earn rather than learn at school (Singh, Raj and Seker 2002).

*Venkatanarayana* suggests that all children out of school should not be considered as a child labourers. This principle shows a wrong picture of the problem i.e. only children out of school were child labourers. This is not true in many places as school going children also work. It is also true that the children may be out of school, but not at work. Child labourers or children out of school should be considered as educationally deprived.

Saying that all-out of school children are child labourers is not convincing because, among other reasons, it sounds as if work and schooling are mutually exclusive activities for children. Referring to them as educationally deprived children is justified from the perspective of human capital development and human rights. Education is a prime requirement for them. Those who are not able to attend school due to economic health or school related problems can be referred to as educationally deprived children. It is justified in the perspective of human capital, human development and human rights. With this objective, we can categorise homogeneously all those out of school children as educationally deprived children rather than child labourers. (Venkatnarayana, 2004)

*Ahmad* carried out an empirical cross country study, and suggested ways to handle the problem:

“Poverty is only a minor explanatory factor behind the incidence of child labour. Poverty ranked last among the seven determinants of child labour in terms of their respective explanatory power.”
School enrolment is a major explanatory factor but this relationship is somewhat blurred as some children could combine work with education and because of the possibility of exaggerated official school enrolment statistics and high school dropout rates. However, the negative relationship between school enrolment and child labour and between adult literacy and child labour confirms the double dividend that can be reaped from free compulsory universal primary education both in the short and long terms”. (Ahmad, 1999)

Burra) suggests from the experience of Shantha Sinha’s work of MV foundation that –

“The elimination of child labour is the responsibility of the education department and not that of the labour department. MVF, through its grassroot level work has shown that the solutions to child labour elimination lies in strengthening the formal school”. (Burra, 2005)

Mathur and Singh have studied the condition of child labourer in gem polishing industry of Jaipur. They found that gem polishing industry is predominantly unorganized by nature, operating through various small workshops situated in residential buildings spread over large areas in the old city. Since the industry is based on the import of rough stones and export of finished products. The number of workers and the child labourers engaged in the industry are at around 60,000 and 13,000 respectively. The very nature of the industry, which requires no knowledge based skill employees, total substitutability between adult and child labour children are mainly engaged in gem grinding and gem polishing. Seven hundred fifty households was taken for the study out of these five hundred household with child labour and two hundred fifty households without child labour. The main purpose of selecting both child labour household and non-child labour household from the same area is to examine the differences in the socio-economic profiles of the
households and find the reasons for some households sending their children to work and others not sending their children to work. The work participation rate of the child labour household is 54 percent as compared to non-child labour household it is only 34 percent. The average monthly income of the child labour household was 4466 whereas the monthly income of the non-child labour household is Rs. 5135. The minimum age of entry into work was six years for both boys and girls in the gem polishing industry. Poverty is an important factor in the area, coupled with a not so meaningful education system, the parents find work to be a viable alternative with better career prospects for their children. Most people in this region are in a state of abject poverty. The workers of this area have very limited employment opportunities. Most of the workers have learnt the skills passed down to them from one generation to the next (Singh, Raj and Sekar, 2002).

*Laskar* carried out a study of child labourers in the lock industry of Aligarh, and observed that financial burden compel children to work. His survey of child labourers in the lock industry of Aligarh reveals that household economic pressures compel children to enter into low wage, hazardous work environment that proves detrimental to their educational and health prospects. He observed that child labour is a phenomenon of poor socio-economic status of a section of society which cuts across communities. In Aligarh, poor section of Muslims who are not able to manage job or livelihood elsewhere join degrading, sub human task in the hazardous and low paying processes of lock making”. (Laskar, 2000)

*Lieten* has stated that “In the drive for universal education all children not in school have been assumed as working children. Such a development is ill
advised as child labour is an aberration that is to be eliminated forthwith. Putting all forms of deprived childhood into one category ‘child labour’ is compounding confusion”. (Lieten, 2002)

Antony and Gayathri attempts to locate the issues in the large context of child rights by reviewing policies and the construct of childhood in India mapping the ambiguities regarding children work and education.

Childhood is a social construct and has variations across culture, time and space. Out of school children comprise of children who are never enrolled and those who enrolled but dropped out. Children at work can be understood on the basis of the regularity of work (full time, part time, seasonal), working conditions (degree of hazard or exploitation), social relations of work (bonded labour, family based farm or enterprise, wage employment) and nature of returns to work (unpaid family labor, payment in kind, piece rate time rate). Some argue that nowhere children are potential child labourers and refer to time use data to justify this claim, others argue that these children are involved in unpaid non-economic or economic activities in their homes such as sibling care, animal tending and family enterprises. The effort to educate one generation can wipe out child labour. Many other lagging human development situations. Investment needed for compulsory primary education estimated at 6 percent of GDP by Kothari commission.

