Chapter - I

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

Definition: Children are ideally considered as the centre of love and source of pleasure for the parents and at the same time a valuable asset that shapes the fortune of the nation. A child is supposed to have a moral obligation to provide for the parents in their old age. The child is regarded as an insurance policy by the parents against any eventuality. But the parents also have some sort of moral obligations to the child. The child being the future hope of the family determines the kind of status, the family would acquire in the future course of time.

A healthy child gives birth to a healthy nation. Pandit Jawahar Lal once remarked: "But somehow the fact that ultimately everything depends on 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 and 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". Pandit Nehru was very clear in his mind about the significance of child which was reflected

in his policies of child welfare and more so in his emotional attachment to the children of the world. But the fact remains that the children, the potential wealth of a country, are the most neglected and ill-nourished lot in most of the developing countries of the world. While a considerable percentage of our child population fall prey of death before they reach 5 years of age, millions of those who survive do not even get minimum familial and national support to shape themselves as healthy and effective citizens of the country. On the contrary, when they need all the warmth and affection, they get exposed to the unhygienic and half starved world - sometimes forcibly and sometimes out of compulsion - to eke out their living and to support their families at the cost and risk of their own life. A scientific study of the problem of child labour is necessary to understand its different facts. But prior to that it is important to define the term "child labour".

A generally valid definition of child labour is presently not available either in national or international context. Any such definition turns upon the precise meaning we attach to two components of the term child labour, i.e., 'Child' in terms of its chronological age and 'labour' in
terms of its nature, quantum and income generation capacity. Thus a child labourer is differentiated from an adult worker on the basis of age. The term 'child labour' is, at times, used as a synonym for 'employed child'. In this sense, it is co-extensive with any work done by a child for gain. More commonly the term child labour suggests something which is hateful and exploitative. Francis Blanchard, the Director General of the International Labour Organisation states that "a first problem is one of definition inherent in the notions of 'child work' and 'labour'.

The term 'child labour' has been defined in various ways by various thinkers and organizations. Homer Folk, the chairman of the United States National Child Labour Committee, defines child labour as:

"..... any work by children that interferes with their full physical development, their opportunities for a desirable minimum of education or their needed recreation".


According to V.V. Giri, the late president of India, Child Labour has two aspects. First as an economic practice and secondly as a social evil. In the first context it signifies employment of children in gainful occupations with a view to adding to the labour income of the family. In the second context the term is now more generally used. In assessing the nature and extent of the social evil it is necessary to take into account the character of the job, on which the children are engaged, the dangers to which they are exposed and the opportunities of development which they have been denied. For, a child labourer is as much a child as any other and needs opportunities for growth of his personality. It is only when the dire necessity to work for himself or for supporting his family conflicts directly or indirectly with his growth and education that the social evil of child labour manifests itself.

Child labour is viewed no less a scourge affecting the destiny of the child than his malnutrition or morbidity. However one must take a distinction between child labour and exploitation of child labour. Both are a problem though of different orders. Child labour as distinguished from work experience has mostly negative attributes. Work as direct

fulfillment of child's natural abilities and creative potentialities is always conducive to his healthy growth. But work when taken up as means for the fulfillment of some other needs, becomes insolving in character and deleterious in its impact. The basic attributes of work are purpose, plan and freedom. When they are conspicuously absent, work becomes labour. Child labour assumes the character of a social problem in as much as it hinders, arrests and distorts the natural growth processes and prevents the child from attaining his full blown man-hood. "When the business of wage earning or of participation in self or family support conflicts with the business of growth and education, the result is child labour. The function of work in childhood is primarily developmental and not economic".

The International Labour Organisation states" 'Child labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions damaging to their health and to their Physical and mental development, sometimes seperated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful education and training opportunities that could open up for them a better future".

In India there is hardly any statutory provision which defines the terms "Child labour" in precise terms. Generally age criterion is used to differentiate a child worker from an adult labourer. According to the Article 24, of the constitution, "No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment". A Banglore based group Concerned for Working Children (CWC) also defines child labourer as "a person who has not completed his/ her fifteenth year of age and is working with or without wage/ income on a part-time or full-time basis. The child labour (Regulation and Prohibition Act 1986) defines a child labourer as a person who has not completed his 14 years of age.

Thus child labour in a restricted sense, means the employment of children in gainful occupations which are dangerous to their health and deny them the opportunities of development. Three things therefore are necessary to include employment of a child within the notion of child labour. Firstly, the child should be employed in gainful occupation, secondly the work to which he is exposed must be dangerous. Thirdly it must deny him the opportunity of development.

However, any work taken by a father from his own child on his field or business place, for long hours, is also covered under this definition, but work by students at school workshops cannot be called child labour.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHILD LABOUR

Participation of children in work is not a phenomenon peculiar to our age. It has existed in different forms in every society throughout human history. Child labour has existed from the time immemorial. Children in every society have assisted in the activities characteristic of their social group. "To a greater or lesser extent children in every type of human society have always taken part, and still do take part, in those economic activities which are necessary if the group to which they belong is to survive". The children used to work in family based occupations under the supervision of adult family members who always saw that the work should not exceed the capacity of the child which will have adverse effects on its personality. They used to carefully assign the work - Qualitatively as well as quantitatively - suited to the stage of development of children. Children, in fact, were given apprenticeship training in these family based occupations in the form of

agriculture or family based crafts and trades to prepare them to gradually take up various adult roles. Children used to work without any fear and with full freedom in congenial family surroundings and were given a sympathetic and humane treatment. The work thus was not detrimental to the healthy development but was instrumental in their proper personality growth and development. Children used to be provided with opportunities to prepare them through the actual work training them to take up effectively various responsibilities later on.

