Chapter I

Introduction
1.1. Introduction

The problem of child labour has become an issue of great concern in recent times all over the world. The alarming growth of child labour, particularly in developing countries, has attracted the attention of governments, national and international social organizations and social scientists. A large number of children of tender age are being exploited, and compelled to work for long hours for low wages and under conditions damaging to their health, and to their physical, social psychological and mental development. Millions of children are thus being deprived of their healthy childhood.

Though child labour is a global phenomenon, its incidence is more acute in the less developed countries. It has been rightly observed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), that child labour is essentially a problem of development. It is a phenomenon deep rooted in economic and social conditions. The exploding population, industrialization and increasing urbanization have aggravated the problem of child labour.

Work by children in India is not a new phenomenon. In the preindustrial era also, children were engaged to work in agricultural and trade occupations, cottage industries and in artisan and craftsmen operations. But the work performed by them was not so arduous. It formed a part of their socialization and training process. Children, who assisted their parents in agricultural operations like keeping watch on the crops, cattle, etc. and in other family economic activities, would combine their limited work roles with recreation and education.

Child labour was found to be cheaper and easily available. Thus began the exploitation of the child labour. Children do not strike or disrupt production. They are also the easiest to dislodge in times of economic difficulty. Children are the cheapest
to hire and easiest to fire and they do not resist. The exploitation of children in the labour market continues to go unnoticed and the public apathy allows it to be perpetuated. One of the striking features of the problem of child labour is its invisibility.

1.2. Concept of Child Labour

'Child labour' implies something different in which young people are being exploited, or overworked or deprived of their rights to health, education or just to childhood. It impairs their health, their overall physical, mental and social growth. A distinction is often made between child work and child labour. 'Child Work' refers to occasional light work done by children which in most of the societies is considered to be an integral part of the child's socialization process. While helping parents at home and in family farms, children learn to take responsibility and pride in their own activities, acquire certain skills and prepare themselves for the tasks of adulthood. The distinction between both child work and child labour may be briefly stated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Work</th>
<th>Child Labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light work (children learn to take responsibilities)</td>
<td>Hard &amp; hazardous work, exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect of Children's right to health &amp; education</td>
<td>Deprivation of rights to health &amp; education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Constant &amp; for long hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Illegal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3. Definition of Child Labour

A comprehensive definition, taking into account the consequences of labour on children, has been provided by the International Labour Organisation, according to which "Child labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions damaging to their health and their mental
development, often separated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful educational and training opportunities that could open up for them a better future.

Age is regarded as an important criterion for distinguishing child labour from adult labour. The Operations Research Group based in Baroda defines child labour as: “A working child is one who was enumerated during the survey as a child falling within the 5 to 15 age group and who is at remunerative work, may be paid or unpaid and busy in any hour of the day, within or outside the family.”

In the context of child labour, in a working definition, a child may be a person below the age limit of 15 years set by Minimum Age convention (1973). In a wier contest, the UN convention of the Right of the Child (1989) set the age limit of a child at 18 years. In the context of exploitation, UNICEF has given a comprehensive formulation in its attempt to define child labour:

- Starting fulltime work at too early an age;
- Working too long within or outside of the family so that children are unable to attend school, where it is available, or to make the most of school due to fatigue or lack of time. In some cases, children still work for 1216 hours a day;
- Work resulting in excessive physical, social and psychological stains upon the child as in the case of sexual exploitation and pornography, work in sweet shops, as well as such dangerous work as military service and mining;
- Work and life on the street in unhealthy and dangerous conditions;
- Inadequate remuneration for working outside of the family;
- Too much responsibility at too early an age as in the domestic situation where children under ten may have to look after young brothers and sisters for a whole day there by preventing school attendance,
• Work that does not facilitate the psychological and social developments of the child as in dull and repetitive tasks associated with industries like handicrafts; and
• Work that inhibits the child's self esteem as in bonded labour and prostitution and, in a less extreme case, the negative perception of street children.

In India, many Labour Acts have fixed the minimum age of employment. But the definition of a child in terms of age differs from Act to Act. The Factories Act prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 in factories. The limit in Mines Act is 15 years, whereas it is 12 in Plantation Labour Act. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, defines 'child' as a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age.