(Antony and Gayathri, 2002)

Thorat and Sadhna states that “higher wages of adult males and females generally help to reduce child labour. It is the income level of the household which matters most in the decision to push the children to work. Government interventions in the form of increased expenditure in rural areas on education and rural development will help to improve the participation of children in education. The percentage of children attending educational institutions and the literacy rate used as impact variables, high per capita agricultural income
presumably helps to reduce the incidence of child labour indirectly through its impact on increased education expenditure and subsequently through improvement in school attendance. The authors suggested that expenditure should be induced on education as well as to improve the rural households income i.e. adult employment should be encouraged. If the financial condition of the households be improved than child labour will be automatically finished. (Thorat and Sadhan, 2004).

Asha has stated in her study that child labour is the main obstacle for children in achieving education. High dropouts, absenteeism and low enrolment were all the result of child labour, she has also observed that the majority of poor families send their children to school and keep their children in school despite their financial burden.

Every child has the right to an education regardless of his or her family’s financial situation, the cost of educating a child is clearly an extremely costly endeavour. Resources should be used to build better education infrastructure in these poor areas. (Kabeer et al., 2003)

Sharma has studied the impact of social labelling on child labour in carpet industry. Social labelling is an initiative to prohibit child labour. The author made an attempt to analyse as to what extent the labelling programmes are able to eliminate child labour. The author opines that :

“The labeling initiative differ widely in their approach, although their broader objective is the same, i.e. elimination of child labour. Despite, a broader common concern, there is no coordination among these labeling initiatives. On the contrary the way the labeling programmes promoting their respective labels indicate a sense of competition rather than coordination. Although organization like RUGMARK and Kaleen, promise to provide child labour free carpets, considering the short comings in the monitoring system, such a guarantee
could be erroneous. In carpet production, there are exporters – contractors – subcontractors – weavers. It is a very complex settings, which make monitoring an arduous tasks. The disorganized nature of production and variation in the level of engagement or the involvement of intermediaries in the production of carpets makes monitoring a gigantic exercise the children work on off loom activities also, and surprisingly the present study did not come across even one instance where off-loom activities were ever inspected. The labeling agencies have concentrated on schooling of children and providing health facilities. However, the educational and rehabilitations programme by these agencies were found to be adhoc in nature. Inspite of widespread corruption at various levels, it seems that legislative measures has been most effective towards reducing the incidence of child labour. It is indeed very important to note that there was remarkable awareness about the child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 and children were aware that if they were caught while working then their parents and the loom owners would be sent to jail. All this has created an environment in which the employment of children is at least feared (Sharma, 2002).

Zachariah has found, in his study, that only one child was enrolled out of eight child, and in case of girl, only one girl was enrolled out of twenty of those who were enrolled in the schools, two thirds dropped out by class V. All these things mainly occurred due to the poor schooling system. He observes :

The major road block in achieving universal elementary education is the absence of quality education in schools. Most of the schools are plagued by child unfriendly pedagogy, poor quality of education, poorly functioning schools, detention of children, corporal punishment, in competency of teachers, teacher’s absenteeism, shortage of teachers etc. (Zachariah, 2005)

Weiner is of the opinion that when employment opportunities grow with the expansion of the country’s consumer industries, the governing middle class may recognize that the country needs a more literate population and therefore
must invest in its children. She also says that the existing schooling system are not able to fulfill the needs of the poor. She notes:

Since existing schools are unable to meet the needs of the poor, parent should not be forced to keep their children in school. It is painfully true that India has not satisfactorily addressed the serious problems in primary education. The lack of trained teachers and the absence of adequate teaching tools, blackboards, play equipment and books” (Weiner, 1996).