Child labour was an accepted part of the economic and cultural behaviour in much of the developed world till the 19th century. Children worked along with their parents doing both domestic and non-domestic work, in agrarian as well as in the cottage industry sectors. There were no social taboos to their working along with their parents and it was accepted that child would learn skills from its parents and thus gets prepared for entry into the adult world. The Industrial Revolution brought about fundamental changes in the mode of production, with concomitant changes in the relations of production. With mechanization, agriculture itself became productive and capital-intensive and those with smaller and not so economically viable holdings were forced to give up their lands and join the ranks of landless
labourers. Many of these marginalised groups worked for the richer peasantry who could afford the capital required for intensive cultivation. But the agrarian sector was not able to absorb the mass of the unemployed proletariat, who then flocked to the cities in search of jobs.

"In the early stages of Industrial Revolution, towards the close of the 18th century, pauper children from London and other towns were put to work in the Cotton factories established in Lancashire and Yorkshire. The atrocities to which these children, housed in horribly overcrowded and insanitary dormitories, were subjected, constitute one of the darkest chapters of the history of child labour". With the advent of steam power, factories were installed in towns and in Coal fields and there also children had to work under deplorable conditions. The Industrial Revolution with its mechanised factory system did not recognise human needs. The factory could run night and day provided there was ample labour to man the machines. For the factory owner, the possibilities of profit were unlimited if he could find a labour force which was exploitable. The net result was that children who had always worked within the family environment, were seen as the key to greater profits because they could not make any demand and could be made to work without

protest. The great demand for cheap labour thus became a demand for child labour. The social evils of child labour were not confined to England alone; they were no less prevalent in Germany, Belgium, U.S.A. and other industrialised countries.

It has been also a tradition in India that children from very beginning have been participating in work both within the family and outside it. In earliest times children used to be engaged in the work relating to grazing of animals and agriculture. There is little evidence about the employment of children for wages, but if child slavery could be regarded as that, the existence of child labour in Ancient India can not be denied. Slaves of tender age, often less than eight years were owned for doing low and ignoble works. Children of slaves took birth as slaves; lived as slaves and died as slaves unless the master liked to release them from slavery.

Children used to work along with their parents in the fields, in family crafts, in domestic and non-domestic works. Children which were sent to ashram, participated in the

domestic chores of the Guru's household. Such schools did not charge fees but the students were expected to contribute their labour towards the running and upkeep of the institution. Among the agriculturalists who then as now formed the largest part of the country's population, the children had specific tasks. Keeping watch on the crops and frightening away the birds and beasts coming to feed on them was their main responsibility. For the children of artisans and craftsmen, education in their craft and skill started early, their families and guilds imparted them the necessary training. "In earlier times children used to work in their family circle. Little by little, through almost unconscious observation, association and imitation, they learnt the role they would be called upon to play as adults. During this process of socialization, of which his on-the-job training formed a part, the child grew to physical and intellectual maturity without ill-treatment and virtually without being exploited, and was simultaneously prepared for adult life. Work of this kind was practically free from harmful effects".

Child labour thus being an age old tradition of our society has existed in one form or the other in all

historical times. What is however, new is its perception as a social problem. In the preindustrial agricultural society of India, children worked as helpers or learners in hereditarily determined family occupations under the benign supervision of adult family members. Familism was the dominant sentiment and 'each for all and all for each' was the general norm that governed the family functioning. The child's interests and welfare were well protected in the family and maximum security was guaranteed in all eventualities.

The social scenario however, changed radically with the advent of industrialization and urbanization. In these conditions there was an unbroken stream of the rural poor migrating to urban centres in search of livelihood. The new habitat provided them survival but reduced their life to a heap of miseries. The family members no longer worked as a team and in caste sanctioned occupations. Children were required to work individually without being given the personal and paternalistic guidance that they used to get in earlier times while working in family undertakings within or outside the precincts of their houses. They now had to perform different types of repetitive, monotonous, unpromising, boring and hazardous jobs and quite often maltreated and exploited.
Factories in India were started about the middle of the 19th century and many children were employed in early cotton, Jute mills and coal mines. Since then the employment of children is continuous inspite of a series of legal and constitutional enactments. While in England and other developed countries, with the enactment of labour laws, the employment of children has become a thing of past. "The stories of exploitation of children in 19th century England could easily be stories about children in India Today". It is surprising the way child labour was brought to be exploited at a time when countries in the west had discovered its evils and were striving to combat it. Labour Investigation Committee rightly remarked: "the black spot of labour conditions in India is the illegal employment of children in certain industries and the legislative measures have met with little success in making the conditions of work of children better".

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CARPET INDUSTRY

Carpet weaving is an age old tradition and the industry is thus long standing and widely dispersed in many countries.


of the world. The hand knotted carpets are as old as the human civilization. Generally speaking one can submit without great risk of contradiction that the carpet has shown in each civilization a very precise degree of evolution. It was around 3,000 years B.C. in the region between Mesopotamia and Mediterranean basin that Textile weaving originated. Having taken birth in nomadic tribes living in tents in the regions between Euphrates and Tigris to Mediterranean basin, deltas of Nile and banks of Volga, the primitive carpet was a result of constant perfection and development over the preceding stages in respect of both design and technique.