Article 24 of the Constitution of India states that, "No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mines or engaged in any other hazardous employment." Thus, one may broadly say that a child means a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age.

1.4. Characteristics of Child Labour

Considering the wide variation in different definitions of child labour and the absence of a commonly accepted definition, the following characteristics may be considered as the distinguishing marks of child labour whether it is within the family or outside the family, paid or unpaid:

• Employing children of tender age children who have not completed the age of 14 years.
• Exploitation of children adversely affecting their physical, mental, emotional and social development.
• Deprivation of the right of the children to health, education and a happy childhood.

• Work by children in the family would be considered 'child labour' if family labor interferes with the child’s education, recreation and has physical, mental or moral health.

1.5. Child Labour: A Global View

A recent study published by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), mentioned that hundreds of millions of children around the world are being forced to work often at dangerous or illegal jobs and a rising number of them have become prostitutes or drugrunners. Many children are employed illegally in dangerous conditions that maim or kill them, while others grow up without education and are condemned to lifelong poverty.

The ILO report says that some as young as 5 and as many as 25 per cent of all children between the ages of 10 and 14 are estimated to be working. Although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly how many are working, since so many are working illegally, the numbers have swelled especially in the developing world. Children have been dragged into prostitution and the drug trafficking in unprecedented numbers and the problem has now reached explosive proportions, says the report. Asia has the largest child work force.

In some countries, young people make up to 11 per cent of the labour force. Italy and Spain top the list in Western Europe. In the United States, a government study shows a 250 per cent increase in violations of the child labour laws between 1983 and 1990. While more and more children are put to work as rug weavers, farm labourers, domestic servants, drug runners and prostitutes, only a few nations have taken any meaningful steps to contain the problem.
In the context of global incidence of child labour, a recent report of the US Labour Department has pointed that to more than 50 percent of the world’s estimated 100 million to 200 million child labourers are in Asia, and constitute a large part of the work force in parts of Latin America and Africa. The place in Asia range from the crowded garment factories, where the doors are locked and the children work for 14 hours a day, to small dusty earthen huts which can seat four children to a loom knotting carpet in a pit for hours on end. The above findings have been compiled in a survey of 19 countries, titled as “Sweat and Toil of Children.”

Among the countries surveyed for child employment were Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Egypt, Brazil and Colombia. The report shows that in most cases, child workers toil for long hours for substandard wages under unhealthy conditions. The Indian government acknowledges at least 17.5 million working children, the report adds. The country-wise estimates of child labour as provided by the report are as under:

- **India** 17.5 million
- **Bangladesh** 15 million.
- **Indonesia** 2.2 million children between ages 10 and 14 were working.
- **Nepal** 3 million children in agricultural sector and export-oriented carpet industry of the country.
- **Pakistan** Between 2 million and 19 million child labourers in the agricultural, weaving and goods factory sectors.
- **Philippines** Between 2.1 million and 5.7 million children are working.
- **Thailand** About 4 million children.
- **Africa** The International Labour Organisation (ILO), estimates that one child in three has to work, making up 17 per cent of the continent’s work force.
- **Egypt** 4 million children between the ages of 6 and 14 years.

Elsewhere on the continent, children under the age of 14 work in garment factories in Lesotho, on Sisal plantations in Tanzania and Mines for gold and
diamonds in Ivory Coast and mine for Chrome in Zimbabwe. In Latin America, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of children work.

1.6. Classification of Child Labour

The international Labour Conference of 1983 in terms of global perspective had categorized child work in five broad categories:

- Domestic work such as cleaning, cooking, washing etc;
- Nondomestic but nonmonetary work such as fuel and water collection in rural sector and running errands, guarding goods, marketing etc. in urban areas;
- Bonded labour, where child workers are kept in bondage because of their family or individual debt;
- Wage employment, where children work as part-time or on piece rate or daily wage basis in domestic, agricultural or industrial activity; and
- Marginal work which may be irregular of short-term nature such as newspaper rolling, shoe shining, rag picking etc.