**Juyal** conducted a study among the child labourers in the carpet industry of Mirzapur. He points out working conditions, work environment, wages and treatment of the employers towards working children. In his study he estimates about 1.5 lakh children are engaged in different jobs of the carpet industry of Mirzapur. Children are between the age of 5-15 years. He traces poverty as the main force pushing children into the occupation. Mostly children have been found bonded labourers. They are exploited in terms of wages and are paid in terms of dihari system (the number of knots, and 6,000 knots is equal to one dihari) and the earnings are Rs. 5-10 per day. For the first six months the child worker is treated as learner and is paid nothing. The study further reveals that working conditions are very poor and the work place is ill ventilated, dark and dirty. The children are supposed to work there 13-14 hours daily. These working children are prone to various diseases such as weak eye-sight, headache, pain in legs etc. There are no medical facilities. Children are generally ill treated and even beaten up for minor mistakes. Mostly children are found to be illiterate (Juyal, 1987).

**Gupta** conducted a study on the child workers of Mirzapur. He explores similar points and the findings by and large supplement the findings of the
study referred to above. The study reveals that the child labours is engaged in Mirzapur carpet industry belong to poor families having no land or job. Mostly 8-15 years old children have been found working there. These children, as the study reveals, are preferred in carpet knotting due to their nimble fingers. For the first six months, a child is placed under training and is not paid any amount. The working hours are 12 a day. There is no proper arrangement of ventilation and light and the rooms always remain full of wool fuff which the working children inhale. The study further reveals that these children develop disease like weak eye sight, chest problems, cough and they often receive cuts on their fingers. These children are brought from the tribal areas of Bihar by middle men or agents by loaning the money to their parents. These children are illiterate and have no schooling at all. The treatment of the employer is not good (Gupta, 1988).

Another important study regarding child labour condition was conducted by a commission appointed by Supreme Court. The Commission surveyed the carpet weavers in Palamau and Mirzapur-Varanasi-Allahabad. A total of 237 villages were surveyed: 160 in Palamau, 55 in Mirzapur, 14 in Varanasi and 8 in Allahabad district. A total 2569 weavers were interviewed: 104 in Palamau, 1294 in Mirzapur, 137 in Varanasi and 94 in Allahabad. In addition to this the commission interviewed 1620 children: 858 in Palamau and 762 in Mirzapur, Varanasi and Allahabad districts. The report revealed that 72.5 per cent of children surveyed in Palamau and 41 per cent of the total universe surveyed in Mirzapur, Varanasi and Allahabad districts were below the age of 14 years. It further indicated that 60 per cent of the total weavers are children below 14 years of age. The observations revealed that a vast majority of children
belonged to scheduled caste and backward class and were mostly illiterate. The data further revealed that 48.3 per cent of child weavers in Palamau and 50.7 per cent in other districts have taken loan advances. Children have to work at least for six months and in some cases upto one year as trainees. The hours of work are also too much, beyond the capacity of these tender aged children. They usually work 9-12 hours a day. It is also reported that 34.38 per cent of children from Palamau district work for more than 12 hours. These children are exploited in terms of wages. It has been found that 48 per cent of the 850 children interviewed in Palamu get only food and no wages, 37.5 per cent receive one rupee; 8.7 per cent Rs. 2; 1.6 per cent Rs. 3; 3.5 per cent Rs. 4 and only 0.6 per cent 5 rupees per day in addition to food. Same is the case with children engaged in Varanasi-Allahabad-Mirzapur belt. In this region 45.5 per cent get Rs. 2-5; 24 per cent Rs. 7-8; 18.6 per cent Rs. 9-10; and 7.6 per cent received more than Rs. 10 per day. The food whenever given, is deducted from the wages at the rate of Rs. 3 per day.

The report further revealed that these children are ill treated and are not allowed to change their employer. Neither are they free to take leave nor allowed to go home. Medical facilities were seldom available, as only 16.1 per cent children in Palamau received medicine when they fell ill. The cost of medicine was adjusted against their wages. The working conditions were also reported to be alarming. The worksheds were generally conjusted and the ventilation was very poor and the air was laden with wool fluffs. The loom sheds in Mirzapur were found open to air and sun though they had enough light and ventilation but in extreme weather they turned torturous.
Burra conducted a study on the child labours of glass industry of Firozabad. She points has studied working conditions, wages and health hazards. She estimated that 25 per cent workers are children out of the total workforce participation while labour Department estimated that only 13 per cent children were engaged in the industry. It is seen that child labour is so important for the glass industry that if factory owners did not employ children, their production would go down by 25 per cent. Children do all types of jobs in glass factories. They were seen carrying molten glass on a seven foot iron rod called labia from the furnace to the adult workers and back to the furnace. Nearly 85 per cent of the total child labour force was engaged in this activity. Children sit in front of furnaces where the temperature are said to be about 700°C. In many of the factories where the children were drawing molten glass from tank furnaces, in which the temperature was between 1500°C and 1800°C, the face of the child was within six to eight inches from the opening of the furnace. No minimum wages were fixed for the glass bangle workers. Child labour employee justify those harsh conditions on the grounds that the children need to be acclimatized to the intense heat (Burra, 1995).

