Chapter- VI
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Child labour is not a new phenomenon. It has existed throughout history and in all types of economies. What is rather new is the unprecedented surge in concern about the issue over the past decade. There are diverse views as to the reasons for this development. The emergence of the rights-based approach to development; the growing emphasis on poverty reduction; the intensifying competition due to globalization of trade and investment flows; and the perceived implications of the latter for unskilled workers in developed countries, are among reasons often noted by observers. Whatever the reasons however, the rise of child labour to global prominence is a welcome development that offers a window of opportunity to address the plight of the most vulnerable segment of the population in any society, namely the labouring children (Tabatabai, 2003).  

The general study on child labour shows that poverty and illiteracy remains the two major causes for child labour. On the other hand, despite of all these legal and constitutional provisions, it is found that the child labourers are being exploited mentally, physically and economically, which seriously affects their present and future life. Because of poor enforcement of laws and lack of general awareness on the part of public and parents, millions of child labourer in India suffers everyday.

To stop the incidents of child labour, we have to first deal with the issues like rural poverty and illiteracy. Majority of the children are coming from rural areas. Since there is no option in the rural areas; they have no
land to cultivate, few school of very low quality to read, parents are semi literate or illiterate and there are no awareness among the rural poor regarding the value of education in present day world. Out of all these circumstances the poor parents send their children to work – just to survive and if possible to contribute to the family income.

At the work place, the children have to work up to 12 or more hours per day. There is little time for rest and normally their works end in the evening. So after completion of their works, they simply go to their bed. Playing and enjoying with friends is a distant dream for these children. There is no paid holiday, for them holiday means economic loss since the employer believe in policy of no work no money. In fact some children have to resume work just after recovering from illness or accidents. Abuse in the work place in the hands of employer and general people is normal, but the children are too young to protest and take these incidents as their fate. The amount they receive is meagre compared to adult worker. Major part of their income goes for family expenditure. If they go for over duty then they receive some extra money. The working conditions for hotel and garage boy is very dirty and unhygienic, in the case of handimen it is dangerous. They have to serve whether it is day or night, rainy or sunny, hot or cold weather.

In fact all those children have lost their childhood. Majority of them have left the school, among those who are still studying have no interest in it and will left it very shortly. Their impression is that they are bom to work and there is no relevance of education. There is little initiative by the government for universalisation of education. Although the government introduced the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) recently, but it is found that only a few number of
child labourer are rescued and re-introduced into schools. The Department of Labour is inactive and the legal provisions regarding employment of children are openly violated. General people too have little awareness regarding employment of children. In conclusion it can be held that children are working out of compulsion and they are not enjoying their works, every day their rights are being violated. Their working conditions are detrimental to their mental and physical development. There is an urgent need to expand the National Child Labour Project throughout the country. Since total eradication of child labour may not be possible for the time being the government should work for improvement of the working conditions.

The problem of child labour can be dealt with only through a series of short- and long-term measures and, better still, by doing first things first. By far the most important area of priority action is the strict prohibition of child labour in socially and economically exploitative employment relations and in hazardous occupations and industries. Another way is the strict prohibition of employment of children at a very early age. The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), of the ILO sets a minimum age of 12 or 13 for light work. This corresponds to the age of completion of primary schooling in many countries and should therefore serve as a benchmark below which children would not be allowed to work.

The vast and complex nature of the child labour problem implies the need for a multi-pronged approach, encompassing not only legislation and enforcement but also action in such areas as incomes and employment, formal and non-formal education, welfare and advocacy of children's rights. It is equally evident that policy formulation has to go beyond the general level. It can be effective
only if it is accompanied by direct practical action focused on child labour in specific industries, areas or occupations characterised by a high incidence of child workers or by extreme forms of exploitation and abusive practices (Bequela & Boyden, 1988). 2

After observing and interviewing 200 child labourer in Nalbari district it has been found that in all the five categories the rights of children are widely violated, they are exploited mentally, physically and economically. All the basic rights like — right to education, right to rest & leisure, right to health, right against maltreatment and right against economic exploitation — are denied to the child labourers. The previous account of the working hours, income, health education, leisure and behaviour faced by them shows that almost in all the aspects of their daily work, gross violation of child right is taking place. They are not getting enough money, time to rest, educational facilities and little or no medical facility.