The developing countries have an unemployment rate raging between 20 and 30 per cent. 100 to 200 million child labourers represent 4 to 8 per cent of the world employment potential of 2.4 million. Replacement of child labourers by unemployed adults could have a major impact on employment prospect in many developing countries.

1.7. Child Labour in India

More than 80 million children in the Indian subcontinent are languishing in bondage today, working 14 to 16 hours a day in inhuman, unhygienic conditions as 'Voiceless nonbeings', says a report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Conference in Vienna. According to the findings of Asian Labour Monitor, every
third household in India has a working child. Child Laoubr contributes to 20% of India's GNP.

India is one of the few countries whose constitution provides for prohibition of employment of children. Article 15(3) empowers the State to make special provision for children (provision relating to restriction to employment of children in certain areas on the ground of the nature of job). Article 23 prohibits traffic in human being and forced labour. It lays down that traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of the provisions shall be an offence punishable in accordance with the law. Article 21 prohibits employment of children in factories etc. it states: “No children below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.”

Directive Principles of the State Policy further reinforce the constitutional commitments. Article 39(e) enunciates that the tender age of children should not be forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age and strength. Article 39(f) provides that children should be given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. Article 45 provides that the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

1.9. Extent of Child Labour

Despite the constitutional provisions and a host of protective legislations and welfare measures, we have not been able to arrest the growth of child labour. India
continues to be one of the developing countries with high incidence of child labour. Several estimates have been made about the magnitude of child workers in India.

1971 census estimated child workers below the age of 15 years at 10.74 million. According to the global labour force estimates of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), every fifth child in the age group of 10-14 years was part of the country's active labour force. The number of child workers in India was estimated at 15.1 million in 1975. The NSS32\textsuperscript{nd} Round (1977-78) estimated child workers in the age group 5 to 14 at 16.25 million in 1978.

According to 1981 census, 13.6 million children were in the labour force 11.2 million as main workers and 2.4 million as marginal workers). In 1983, the Planning Commission projected the number of child workers as 17.36 million. The findings of the Operations Research Group, Baroda, (Published in 1983) came up with an estimate of 44 million working children in India on the basis of an All India Child labour Sample Survey conducted in 1980-81. The Census data and the NSS data clearly show, the incidence of child workers is increasing both in terms of absolute numbers and as a proportion to the total work force.

As per 1991 census, the number of child labour in the age group of 5-14 years was 112.85 lakhs and the figure increased to 122.66 lakhs in 2001 census. The wide variations in the various estimates of child labour in India are due to certain limitations arising out of multiplicity of concepts, methods of estimation and the sources of data. There is no standard definition of child labour for the collection of statistics. In India, the child labour mostly operates in the unorganized, informal and unregulated sectors of the economy and is not being adequately represented in the official labour statistics.
1.9. Causes of Child Labour

Engagements of children in light work like helping the parents in domestic work, in agricultural operations or in family business, is encouraged in most of the societies particularly in agrarian households and it is considered to be an integral part of the child’s socialization process. Such informal work is not at the cost of education and normal growth of the child.

Thousands of young children of school going age in India are found working for long hours in the field, in industrial and service establishments and even in hazardous occupations and are being deprived of opportunities for normal physical and social growth and development. Normally, no children, left to themselves, like to work in the field or in factories especially under strenuous condition when most other children of their age are engaged in play or schooling.

The causes of child labour are many and interrelated. Generally, it may be said that children are compelled to work because of their poor socioeconomic conditions. Though poverty is said to be the major cause of child labour, it is not the only one. The extent and nature of child labour are also influenced by the structure of the economy and the level and pace of development. The causes of child labour being interrelated, their exact classification is not possible. However they may be grouped as follows, allowing some overlapping.

1.9.1. Economic Reasons

Child labour in India is necessitated primarily by economic compulsions. Poverty and unemployment are the root causes of child labour in our country. Nearly half of India’s population subsists below the poverty line. In the countryside, the distribution of land is most iniquitous. Economic compulsions weigh heavily on the consciousness of poor parents and they would not mind colliding with their children’s
employers in violating the law and putting their children under risks of inhuman exploitation.