The earliest known carpet was discovered in 1949 by the Russian archeologist Rudenko, in a royal tomb at Pasyryk in the Atai mountains on the border of Siberia and outer Mangolia. Most of the researchers are of the opinion that the Carpet may have had its origin in Egypt. It has been found that smooth surfaced Carpets and tapestry were used as far back as 1300 B.C. in Egypt and other parts of the near east.

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Mesopotamians, ancient Iraqis, called Sumerians, came in contact with the Egyptian civilization and learned the art of carpet weaving. Thus the art travelled to Persia through the waves of Sumerian Trade. The Persia was conquered by the Seljukes in the 12th century. The Seljukes had been very sensitive to all arts. In the 16th century, Safavid dynasty came in power and a major development began in the design and technique of carpet weaving. Shah Abbas who ruled Persia between 1550 to 1629 A.D. took special measures to promote the production of magnificent Persian carpets. Being a skilled weaver himself, he established factories all over Persia, not only to cater to the requirement of his new palace at Isfahan but also to meet the increasing demand of carpets in western Europe.

In the 7th century, A.D., carpet weaving received a tremendous boost with the spread of Islam. The Muslim missionaries while carrying the message of Islam to far off areas, carried also the art of carpet weaving to areas like Central Asia and India. The art reached even to China through the famous silk route. The powerful wave of Islamic current took the art to Spain and France in the west. Thus

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19. Ibid, p.3.

the art of Carpet weaving was regarded as the gift of Islam to mankind. Hermann Haack says that "West Europe's intercourse with Asiatic lands was virtually cut off from the time of the fall of Roman Empire until the crusade began at the end of the eleventh century. If very few pile carpets had reached Europe before the time of crusades, it seems that from then onwards the tide of the trade began to turn". The ancient historical evidences indicate that oriental carpet is a product of the cultural interaction and synthesis of some of the main civilizations and religions of the world and Carpet has also flourished in this pot.

In India the Carpet weaving was introduced in the 16th century by the Mughal Emperors. The great Mughal Emperor Akbar (1542-65) brought some Persian weavers and designers to India and established factories at Agra, Delhi, Lahore and Murshidabad. The subsequent Mughal Emperors known for their passion and love for arts and crafts, patronised the carpet weaving. As a result the production of carpets stepped up and produced some of the finest Carpets of superb colour, design and workmanship. The Indian Carpets reached

the west in the 17th Century. The Commercial possibilities of carpet weaving attracted European and American firms, which established their own factories in India at Amritsar and Mirzapur. With the departure of the Moghals this Craft did not get the royal patronage it required for survival. Its rebirth dates back to the first half of the 20th century, when carpet production for export was launched on a commercial scale.

CARPET INDUSTRY IN KASHMIR

Kashmir, being famous for its finest carpets in the country, claims to have introduced this craft into India at the earliest. The art of carpet weaving was introduced into Kashmir by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin who ruled Kashmir from 1423-1473 A.D. The industry flourished for a long time after his reign. But in course of time it decayed and died. It was during the Governorship of Ahmed Beg (1615-1618 A.D.) who was deputed by Jahangir to Kashmir, that Carpet industry was revived. During his period, a Kashmiri Muslim named Akhun

Rahnuma went to Mecca to perform Haj. On his way back he visited Persia. He got interested in Carpet weaving, picked up the art and started the industry in Kashmir. During the Mughal period the Kashmiri art was well developed and reached a high level of workmanship. All this was possible because Mughals took keen interest in Kashmir products and encouraged the carpet industry in every possible way. With the deterioration of Mughal period, the industry received a setback as the patronage of the Princely houses was no more available.

It was during the reign of Maharaja Kanjit Singh, the creative urge and instinct of Kashmir craftsmen manifested itself in designing of new patterns of carpets. The beautiful natural sceneries of Kashmir particularly Fauna and Flora soon found an expression involving and developing new designs of carpets. It is said that when a carpet, a master-piece of art, which depicted the natural beauty of Kashmir, was presented to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who had never visited Kashmir, produced such a magical effect on his mind that he roled himself into the Carpet with joy. Thus this carpet

27. Ibid, p.571.


fascinated many rich people and a regular demand for carpets was created. The carpets then were sent to Exhibitions abroad which arouse great interest. One of the finest carpets produced (having 700 knots per square inch and a silk warp) for Maharaja Gulab Singh was also exhibited in Great London Exhibition 1851. This was a turning point in creating market for Kashmir Carpets in the west. The exhibitions held at various places in the world attracted the attention of foreign commercial houses towards the Kashmir Carpets and created possibilities of producing carpets for overseas market. Chapman was the first person who attempted the organization of carpet production in Kashmir in 1876. In 19th century when Shawl industry lost its ground, the shawl bafs (Kani shawl weavers) who were jobless at that time switched over to Carpet weaving. These weavers introduced the 'Taleem' method of design writing, previously used in 'kani' shawl industry. At this time many foreign firms established their branches in Kashmir to harness the full potentialities of the export trade of carpets. However the real breakthrough was made by two Europeans namely C.M.


Hadow and Mr. Mitchel who gave this industry a new shape.