In the chocolate factory, although they get rest during lunchtime but they have to work till evening, which means there is no time to play. There is no medical facility although they have to work near high temperature and machinery. The employer and senior worker, often maltreat the child labour. Regarding their income it is found, in chocolate factory, they get only paisa 50 per K.G., which is very nominal in the age of inflation. Other children, who are working in shops and stay with the employer, have to look after domestic chores.

In case of the self-employed children, they too have to stay in the market for the whole day to earn more money. Among the vendors, there is stiff competition among them, as they get very little time to sell the products in the highways. Working in the running bus is very dangerous as there is possibility of
accidents in the roads. The vendors of the trains too face such hardships where they have to sell their products from morning to evening among hostile passengers.

The hotel boy, all of them are drop out from school. Regarding rest period they are the worst sufferer. They have to work constantly from morning to 9 P.M. There is no medical facility and inside the kitchen the working condition is very dirty. The employer often maltreats these boys if they broke glass and work in a lazy manner. Sometime customer too misbehaves with them especially in the dhabas. Their average income is 100—400 rupees plus free meal and accommodation.

The children who are working in brick kiln units are migrated from Barpeta district and from other states to Assam. They work side by side with their parents. All the day they have to work under the sun and have to carry and shape mud. Their average monthly income is between rupees 200-500, which are received by their parents. The children stay in temporary rooms, which are made for just one season. There are no education, medical, and electrical facilities. All of them are migrated labourer since their works are seasonal and hence they face extra problems like of education and socialisation.

In the motor garage and other steel-repairing workshop the children have to work with machine having excessive heat, rigidity and chemical elements. For them Sunday is a holiday but during other working days they have to work till 6 P.M. Those who stay with the employer have to work even midnight sometime. Their income range is from 100—400 rupees. In fact they are economically exploited compared to their level of labour. Surprisingly there is no medical facility and after any causality they have to resume work after 2—3 days.
The medical expense is borne by the employer. Here all the children have discontinued their education for various reasons.

Lastly, the auto-rickshaw and tempo *handimen*, who have to work in the most risky conditions, per day they have to travel at least 50 K.M. and after every trip they take some rest. During lunchtime too they can take rest. But it is observed during the rest period they are busy with smoking and gambling. None of them continue their education. Out of 20 handimen two have faced accidents. The driver (owner of auto-rickshaw) helped them regarding medical expenditure. The working hours starts from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. Some time the children have to go for some special trip till midnight, for which they get extra money. Their monthly income varies from rupees 300—500 plus free lunch and tea. Majority of them complain about misbehaviours on the part of passengers.

Analysis of the field survey shows that 40% of the children are working because of poverty and having no option (Table 7). At the same time we can also observe that there is a direct link between poverty and school drop-out (Table 36), majority of children is dropping out of school because of poverty. The children who are working in different fields, majority of them are dropout from schools (46%), only a few children continue their education with little interest. Again from field study it is found that 20% of those children are illiterates. Regarding the income of the children majority of them get up to Rs.100 to 500, only a few children get more than that. But if we compare this monthly wage with adult labourer, we will found that adults are getting not less than Rs.1500 per month. However in the field of chocolate labelling and handimen work, adults are totally absent. So we can hold as assumed in the first hypothesis that because of poverty,
illiteracy and school dropout children are forced to work as child labourer and child labour is cheaper than adult labour that is why children are preferred in those activities.