Inequitable distribution of land and assets in our country has resulted in economic disparities. The power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of a few despite several reform measures. The concentration of land as capital asset in our country lies in the hands of less than 10 per cent of the total population of India.

The land reforms aimed at reducing economic disparities resulted in fragmentation of land and stopping of land leasing system to a certain extent. Agricultural operations in small land holdings became nonviable and the landless labourers and the small land holders had to migrate in search of wage employment. Poverty, unemployment, underemployment and landlessness have forced a large section of the rural population to migrate from place to place, particularly to urban areas for survival.

The urban setting offers little scope for gainful employment to the unskilled, illiterate migrant labourers. Even their children are forced to work for the survival of the family. This displacement of a large section of our population, especially the rural and tribal labour, is one of the major causes of child labour. The problem of child labour is interrelated with the problem of living wage of adult worker. The inadequacy in wages of adults compels them to send their children to work to supplement the family income.

1.9.2. Zamindari and bonded Labour System

Poverty and economic backwardness of the parents are the main reasons for the prevalence of bonded child labour. Children are mortgaged to the Zamindars or moneylenders for small sums of money borrowed for unproductive purposes such as consumption, social ceremonies (like marriage, funeral etc.), illness etc., till such time
the amount is cleared. The interest rates are so exorbitant that this amount is seldom repaid by the poor farmer. The child remains a bonded labour for ever, working hard for no wages or for wages. This bondage is sometimes intergenerational.

1.9.3. Social and Cultural Factors

Child labour depends upon normative attitudes towards children in society, the culturally determined roles and functions of children, the values by which the activities of children are judged and the nature of socialization process. In many countries, participation in various types of economic activities from an early age is considered as an essential part of socialization. The prevailing modes of domestic organization and system of kinship and marriage also affect the child labour.

The compartmentalization of groups of people on the basis of a caste hierarchy with a well defined traditional occupational role for each of the caste groups has resulted in social inequity. The upper class took more advantage of education, urbanization and industrialization. The lower caste groups, because of their position in the society, remained uneducated and became economically more dependent upon the upper caste group. Child labour is more prevalent among the weaker section of the society.

1.9.4. Ignorance and Low Education

Child labour and nonschooling of children has a significant linkage among the poorer sections of the population. Many poor children do not have easy access to schools. Schools are either too expensive for them or not available to them. In rural areas, some children temporarily withdraw from the school during the time of sowing and harvesting. A good number of children from backward classes, particularly female children, discontinue their studies to look after the younger ones at home when their parents go to work. There is also discrimination in educating female children.
In many cases, parents, particularly in villages and urban slums, are themselves illiterate and do not realize the importance of educating their children. They are unaware of the injustice done to the children by making them work instead of sending them to schools. They are ignorant about the rights and needs of children. A large number of parents of poor families find education does not guarantee a job in future. They prefer to send their children for work at an early age instead of sending them to school with the hope that the children will at least acquire a skill or learn a trade by the time they become adult.

1.9.5. Failure to Ensure Compulsory Education

The provision of compulsory education up to a prescribed age could compel the children to attend the school and prevent them from entering into employment at an early age. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of the State Policy enunciates: “The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.” However, we have not been successful so far in ensuring compulsory education to children up to the age of 14.

Some studies show that the earnings of child workers can account for as much as 30 per cent or more of household incomes. In such situations, families send their children to school only at their own peril. The long term solution lies obviously in promoting income and employment generating schemes. But the society could not consider alternative schemes, such as school feeding programmes and other innovative measures in order to lighten the burden on poor families and make it attractive for them to send their children to school rather than to work.

1.9.6. Employer’s Preference for Child labour

Many employers prefer child labourers than to adult workers for various reasons. The reasons stated in the Report of the Committee on Child Labor (1980) for
employer's preference for children in work are: "less age and status conscious, lesser affliction by feeling of guilt and shame, no hesitation to do nonstatus, even demeaning jobs, activeness, ability and quickness and lesser feeling of tiredness, greater discipline and control, less expensive to maintain, superior adaptive abilities, lack of organization, moral consideration of employers to help and to provide succour to destitute or forsaken children and acquisition of fitness though initiation in the early age".