Sir Walter Lawrence, the then settlement Commissioner of the state writes:

"Many of the survivors of the famine of 1877-79 have now found occupation in the manufacture of carpets. Three Europeans carry on business in Srinagar as the manufacturers of Carpets. Their work is of good quality and apparently they can with difficulty keep pace with the orders which they receive from India and Europe. There is now no attempt to manufacture the costly though spurb rugs in which the shorten wool was used and in Srinagar looms consume wool imported from India or wool locally produced. Srinagar has a formidable rival in Amritsar where a large colony of Kashmiri weavers is settled and considerable capital is employed in the manufacture of carpets".

33. Ibid, p.11.

The period from 1919 to 1929 was the boom period. Kashmir used to produce high class carpets meant for the American market. It was adversely hit by the great depression of 1929. Because of financial crisis, America raised high Tariff walls against the Indian carpets and this produced a crisis in the carpet industry of Kashmir. The demand came to a standstill and the labour was thrown out of employment. But with the help of Britain and other European countries and the timely action of the state government which granted a subsidy on the export of carpets from 1932 the industry got further boost. It again received a setback in 1947, due to the partition of the sub-continent. A few skilled weavers from Srinagar went to Pakistan and established their units there. The British manufacturers were forced by circumstances to leave Kashmir. These foreigners sold their factories but their successors could not run the factories on sound basis resulting in the reduction in production and export.

After 1947, a large number of local manufacturers got involved in Carpet industry and tried to revive the industry. Among these are M/s Indo Kashmir Carpet Co., M/S Gulam Mohi-ud-Din and Sons and M/s Modern Carpets etc.

These manufacturers tried to give a new direction to the carpet industry and original persian designs and local designs were introduced and industry started showing the sign of revival. From 1970 onwards, due to a number of reasons the production exports and employment share of industry increased gradually. It was due to the fact that shah of Iran set in motion the Petroleum financed era which brought about a distinct shift in Iranian Economy. The state discouraged carpet weaving due to employment of children. Subsequently child labour was banned and as a result the production of carpets decreased. To fill up this vacuum, Kashmir Carpets were found suitable as Kashmir was the only place which could produce finest quality oriental carpets comparable to Iranian Carpets in terms of design, colour combinations, weaving texture and silk. Thus to cope with the demand for carpets, a massive carpet weaving programme was launched by state and central Government organizations. As a result the industry expanded tremendously and was geographically dispersed into the rural areas of the state. The production and exports of silk carpets for the first time, increased significantly during this period which continued till 1980.


38. Ibid, p.17.
From 1980 onwards the industry started facing the market depression. The value of carpet exports declined from Rs. 26.80 crore in 1980-81 to Rs. 22.20 crores in 1983-84. The reasons for this depression are much more as economic recession in Western Europe and America, the deterioration of quality due to inadequate training to weavers, competition from other leading carpet producing countries. Within the country itself Kashmir carpets face growing competition from Mirzapur Bhadhoi carpet belt. In addition to all these factors, the present situations of the valley are not conducive for promoting the quality of the carpets. Thus industry has got a tremendous setback after 1989. It is not possible neither for the weavers nor for manufacturers to look after the quality of the work in this period of uncertainty.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Children are universally recognised as the most important asset of any country. The future of a society depends on how well the children reared and trained to fulfill their adult roles. In societies where sheer survival is beset with difficulty, children suffer in respect to their development and growth. The absolute poverty of parents compels children, on the one hand, to work and, on the other, parents have no time to look after their well-being. Several studies have been conducted by different researchers to know and understand the problems and conditions of child labourers engaged in various occupations. These studies are not only of academic interest but also depict the miserable conditions of would be citizens of a free country. A drive through these studies would reveal the grim reality of life which a child endures round the year.

The Ministry of labour, Government of India appointed a committee on child labour which surveyed the carpet industry of Jammu and Kashmir. The report of the Committee reveals significant information about the child labourers and acquaints us with the vicious forms of exploitation. In Jammu

and Kashmir according to the report, there are 6,500 children aged between 8-10 years engaged in carpet weaving. These children have to work for at least 8 hours a day and are paid Rs. 80 per month. These children work in looms under the instruction of master craftsman. There are 150 carpet training centres in the valley run by the All India Handicrafts Board, each centre has 50 apprentices getting a stipend of Rs. 60 per month. In addition to these centres, the state handicrafts department also operates 60 other such centres out of which 20 have been converted into production centres. The report describes the story of a carpet weaving centre situated in Truckroo village about 40 km away from Srinagar. The centre employs children between 8-14 years of age which start work at 10 in the morning till 6 in evening with one hour lunch break. In addition there are a number of private carpet weaving centres in which the working conditions are worst. There are no fixed work hours. According to the report the average earnings of these children are Rs. 30 to 40 for a square foot of carpet or a rupee to one and a half for ten thousand knots. These children are exposed to variety of diseases such as lung ailments, cough etc. caused by continuous inhaling of wool fluffs. They also suffer from weak eyesight and pain in back and legs.
Nazir Ahmad Shah also studied the child workers engaged in the unorganised sector in Kashmir valley. The various occupations included in the study are carpet weaving, paper machie, hotels and dhabas and household servants. Shah took a sample of 200 child labourers: 100 were selected from carpet weaving, 70 from paper machie; 20 from Hotels Dhabas workers, and a sample of 10 child workers was taken from the children working as domestic servants.