The second hypothesis of the study i.e. child labourer are exploited economically, mentally and physically by their employers is found to be true during the study. As mentioned in the above paragraph, children are paid little compared to the adult labourer but they are forced to work for the whole day (in some cases at night also). In the field of handimen and chocolate labelling children are found to be the only choice because of their cheapness. Wherever the children are provided food and lodging facilities, they are forced to work overtime and virtually all the domestic work of the employer. Regarding mental exploitation it is found that child labourer are often rebuked by the employer and general people. They are denied the right to play, leisure and there is no provision for holiday. Except the brick kiln, chocolate worker and vendors, other children are not staying with their family members, which mentally affect the children. It is found that majority of the children are physically abused and misbehaved at least once in their work life. Although the child labourer are not willing to express their views on physical abuse and exploitation but it is observed that the vendor, hotel and garage boy frequently encounter with such situations. Another aspect of physical exploitation is the duration of work. Table (11) shows that majority of the children work for up to 12 hours and even more than that. The working condition is not satisfactory and the children have to work in that situation in all seasons and for the whole day. But the children are not complaining because of their lack of knowledge, awareness and having no alternatives.
During the period of investigation, it is found that not a single government official ever visited these areas to assess or stop the incidents of child labour; even not a single NGO is found which is working for the cause of child labour. Student’s organisations, which are so strong in the district and who often raises its voice in different socio-economic and educational issues are totally absent and silent in this issue. The political parties too are not raising the issue of child labour. So it is clear that there is no awareness and all the rights enjoyed by the child labour are there only in paper and the ground reality is a sharp contrast to the international standards, national laws and constitution. In spite of the hopeless situation, as stated earlier, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan unit of Nalbari district has been doing laudable job in the area of providing education to the child labour and particularly to the out of school and dropout children.

**Summary of Findings**

In this study, the socio-economic background, income, working conditions, reasons for working, educational qualifications, reasons for school dropouts, types of residence, caste, religion, sex, age, language etc of child labourers are investigated who are engaged in basically hotels, brick kilns, garages, shops and as vendors within Nalbari District. Some of the important findings of the study are furnished below:

- It is found that about 82.5% of the child labourer is male and the rest 17.5% are female. Except for working in the chocolate factory, in other activities boys are preferred.
• About 31% of the child labourers belong to the age group of 5-10 and 69%
belong to the age group of 11-14. Majority of the child labourer are at the
higher age group but employment of very tender aged children is a matter of
concern who are more prone to abuse and exploitation.

• The child labourer belongs to only two religious communities i.e. Hindu and
Muslim consisting about 86.5% and 13.5% respectively. In the study area
other religious communities are totally absent.

• Regarding mother tongue it is seen that 81.5% of children belong to
Assamese, 13% to Hindi, 4% to Bengali and only 1.5% to Bodo. The Hindi-
speaking children worked in brick kiln units and all of them are migrated
from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

• During investigation it is found that majority of child labourer belong to the
lower castes i.e. Schedule Caste. The Schedule Caste children constitute
48.5% of the total child labourer, 24% belong to Other Backward Caste
(OBC), and only 1.5% belong to Schedule Tribe (ST). However a large
number of children are coming from the General Caste i.e. 26%.

• Regarding education it is found that 80% are literate and 20% are illiterate.
Although the numbers of literate children are more but majority of them have
little educational knowledge and they were very irregular during school days.
Because of poor school infrastructure and lack of motivation on the part of
the teacher most of the children left their school. On the other hand the
illiterate children are the poorest one who cannot even think of going to
school and joined work from very tender age.
• The chief reason for school dropout is financial i.e. poverty (50.5%) and for that reason they have to supplement family income (24.5%). These two reasons constitute the majority of children. For girl child sibling care is the dominating factor (7%). Another area of concern is that a large number of children i.e. 12.5% do not have any interest in pursuing education and they do not see any benefits from the existing system of education. Besides 5.5% children left the school because of maltreatment by teacher and friends.

• 47.5% of child labourer works for about 8-12 hours a day and another 27.5% works for more than 12 hours a day. Only 25% children works for up to eight hours a day. Thus it shows that majority of the children are being exploited in case of working hours.

• In case of income, there are differences, for example 78.5% children get up to only Rs. 400 per month, 14% get Rs. 400-500 and only 7.5% earn more than Rs. 500 per month. The children who are earning more than Rs. 500 are self employed or engaged in shop and establishment.

• All the children working in brick kiln units are migrated from other districts and even from outside the state. Even some child labourer working in garages are migrated from outside the state of Assam.