Most of the employers have vested interest in employing child labour. Child labour is cheap. Children work at lower wages for long hours without grumbling. Children are easy to be exploited, honest and hardworking and at the same time docile and meek workforce. Managing children is easier than managing adults. Children are found to be better suited for certain types of jobs.

The greed for profit and stiff competition for markets in the developed countries encourage employers to use child labour for economic advantage. It is argued that if children who earn meager sums were taken out of employment, there would be no downward swing in the socioeconomic status of the family. The only downswing would be the profit margin of the employers.

1.9.7. Victims of Misfortunes

Loss of parents or bread winner of the family, chronic illness of family members, drinking habits and other social evils among adults, force some children to enter into employment at a tender age. In some families children are the main bread winners. Often orphans and children from broken families run away to big cities and work as migrant child labour.
1.9.8. Inefficacy of Protective Legislation

In almost all countries and particularly in India, legislation concerning minimum age for admission to employment or regulations about the employment of children exists. But an effective enforcement of the legislations pertaining to child labour has not been possible so far for various reasons. An effective inspection system is not adequately developed. Moreover, the legislation often excludes from is purview small scale units, traditional workshops, quasifamily undertakings, petty commerce, street traders and agriculture where we find the majority of working children. The enforcement of legislation, if any, is extremely difficult in these sections.

1.10. Child Labour in Different Sectors of Economy

The child labour in India have been working in various sectors like agriculture and allied activities, construction works, brassware industry, lock industry, Gem industry, automobile industry, Beedi making, hotels, provision shops and various other small scale unorganized industries in rural and urban India.

1.10.1. Agriculture & Allied Fields

Agriculture is one of the most hazardous sectors for the physical safety and health of child workers. On an average, a child starts working in agriculture between 7 to 9 years of age in India. About 14 per cent of children start working in agriculture at the age of 5 years. Majority of child labourers work on fields owned by their parents and about 12 per cent work on fields of other farmers. Majority of child workers are engaged in transplantation, taking out seedlings from one field and planting them in another, harvesting, watching of corps, weeding, irrigation of field, hoeing, sowing, threshing, storage, ploughing and other miscellaneous work.
1.10.2. Domestic work

Besides agricultural work, children in India perform domestic work, such as bringing water, cattle grazing and feeding, bringing firewood, cleaning utensils, cooking, carrying food to the fields and looking after young ones. These tasks children do in their homes as well as the residence of their employers.

1.10.3. Construction Works

Owing to a rapid growth of wealth and an ever expanding need for housing, construction work is undertaken on large scale under private, cooperative and government auspices. The builders invariably carry out the construction operation through contractors who employ their own subcontractors for specific works. Because of the increasing poverty among the rural landless sections, there is an influx of these people into the city in search of employment.

When the head of the family is recruited, he moves to the city with his entire family. The fate of the child construction worker is tied up with that of his family. A construction sites change, the family is constantly on the move and the child cannot take advantage of the existing schooling facilities.

1.10.4. Lock Industry

The lock industry of Aligarh employs about 7 to 10 thousand child labourers. This industry comes under the small scale and cottage industry sector: Locks and their parts are made in almost every house in the city. The practice of employing children as part of family labour is very common. It is estimated that about 80 per cent of the locks are made in Aligarh district alone.

Children are engaged in the process like working on handpresses, buffing machines, electroplating, spray painting, assembling of components, making springs, and packing of locks etc. The activities of polishing, electroplating, spray painting and
working on hand presses are the most hazardous to health. The handpresses are particularly dangerous because children are made to work very long hours, anything form 1214 hours a day.

1.10.6. Gem Industry

Ninety five per cent of all coloured gem stones in India are polished at Jaipur, Surat and Ahmedabad. The gem industry caters to the international market because of the easy availability of child labour. Children below the age of 14 accounts for 20 percent of the total work force engaged in gem polishing industry.

The parents of child labour see this industry as a means of upward mobility if the child is trained as a skilled gem polisher. This has adverse repercussion on the schooling of the children. Child laboures are engaged in cutting stones, faceting and polishing semiprecious and precious stones like garnets and rubies respectively. The entire labour force consisting of children are engaged in polishing of gems.