Shah presents the magnitude of child workers engaged in these sectors. His observation reveals that child labour comprises 52.79 percent of the workers in carpet weaving; 51.27 per cent in paper machie; 63.12 per cent in Hotels and Dhabas and 65 per cent in domestic services. Sex composition in carpet weaving is 15 females to 100 males; in paper machie 12 females to 100 males. The study shows that female child workers are concentrated only in carpet weaving and paper machie. Regarding the age distribution the study shows that in carpet making 76 per cent of the sample is in the age group of 8-14 years and 24 per cent are below 8 years of age. Among the paper machie child workers 77.14 per cent are between 8-14 years while 22.86 percent are below 8 years of age. Among Hotels and Dhabas boys 20 per cent are between 6-8

years and 80 per cent are more than 8 years of age and in domestic servants 40 per cent are below 10 years and 60 per cent between 10-14 years of age. Shah finds poverty and the absence of adult wage earner as the main cause of child labour. Among the carpet weavers 62 per cent gave this reason and remaining 38 per cent gave reasons like family tension, ignorance of parents etc. as the main cause to take up job. Same is the case with paper machie workers as 64.29 per cent gave the reason as inadequate family income and absence of adult wage earner. The hotels and household boys also depicted the same story as among these 80 per cent gave the same reason. The study further reveals that children workers are exploited in terms of wages and Carpet weavers are paid Rs.5-15 per work day; paper machie Rs.5-10; hotels and Dhabas boys get Rs. 3-7 per day and household servants get wages as Rs. 200-350 per month. The working conditions are very poor and highly hazardous. The working hours are as long as 12 hours a day during summer and nearly 10 hours in winter with one hour lunch break. The parents of these children as depicted by study, take advances from employers and mortgage their children. The study further shows that 69 per cent in carpet weaving, 77.14 per cent in paper machie, 85 per cent in hotels and dhabas, and 90 per cent among domestic servants are illiterate. Mostly children are school dropouts. The work has very bad effect on the health and physique of the
children. These children are prone to various diseases like, weak eyesight, pain in legs, vitamin deficiency which leads to anemia resulting in the poor physical as well as mental growth.

The committee on child labour has studied the child workers in handloom industry. Three states viz., Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal were selected and important Centres were surveyed. The report says that a large majority of children are engaged in these states in handlooms industry. In chinalampatti, 10 per cent and in Kerala 9 per cent of the total work force are children. The children were found working along with their parents. The report reveals that no minimum wage is fixed for children. In Tamil Nadu children earn Rs.2-3 per day and a child engaged in weaving is paid on piece rate basis and earns Rs.10-15 per day. In Kerala children usually earn Rs.1-2 per day. In West Bengal Children were found working after the school. Their monthly income ranges from Rs.30-100 depending on the quality of the product. It is also reported that there are no fixed working hours. Children generally work 9-10 hours per day. In house based units, children have been seen working since

early morning till late night depending upon the pressure of the work. In West Bengal children work only in spare time. It is West Bengal only where some working children are found literate.

42. B.N. Juyal conducted a study among the child labourers engaged 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 that about 1.5 lakh children are engaged in different jobs in the carpet industry of Mirzapur. Children are between the age group of 5-15 years. He traces poverty as the main force pushing children into this occupation. Mostly children have been found bonded labourers. They are exploited in terms of wages and are paid on 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 condition is very poor and the place of work 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 as weak eye-sight, headache, pain in legs etc. There are no

42. B.N. Juyal, "Child Labour and Exploitation in Carpet Industry. Indian Social Institute, Delhi, 1987."
medical facilities. Children are generally ill-treated and even beaten up for minor mistakes. Mostly children are found to be illiterate.

Another study concerned with the child workers of Mirzapur is conducted by Subhadra Sen. 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 labourers 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 knoting due to their nimble fingers and cheapness. 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 fluff which the working children inhale. The study further reveals that these children develop diseases like, weak eye sight, chest problems, cough. They often receive cuts on their fingers. These children are brought from the tribal areas of Bihar by a middle-men or agents by loaning the money to their parents. These children are illiterate and have no schooling at all. The treatments of the employer is not good.

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Janak Singh also conducted a study in Mirzapur Bhadohi belt carpet industry to find out the nature and problem of child labour force engaged in this industry. He took Carpet weaving centres of Mirzapur district as sample for his study. Similar to the findings of other studies, the children in these centres belong to low socio-economic families. Poverty is the main force of motivation. The ages of these children range from 9-15 years and they carry the work from dawn to dusk daily. The daily earnings are Rs.5-10. The looms are dark and dingy having no ventilation and remain full of wool fluff. They suffer from diseases like lung diseases, swollen feet, weak eye sight etc., due to the nature of work and unhygienic conditions.

The study conducted among the Sari and Carpet weaving centres in Gauriganj area of Varanasi district is of Ramesh Menon. Menon finds that child labourers hale from very poor families and are mostly in the age bracket of 6-16 years. These children who come from nearby villages and other states are recruited through contractors. The working looms are ill ventilated having no proper lightening system. The wages are very low and normally child worker earns Rs. 6-8


45. Menon, Ramesh, "The wages of Innocence" India today, Feb. 15; 1986.
per day. Bonded child labourers are also found there. The child labourers are ill-treated and are beaten and scolded even for minor mistakes. The working conditions pose serious health hazards and develop various kinds of diseases due to inhaling of fluff and dust of cotton, silk and wool. These tender age children are preferred because of their quickness and cheapness.