• Drop out from school (46%) is the main reason for child labour followed by poverty (28%) and another 12% children are working because they have no other option. Only 6% children claim that they are working to know new skills and 8% of the respondents could not specify the real reason for working.
Lastly, the nature of residence is like that all the children engaged in brick kiln units are living in temporary rooms which is 25% of the total child labourer. 40% of the total children are found to be living with their employer i.e. in rent free rooms, 28.5% children have their own residence and the rest are living in rented residence.

The above-mentioned findings show that the child labourer of Nalbari district is denied some of the basic rights. At the same time it is found that they are exploited in a number of areas and their path of future development is virtually closed. In our country there is no scarcity of legal provisions to protect the interest of children but the ground reality is very harsh. It is in this context that we have to change our approach and mindset towards those children for a better life. As the table (38) shows, today approaches towards children have changed which gives more stress towards development and rights. Today children are seen as agents of development through the process of participation as without children there cannot be all-round development. It is high time that we must treat children as agents of change and not helpless object of charity work. Child rights are non negotiable and today their rights are legally binding as they become the subject of rights. Child rights are not special rights, but rather the fundamental rights inherent to the dignity of children. The state has the responsibility to protect the rights of children.
Table 38: Approaches towards Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earlier approach</th>
<th>Present Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td>Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional and residential care</td>
<td>Non-residential and family-based alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial care</td>
<td>Holistic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segregation and isolation</td>
<td>Inclusion in mainstream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary and recipient</td>
<td>Participant and partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Asha Bajpai, 2003

If we trace the reasons for decline of child labour, a number of interpretations can be put forwarded for what caused child labour to decline in the developed nations, like:

- Increasing household incomes, which leads to invest in children’s education.
- The second argument is the level of technology as use of sophisticated tools causes decline of child labour.
- Strict enforcement of laws regarding minimum age for work and state sponsored free compulsory education was another key element.
- Changing views on children that children had rights and it was the duty of the State to defend the defenseless as children had the right not to work.

Each of these factors played an important role in the historical decline of child labour, although economic growth alone is not sufficient,
but any direct measures against child labour will not be successful without it (ILO, 1995).³

In this context we may cite the example of Hong Kong, which have achieved notable success and have almost eliminated child labour through:

- Regular and persistent inspections by the Labour Department;
- Special annual campaigns to detect child employment;
- Requiring all young workers to carry identity cards with their photographs, thus facilitating enforcement;
- Introducing welfare benefits, especially social assistance to poor families, which assured a minimum income and removed the need to rely on child labour (UNICEF, 1997).⁴

In fact, Hong Kong is almost urban and has a developed economy. But it would be very difficult to detect the entire child labourer to apply legislation and inspection in a large country like India. The India Country Report (2006)⁵ noted some hurdles in eliminating the practice of child labor in our country like:

- Continued lack of community involvement and support for child rights and absence of community ownership of schools are major obstacles in ensuring coordinated action.
- Lack of a stakeholder-based convergent approach in the implementation of key programmes related to the elimination of child labour is a weakness in the current strategy of the government and of NGOs.
• Prosecution and conviction rates in cases relating to contravention of the Child Labour Act (1986) are low, pointing out the poor implementation of the law, administrative lapses, and lacunae in the act.

• Poor quality of education and weak support for children in difficult circumstances in schools are constraints still prevalent.

**NGO and trade unions initiatives against child labour**

Over the years the State is emerging as a partner, supervisor, facilitator, and regulator rather than as a single actor. Private entrepreneurship and the civil society are being acknowledged as important agents for change. They are the new partners in delivery of social goods and services. The numbers of NGOs as well as the resources at their disposal are growing exponentially and are likely to dominate the radar of development for the next few decades. This contribution attempts a roadmap for the NGOs and uses particular projects of intervention by the NGOs in reducing child labour in India (Dixit, 2004).  

The NGOs can play important role in combating child labour by creating awareness, by initiating income generating schemes, by providing skill training programme for the poor children and by providing free formal and non formal education. A great number of NGOs, both local and international, work in the field of child labour in India. The list of selected NGOs and their activities are listed in the annexure.