1.10.7. Auto Garages

With the emergence of private car and taxi or two/three wheeler vehicles, automobile repair shops have sprung up in almost all parts of the metropolis. In the auto repair shops, children work as helpers to the adult mechanics who do the main repair job. The child labourers in auto garages perform the task of loosening and tightening of bolts and nuts, cleaning the oily parts, removing and fitting the parts of the vehicle washing, polishing vehicle and a score of such other helping tasks.

The children have to do their jobs in the open and they are exposed to sun rain and cold. Because of the nature of job, these children are always seen in oil and dirt soaked clothes, their hands and faces blackened and their body sweating. They do not look healthy because they do not get sufficient to eat during the day and their work is physically very demanding.
1.10.8. Bidi Making

Bidi manufacturers get bidis made in their premises by employing persons or through contractors or through poor families by supplying them materials. Families who make bidis at their houses work for about 15 to 16 hours a day. A child because of his nimbleness rolls more bidis than an adult and his efficiency declines with age. Bidis are rolled in a small house, rather a room where the whole family lives, with the result that the whole room gives out tobacco smell.

1.10.9. Tea Shops and Dhabas

Tea shops, Dhabas, and similar wayside eating places are a common site at all urban and semi urban areas. The children working in these shops are exposed to unhygienic conditions and to the vagaries of weather conditions. They work in the open without adequate clothing or footwear. The child’s work consists of sweeping and dusting of the premises, cleaning of utensils such as cups, spoons and other cutlery including those used as containers of prepared foods and serving the customers. They also do personal work of their employers.

1.10.10. Pottery Industry

The child labour in pottery industry consists mainly carrying of empty moulds to the workers on the machines and then carrying the filled moulds out into the sun to dry. The child labour doing this work makes about 1000 trips a day, runs five kilometers a day with ten kilograms load. Children as young as 8 or 9 yeas of age carry weight upto 20 kilograms with their bodies bent and frames trembling with the effort. Children also carry half dry pots to workers engaged in finishing work, removing handles from the moulds and carrying them to adults, scrapping the rough edges, clean machines, remove portions from the processed clay.
1.10.11. Chalk Making

In tiny workshops thousands of children manufacture sticks of chalk sticks for schools. Children break the rough chalk and carry it to cramped workshops. In the thick white dusty air, they cut the chalks, pile up the chalk sticks and pack them in cardboard or wooden boxes. Generally, it causes dust allergy at their child age, which is a chronic disease.

1.11. Consequences of Child Labour

Parents show interest on the earnings of the children and neglect those who earn. Consequently some unfortunate children may become “Street children” and fall into the wicked clutches of antisocial elements or hardcore criminals. They are made to take up smuggling, stealing, pick pocketing or other criminal activities. They live in fear, obeying their masters and become hardened criminals when they grow elder.

Ignorant parents feel the more the children the more the gain will be. This is a paradox considering that the redundancy of man labour is so great. As agricultural labour is seasonal, child labourers of this sector may become child beggars due to unemployment in unseasons. Child labour increases adult unemployment and ultimately their wages are reduced.

1.12. The Consequences of Child at work

- The child when fully occupied in work is unable to have an opportunity for his physical and mental development.
- The work exerts a negative influence on child’s personality and wellbeing. The absence of harmonious family life, particularly if the child is employed on external job, the attention and care of parents being impossible.
- Child is deprived of any leisure for games, sports or cultural activities.
• The unsuitable, unhygienic surroundings where children work for long hours have injurious effect on their health.

• In the case of jobs accomplished in the streets, the child, sometimes engaged in the above occupations, is exposed to social evils, even crimes.

1.13. Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study cannot be overemphasized in the context of children working in various activities. So far, many researchers and social activists have investigated the problems and conditions of child labour in some particular activity. But only very few of the studies concentrated on all activities by child labourers in rural as well as urban areas.

Hence, it was decided to study the problems of child labour in lime burning industries, mosaic chip industries, iron ore industry, hotels, provision shops and agricultural sector. Another reason for selection of various activities in industry in rural areas for the purpose of the study is that, due to liberal licensing policy, the number of industries have increased enormously. Simultaneously the number of workers attending to the various activities has also been increasing in recent years.