Another important study regarding child labour conditions is conducted by a commission appointed by Supreme Court. The commissioner 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 of 2569 weavers were interviewed: 104 in Palamau, 1294 in Mirzapur, 137 in Varanasi and 94 in Allahabad. In addition to this the commissioner 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 percent of the total weavers are children below 14 years of age. The

observations revealed that a vast majority of children belong to scheduled caste and backward class and were mostly illiterate. According to the data 88.9 per cent children in Palamau and 76 per cent in other three districts were completely illiterate. The data further revealed that 48.3 per cent of child weavers in Palamau and 50.7 percent in other districts have taken loan advances. Children have to work at least for six months and in some cases up to 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 also 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 rupee one; 8.7 per cent Rs.2; 1.6 per cent Rs.3; 3.5 per cent Rs.4 and only 0.6 per cent rupees 5 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 detected 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 they are free to take leave or 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 are 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 conditions they turned into hell.

The carpet industry of Rajasthan is also very famous for its fine and medium quality carpets. This industry also employs children in a considerable number. Manju Gupta conducted a study on the carpet weaving children in Rajasthan which is more concentrated in the areas like Jaipur, Tonk, Sihar and Bikaner. In these areas according to a rough estimate 6,000 carpet looms are in operation employing 30,000 people. There is no record regarding the number of child workers but it is estimated to be 40 per cent of the total work force. Generally weavers are Muslims

47. Gupta, Manju, op.cit., pp. 35-49.
or belong to scheduled castes. These children work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. with an hour's lunch break and one day off a week if working in a factory. The average earnings are Rs. 150-300 per month from which contractor deducts his commission at the rate of 15 per cent. The working conditions in family-run units are pathetic. The looms are usually set up in courtyard which is open. During the rains it is covered by jute or plastic covering. The children start learning the craft at the age of 5 or 6 years and after that they are put to work on the loom daily. Some families send their children to school in the morning and make them work on looms after the school hours. But generally most of the children are put to work instead of being sent to school.

The condition in organised factory type unit is slightly better. In these units majority of the children has been found in the age group of 8-14 years but some children are below eight years of age. The working hours are same as in family run units. No medical facility is available. The tedious work adversely affects their health. These children suffer from chest diseases, cough and eye problems.

The study conducted by Ramesh Kanbargi among child workers in Carpet factory of Bhadohi is also of great

significance. The study reveals the facts similar to other studies. 49 children were taken as sample for study whose ages were 7-15 years. It is worth noting that children are preferred due to their nimble fingers and keen eyesight which is essential for accuracy. These children are mostly migrants from Bihar and other districts of U.P. Most of children are scheduled caste but Muslim and Tribal Community children are also working there. They come from very poor families having hardly a home to live in. Children are employed through agents who get them after payment of advances to their parents. The study further reveals that Government itself has set up nearly 200 training centres and in each centre there are 50 trainees getting Rs.100 per month. In Private weaving units a child is treated as a learner for first six months and is paid no wages. There are no fixed working hours and children had to work at least for 12 hours a day with one to one and a half hour break for nashta and lunch. The wages were paid to their parents. No paid holidays were provided. No recreational facilities are present in the work units. Food is provided in some factories and the cost of the food served is deducted from their wages at the rate of Rs.75-100 per month. The food consisted of roti and dal and meat and rice are occasionally supplied.
Education is very poor. Out of 49 children interviewed only 6 had schooling up to 4-5 years and the rest were effect illiterate. It is because of the lack of interest in studies and poor schooling facilities. It has been reported that in a school survey there were 30-35 students and the teacher was only one who had to look after and teach to all the five grades. The health conditions of these children are also poor. They are prone to various diseases as eye fatigue and illness, cough and allied diseases like tuberculosis. These risks are aggravated by other factors such as inadequate light, absence of windows and ventilation, dirt floors and lack of washing facilities. The study further indicates that almost all children like this occupation and a very small proportion disliked weaving. The reasons of unliking were that it was poorly paid. On the other hand most important reasons for liking were that the industry offered good employment prospects and opportunities of work for juvenile locally.

Apart from these studies several studies have been conducted on child labourers engaged in other jobs as well. These studies depict the pathetic situations in which these children work through out a 10-12 hours day. Some reports of the committees set up by the Government also reveal the grim
reality of these children. Simitu Kothari studied the match producing factories of Sivakasi and presented the profile of the child workers. The study estimates the total workforce to be 1 lakh out of which 45,000 are children. These children either work in their own villages or are brought by organised transport to the small factories situated in and around Sivakasi. These children start their day between 3-5 a.m. and are back from their work place between 6-9 p.m. Children are recruited through agents who pay advances to the parents. It is further revealed that children are between the age group of 3 1/2 years to 15 years. Girls outnumber boys by 3 to 1. The working conditions are detrimental to the physical and mental health. Children used to work in cramped situation with hazardous chemicals and inadequate ventilation. Mostly children were found illiterate. Out of the 4181 children surveyed in 16 factories, 3323 (79.48%) are illiterate. Only 474 (11.34%) were educated up to primary school level. Dropouts were 384 (9.2%). Earnings of younger children i.e., 4-10 years of age are Rs.2 per day while older children earn Rs. 6-7 a day. Children are prone to frequent accidents in addition to other diseases but no medical facility is available.

Similar story is of the children working in Glass factories of Firozabad. Neera Burra surveyed the glass factories and presented a detailed report about the horrifying conditions of the child workers. It has been estimated that nearly 50,000 children below 14 years of age are engaged out of a total work force of nearly two lakhs. Though the official estimates are far behind this number. Children are involved in almost all kinds of processes in bangle making. Children sit in front of furnaces where the temperature is said to be about 700 °C and in some factories the temperature is 1500 °C to 1800 °C in the furnace from which molten glass is taken out by children of tender age. The floor of the work place was found strein with broken glass and naked electric wires were seen everywhere. The noise in these factories was deafening and there was hardly any space to move without bumping into some body. The children are prone to many diseases in addition to frequent accidents. They are preferred because of their cheapness and quickness.