Sekar conducted a study in the Bidi industry of Uttar Pradesh found that girl child labour constitutes 73 per cent of the total child labour in Beedi industry all over India. Allhabad, Mau, Ghazipur and Azamgarh are the main centres of Bidi manufacturing. Most of the bidi manufacturing takes place at home. Bidi workers are provided raw material and wages are paid on piece rate. Bonded labourers in large numbers also work for contractors hired by the big bidi making companies. The employers are of the opinion that children have amazing grasping power and learn easily. Because an adult can make
2000-2500 bidi in a day and a child can make 4000 bidi in a day. Most of the children engaged as bonded labour are by and large illiterate. Illiteracy level is very high among bonded labourers. Majority of the bonded labourers are from scheduled caste or backward class and they are deprived of education, health care, and even of basic amenities of life such as water, electricity, toilet facility etc. Children were mainly involved in the activities like tying thread on the rolled bidi, closing the upper ends of the rolled bidi, leaf cutting and bidi rolling. Children of bidi industry mainly suffer from the ailment of tuberculosis, bronchitis and cough and back pain and arthritis due to defective sitting posture (Sekar, 2007).

After reviewing the studies relating to first school of thought we now turn to the second school of thought. According to this school children should be permitted to work, because prohibition of work would lead their family into greater problem. However, the working conditions should be regulated and working hours should be reduced.

*Basu* states that it is not a good idea to try to eradicate child labour in one stroke. Some areas are so poor that perhaps the best policy is to allow children to combine some schooling with some work. Indeed, doing some work and earning some money may be the only way that children can afford to attend school. In some of the poorest economies, if we try to eradicate child labour suddenly (whether by law or by a consumer boycott of such products), we may push poor households into even greater poverty and possible starvation. Restrictions should be placed on the number of hours that a child is allowed to work and on the conditions of work (*Kabeer et al.*, 2003).
1.7 Research Methodology

The present study is primarily based on qualitative research techniques. The purpose of this approach is to offer an insightful analysis of a multidimensional problem of child labour. This problem is not the product of merely economic factors but also the interplay of social and cultural factors. In order to delve into the attitudes and values of people qualitative methodology has an edge over quantitative methodology. The data collected through case studies, participant observation methods are supplemented with quantitative data from census, commission reports.

150 respondents and seven cases have been selected for the purpose of study to have an in-depth and all round information covering socio-economic aspect of social life of the respondent. Questions dealing with socio-economic sphere of life that has already been used during the observation and unstructured interview were kept in mind during the investigation of these present cases.

District Sitapur has been chosen as a locale (universe) of the research area, of which Khairabad, Laharpur, Chilwara and Parsendipura and proper Sitapur were chosen for the study as there was a high concentration of child labour engaged in dari (cotton carpet) industry here.

The total population of the district according to 2001 census are 36,19,661 of which total males 19,41,374 and total females are 12,78,207, total child population was 10,15,093 of which 21856 are child workers, 18109 are marginal workers (ILO Census Report, 2001).

Although census 2001 provides data regarding overall child labour in Sitapur district but no statistical data is available on the child labour
specifically engaged in *dari* (cotton carpet) industry. On the basis of some observations, investigations and communication with the people, it was found that significant proportion of the population working as a child labour is mainly engaged in *dari* (cotton carpet) industry. Therefore, the researcher has estimated the population of some particular pockets of Sitapur district, where the large chunk of children is engaged in *dari* (cotton carpet) industry have been chosen as a sample of the population. These areas are proper Sitapur, Khairabad, Chilwara and Parsendipurwa.

### 1.7.1 Sample Selection

The researcher has employed two stage sampling. In the first stage various pockets having high concentration of child labour in carpet industry have been chosen on the basis of purposive sampling to make sample more representative; in the second stage the researcher has employed simple random sampling to choose the respondents from each selected area. Both types of sources of data collection i.e. primary sources of data collection and secondary source of data collection have been used in the present study. Primary source of data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character. Participant observation, unstructured interview and case study method are the primary sources of data. While the secondary source of data, are those which have collected by some one else and have already been passed through the statistical process. Census, various studies of different social scientist etc. are taken as a source of secondary data.