Many children are working in lime burning, iron ore, automobiles, chip making, chalk piece industry, hotels, shops and in seed cotton, because of recognition of lucrative nature of the job. It can be said without fear of contradiction that there is no automobile and hotels wherein a child labour is not employed. Innocent and ignorant children are employed and exploited by the selfish and opportunistic master repairers or the owners of restaurants.

It is painful to note that millions of underaged children are working in damndirty, darkdingy, illventilated places under highly insanitary and unhygienic
conditions. They are paid low wages for long duration of work, besides every chance of illtreatment by their heartless employers.

Pathetic conditions of the children working in the unorganized sector has inspired the researcher to study the working conditions, problems and future of the helpless children working in various industries, workshops and in cotton fields. It has also been worth studying the working conditions, the level of earnings, education and health conditions. Its value lies in its being not so much theoretical presentation, but model focusing the attention on their problems with empirical evidence.

A summary of suggestions, along with identified problems will give scope for further research or special areas at micro and macro levels. It also enquires into the causes for their option to work as a child labour in a particular activity which are of utmost importance. An identification of the causes and their relative weightages are the obvious steps to rehabilitate them.

1.14. Its likely Contribution to the Existing Knowledge

The present study, though modest, contributes a lot to the knowledge of child labour working in various activities in particular and child labour in general. It enriches the scanty literature on the subject. Study of this type would add to the existing knowledge on the subject, in better understanding the nature of the problem of child labour. Special contribution to the existing knowledge is that it covers the different aspects of crucial importance in their preference to work at this age which was received insufficient attention at micro and regional level. Its contribution to the knowledge of child labour is immense.

1.15. Scope and Limitations

The present study is a district specific and group specific. A study of this kind has its own limitations which condition the scope and contents of the study. But for
these limitations, the quality of the study would have been better than that has been found possible.

However, the following limitations in the present study may be noted:

- For the purpose of the in depth study from all unorganized activities, the study was proposed to cover only a district with a sample of working children for detailed investigation and analysis.

- The findings of the study were based on facts responses and experiences supplied by the respondents, which certainly give scope for bias.

- As against many working children in rural areas and also in urban available for only selected child workers in different activities at the time of investigation were covered.

- The study was undertaken at a time when the government has been implementing special school education for freed child labour.

- The tools and techniques applied are the most commonly used statistical measures as the nature of collected data permits to achieve the objectives of the study.

- The conclusions arrived at and the inferences drawn are applicable to the sample respondents of the district.

Dhone mandal and Dhone town of Kurnool district in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh was selected for the purpose of the study. All these factors taken together might have worked as limiting factors. However, every care was taken to see that the quality did not suffer and did not go unbiased to achieve the objectives of the study. The investigator's subjective reaction to the interviews and vice versa, invariably enters into such empirical studies. The only way to correct such 'biases' is to check, recheck and countercheck. The study endeavours to do so.
1.16. Statement of the Problem

The problem of child labour is a global phenomenon. It is everywhere; every field and every sphere of economic activity. In broader sense, it can be said that utilizing the child workforce is geographically rampant. In such circumstances, the researcher, with the limited means, found it difficult to cover all the child labourers in the study area and therefore, has decided to restrict himself to a particular geographical area and the sample size.

1.17. Objectives

The following are the major objectives of the study:

- To know the socioeconomic background of the children working in the selected villages/town.
- To delve into the circumstantial factors responsible for the children to take up the economic activity,
- To spotlight working and living conditions of the child labourers,
- To list out the problems associated with employment in various activities where children are working.
- To orchestrate the aims and aspirations of the children working in the different activities.

1.18. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are made use of for the purpose of the study.

- Most of the children employed in various activities come from poor families.
- Lack of interest in education and educational failures are the other reasons.
- Working and living conditions of the child workers are satisfactory.
1.19. Methodology

The present study is based on the data drawn from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from the sample child workers purposefully selected for the study. The primary data needed for the present study was collected in Dhone town and Dhone mandal of Kurnool district. This survey covered child workers working in different fields in selected revenue villages of Dhone mandal and Dhone Municipality.