Debasish Chatterji also finds the conditions and environment of glass factories pathetic and miserable.


Children have to work in extremely hot temperature that endangers their health and life span. These children generally inhale silica dust—an essential raw material, and Carbon dust which cause asthma, bronchial spasm and a host of other respiratory diseases. They work at a stretch throughout the day with a lunch break of only 15 minutes. For such hard work they get Rs.16 a day. The irony is that the owner refuses to employ workers on permanent basis.

Lock Industry of Aligarh is well known for its locks. At the same time it is worth noting that it is also very famous with regard to the employment of tender aged children. Neera Burra studied the lock industry of Aligarh and estimated that nearly 7,000 to 10,000 children below the age of 14 years work in this industry for more than 12 hours, inhaling vast quantity of metal dust and emery powder and earn only Rs.5-10 per day. These children generally work on hand presses, electroplating, polishing pieces on buffing machines, in spray painting units, and in the assembling and packing of locks. All these processes are dangerous and hazardous. Children often met with accidents and loose their hands and fingers in hand presses. Inhalation

of chemical fumes in buffing and polishing process also effects badly the health of these child workers. The lock industry is generally based on cottage centres situated in homes where there is no check on working conditions, hours of work or wages. Children generally work till late night.

The wages are not uniform and the payment is made on piece rate basis. Generally children earn Rs. 5-10 in electroplating, Rs. 15 a day in polishing for 12-15 hours day. According to the workers a child earns on an average Rs.50 a month after an initial period of apprenticeship. After a few years he starts earning Rs.125-150 per month for a 9 hours work day. There were no medical facilities provided to these children.

Another study was conducted by Neera Burra on the plight of child workers engaged in Gem stone industry of Jaipur. She found that more than 13,000 children below the age of 14 years are working as apprentices in the gem polishing industry of Jaipur out of a total labour force of 60,000 workers. 85 per cent of which comprises of Muslims and the rest 15 per cent are Hindus. The study reveals that there are two categorises of working children. First is of those

working full time from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. These are lowest in the economic status. In this category children between 6-10 years do the job and are illiterate. In the second category children belong to families who have a fairly steady income. Parents of these children are engaged either in the industry or do service in government or other private organizations. These children go to school and work for about 4 hours a day after school. Their age ranges from 10-14 years. It is surprising that children of artisans who earn more than Rs.1000 per month do not work but go to school. They enter the craft after completing the schooling and certainly not before 15 years of age. Children are generally recruited as apprentices by Master Craftsmen, Ustads, Exporters and Traders and are treated as apprentices for about first one to one and a half year as learner and do not get any wage. They work at least 10 hours a day. Ustads by involving children in these occupations save the wages of adult workers i.e., Rs. 150-200 per month. After 1 year or one and a half year the Ustad starts paying a child Rs.50 a month and occasionally gives him old clothes, tea and sometimes even food. Once the child spends 3-4 years in the craft and learns more facets, he works for at least 300-400 rupees, but he may get Rs.100 a month along with old clothes and food. By the age of 14-15 years when he is fully
trained, he earns Rs.150-200 a month whereas an adult is paid Rs.500-600 for the same job.

The gem polishing industry is seen as a means of upward mobility by many people because the adult wages of Rs.20-25 a day are higher than in most of the industries in that area. The children of casual workers are sent primarily because their parents had such a hard life and uncertain income that they see the gem industry as a means of escape for their children. Some of the children are sent to work in order to enter the industry. Children of artisans are sent to work after school because they feel that child should learn hard working and be industrious at an early age. These children find it tough going and this is reflected in their school performance.

Prayag Mehta studied the Bidi industries of Vellore in Tamil Nadu and presented an informative report on the exploitation of child workers, their working conditions, socio-economic background and health hazards. The study reveals that poverty is the main reason which forces the parents to send their children to work. Children between the age group of 5-14 years are engaged in bidi making in and

around Vellore. The work is done both in houses as well as in factories and the daily hours of work are 10-12. Mostly children are bonded labourers because their parents take loan from the employers. These bonded labourers are at the disposal of the money lenders or employers who make them work too long. They are even beaten up and ill treated. It was also observed that the children as well as their parents are illiterate, the seth or money-lender cheats them by keeping no record of the money paid back. If the parents want to take their child off, the employer demands full money even after 2 or 3 years. The study further reveals that children working there often get habitual of bidi smoking and develop the diseases like tuberculosis.

Asha C. Rajan S. and Usha Rani H.S. studied some silk reeling centres and the focus of study were the child workers. An attempt was made to study their working and employment conditions. The researchers found that there are around 311 registered silk reeling factories and each of these have on an average 16 basins employing around 25 labourers almost entirely children in the age group of 8-14 years. The study is based on an empirical data and a sample

of 100 out of over 6000 working children was selected. Apart from these children their parents were also interviewed to identify the socio-economic causes behind the work of these children. The doctors of the area and employers were also contacted to obtain information about the diseases and the working conditions made available to them.