The study is mainly based on empirical data and its analysis. Taking into consideration, the specific objectives of the study, an interview schedule was constructed for canvassing to solicit respondents’ attitudes/opinions and reactions of child respondents. After pre-testing the schedule, necessary modifications and alterations were made in the schedule originally framed. The interview schedule consists of both open and close ended questions.

The secondary data pertaining to the magnitude of child labour in India and regional level were collected from various published sources to highlight the trend and incidence of child labour. The secondary data was collected from authoritative sources issued by various institutions, agencies and organizations such as International Labour Organisation, New Delhi, United Nations Children’s Fund, Hyderabad, Tata Institute of Social sciences, Mumbai, National Institute of Rural Development, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Hyderabad, Plan documents of Planning Commission and State Planning Department and Reports of National Child Labour Project were also made use of.

The geographical area of the present study is limited to Kurnool district, one of the ‘ceded’ districts of historically popular Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh with special reference to Dhone Mandal and Dhone Municipality, where there is high
incidence of child labour in automobile work shops, hotels, iron ore industry, lime stone burning industry, mosaic chip industry and in seed cotton growing fields.

1.20. Sample Design

Considering the objectives of the study, a stratified random sampling method was adopted. In the first stage, Rayalaseema region was selected from the three regions of Andhra Pradesh. In the second stage, Dhone Municipality and Dhone Rural Mandal were selected from Kurnool Revenue division. In the third stage, the five wards in Dhone Municipality and the seven revenue villages in Dhone mandal were selected on the basis of simple random sample.

In the last stage the child labourers were selected on simple random sampling basis from the selected areas. The altogether covered 300 samples from five Municipality wards and Seven Revenue villages. Out of respondent child labour, 135 of sample child labour belongs to backward community, 120 from Scheduled Caste, 29 respondents from Scheduled Tribes and the remaining 16 samples belongs to other communities.

At the time of enquiry, personal interviews were conducted with the respondents personally. The observation method was also adopted to know the working environment at the work site of child work. The sample profile is presented in the following table 1.1.
Table 1.1: SAMPLE PROFILE OF CHILD LABOURS IN SELECTED VILLAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Village</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dhone</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Malkapuram</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yeddupenta</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kothakota</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Venkatapuram</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Devarabanda</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kocheruvu</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dhone Rural</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.21. Methods of Data Collection and Processing

The data was collected by administering a well structured interview schedule among the selected child labour. The researcher also conducted certain case studies. In order to make the present study quite successful, the researcher designed the questionnaire after having discussions at different levels with informants as well as officials and subject experts. The questionnaire was pretested and referred to computer programmers, specialized in social science packages before approaching the respondents. Relating to secondary data, the published and unpublished materials available with government and private agencies were utilized. The periodicals, magazines, journals, books and reports were referred to as documentary sources.

1.22. Processing

The collected data was edited in order to ensure that all the required information gathered and irrelevant material omitted. After editing, the collected data was classified and coded. After developing codes, necessary tables were also prepared.
1.23. Tools of the Study

In addition to simple averages, percentages, the other required statistical tools were adopted wherever necessary.

1.24. Chapter Scheme

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with introduction, concept and causes of child labour, effects, consequences of child labour, objectives, methodology and chapter scheme.

The second chapter reveals the review of literature on the theme of the present study. Articles, books, reports and various Acts related to child labour were reviewed in brief.

The origin of child labour, child labour before and after independence, the extent of child labour in India were analysed in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter explains the problems and policies of child labour in India. The fifth chapter examines the socioeconomic conditions of the working children in different activities of selected areas. The study of life pattern, family background and earning and contributions of the children, the literacy and other social aspects of the child labour family were also analysed in this chapter.

The sixth chapter describes the information pertinent to the work life of the children i.e. timings of work, working outside the timings, lunch hours, monetary benefits, wages, facilities available at work site occupational hazardous, income and employment particulars of the child labourers from different activities were discussed.

The last chapter is entirely devoted for major findings and the policy recommendation to overcome the child labour problem in the coming years.
1.25. References