The study reveals that 80 per cent of the sample selected were girls. It is because of the fact that boys are preferred over girls in providing education and girls are sent to work in their childhood. Among these 80 girls 90 per cent are in the age group of 8-12 years. Regarding the tenure of employment the study reveals that all the children were working for more than 2 years continuously except for short breaks of 2-3 weeks during the busy agricultural season. These children were not having enough food to eat. 85 per cent of the girls did not have any thing to eat at lunch and 20 boys and 15 per cent girls had something to eat. The younger children are paid Rs.5.50 per day while the older children engaged as reelers are paid Rs.8 per day as their wages. No specified working hours are stipulated and children are made to work for about 10 hours a day. They also work overtime and are paid Rs. 2-3 per 2 hours. The working conditions are miserable and unhygienic. The entire area was polluted with allergents and the ground was damp as a result
they get various diseases like allergic dermatitis, fungal dermitites, bronchial asthma and allergic bronchitis. The girl workers were more prone to diseases because of their poor nutritional status and in due course of time these girls become victims of T.B.

The children are made to work in poorly lit, dingy and ill-ventilated rooms. No medical facilities are available in these units. The study also reveals that according to the doctors, "apart from the upper respiratory track diseases which is a common ailment in children, 10 percent of the children they treated, had usual infections as fungal and allergic dermitites, 5 per cent with allergic bronchitis and 1 per cent asthma. 80 per cent of the patient children were girls". The doctor said that as long "as the children keep working in these units, no medicine can be effective".

S.H. Venkatraman studied some units of hosiery in Tiruppur in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. It is estimated that nearly 10,000 children are working in hosiery factory of Tiruppur. The study reveals that poverty is the main cause behind child labour. Children below the age of 14 years are working 9-10 hours per day and are paid meagre wages of Rs.3-4 per day. Initially when the child starts

work, he is treated as learner for six months for which he is paid nothing. Most of the children are found the school dropouts and have attained education upto 5th level. Children are prone to diseases due to inhalation of cotton dust floating in the air. They get diseases like respiratory problems and tuberculosis. About 50 per cent of the child workers suffer from these diseases in the units under study.

Nirmal Mitra describes the conditions of child workers engaged in slate industry. The study reveals that all the workers suffer with silicosis due to the fact that they work in dangerous atmosphere for their livelihood. The exploitation in slate factories is of highest degree. The workers generally get inhuman treatment. No facility is provided to them and even for their wages they have to beg the Munshis. Mitra describes the behaviour of these Munshis as:

"the Munshis treat the workers like beasts to burden, to be used and abandoned. There is no place for any one who has worked too long in a dusty factory, for by them he is weak and breathless, waiting to die. Only

young teenagers, healthy boys and girls as yet unaffected by any disease. Catch the munshi's eyes. They are forced to replace their parents on jobs. To the workers this fate is unescapable; they have no other option but to survive on piece rates. Agriculture provides only occasional respite and even so, is hardly paying. Work on opium cultivation brings rupees 2-4 per day, and on the wheat fields, about the same amount".

The researcher visited the villages of Multanpur, Piplia Mandi, Bahi Parasnath Kangheti and Botalganj of two tehsils Mandsaur and Malhal of district Mandsaur. According to him the factories are "the torture chambers of various dimensions, many of them poorly ventilated filled with silicon dust".

Minu Jain and Bhavdeep Kang describe the working conditions prevailing in the steel units of North Delhi industrial area. It is found that 15-20 people are employed

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in every unit out of which 3-4 are children. The work of these children is to wash the steel plates in acid. Children below 14 years of age are engaged in this work day and night. They work 8-12 hours a day and are paid Rs.300-350 per month. The acid fumes are unscarable and continuous inhaling creates much problems for the workers especially children. They by and large cause bronchitis and spasmotic cough. Burns are the obvious results of handling the chemicals and frequent handling of Corrosive acid without adequate protection is very dangerous to life. In case any accident takes place, the worker injured does not get any compensation. No medical facilities are available.

The problem of child labour is not a concomitant of modern society only. In fact, the problem has been there since the very dawn of human civilization. The reasons and factors responsible for this are varied and have been changing as the years passed on. Over the years, the child labour has travelled from local forums and platforms to the inner circles of legislative, executive and judicial chambers where its manifestations and ramifications are being debated and discussed. The industrial revolution coupled with the changing life styles have added new dimensions to the problem. Today, as a matter of fact, the problem is widespread and is not a characteristic of any particular type
of economy. It is present even in highly advanced countries of the world, though in a disguised form. However the plight of children working in the unorganised sector is more deplorable.

Owing to the existence of large number of small units scattered in isolated parts of the state, it is difficult though not impossible to arrive at a correct estimate of children working in these units. The children are engaged in cottage industries like Handloom weaving, Carpet making, Paper-machie, small work-shops, Repair shops, Hotels and Dhabas, transport and Domestic Servants. Children working in these occupations are not only exploited but even brutally abused and physically assaulted.

Carpet Industry engages a highest proportion of working children in the state. These child workers are prone to various health hazards and are exploited and ill treated by the employees. The purpose of this study is to assess the plight of these child worker and to bring to light the manifold types of exploitations and abuses which they are subjected to. Some studies have already been made regarding the social and working conditions of child workers in unorganised sector in Kashmir but they have also included other occupations as well. For instance studies are conducted by Kitchloo 1986, Mir 1989, Shah 1992. The present study
has been restricted to only one segment of the unorganised sector i.e., Carpet industry. This study will present a real picture of working children in Carpet industry and various Vicissitudes to which they are exposed. Further, the aspirations and perceptions of the child workers are also a part of the study which is lacking in earlier studies.