Not only the NGOs but also action taken by workers' organizations as in Andhra Pradesh provides an interesting example of how workers' organizations can join forces in combating child labour. The *Andhra Pradesh*
Federation of Trade Unions for the Elimination of Child Labour (APFTUCL) acts as the central support system for the field-level actions of the trade unions at the district level. The unions are involved in a wide range of interventions like:

- Identifying and training workers, making them part of an Informed Workforce that will work to eliminate child labour;
- Reaching parents of child workers and key community leaders, educating them on child labour, and encouraging them to work to get children out of work and into schools;
- Establishing close linkages with law enforcement agencies, education and child welfare departments, and the managers of national child labour projects to which working children can be diverted to receive education, mid-day meals and a stipend;
- Working to enforce laws, especially those on minimum wages and those relating to children and their welfare;
- Holding rallies, demonstrations and public meetings against child labour (IPEC, ILO, 2002).  

**What do children want?**

While formulating policies on children or child labour, often it is seen that children are not consulted; they are not incorporated and denied participation. It is important to systematically involve child workers themselves in the planning and implementation of their projects and programmes. Anti-Slavery Internationals (2004) consultations with child workers had some clear messages about the best kinds of assistance for children like:
• To provide opportunities for education and training;
• To assist them in seeking redress from abusive and/or exploitative employers;
• More awareness raising about their situation;
• Assistance in accessing government and state infrastructure that can help them.

In the *Children’s World Congress on Child Labour*, 2004, the children have made many demands for the governments like:

• Governments must listen to children. The governments make the issues of the children a priority and include the children in the decision-making that affects lives of children. Governments must also provide opportunities for children to participate and express their opinions.

• Governments must criminalise child labour but should never criminalise the children. The children are victims of child labour. They must create and carry out laws that strictly punish the adults who have abused children for their own interest. Indeed, these children be rescued and rehabilitated.

• Governments should encourage adults to work. Adults should work so they have enough money not to put their children to work. It is important that adults are protected as workers so that the children do not have to work.

The children need love, respect and dignity. It is in the hands of parents to provide with happy and stable family life. Parents must take their responsibility and vote. When they vote, they must also speak for the children and vote for someone who respects child rights and honour.

Child workers need to be a part of the solution as children are not the problem. Children know their situations better that any one else and most
often they know what needs to be done to solve the problems they face. If they are included as active participants to transform their own lives, they can bring great change and will provide positive direction to the plans for implementation. Working children and their families need to be empowered to become agents of their own change. Such a move from below, with the right support and resources, can achieve much more than the present developments.

The *World Summit on Sustainable Development*, (Johannesburg, 2002) discusses about the issue of child labour. It is found that without eliminating millions of child labourer we cannot attain sustainable development. We must not exploit the children for our present benefits and must invest for the children’s development. At the summit the delegates recommend that governments with immediate effect, stop the illegal recruitment of new child labourers and instead offer decent work to adults or older teenagers besides guarantee the proper rehabilitation and education of all children relieved of exploitative work.

To Anker the elimination of unacceptable forms of child labour is good for development. As he adds: Elimination of hazardous and other worst forms of child labour would reduce health costs, human capital would increase, income distribution would improve and poverty rates and social exclusion would fall, gender equality would improve, democratic tendencies would increase along with increased education and informed public, knowledge of rights would increase along with increases in education and fertility rates would fall, and this would help increase economic growth rates.
An IPEC study (2004) on the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour (table 39) found that the elimination of child labour and its replacement by universal education yields enormous economic benefits. Over the period 2001 to 2020, the total sum of estimated global costs is US$ 760 billion, whereas the benefits that accrue during this period come to US$ 5,106 billion. Thus, benefits exceed costs by a ratio of 6.7 to 1. This amounts to an internal rate of return of 43.8 per cent. In Asia, the ratio of benefits to cost would be 7.2 to 1.

The study reveals the economic character of elimination of child labour as a generational investment, a sustained commitment to our children in order to reap the benefits when they reach adulthood. For approximately one and a half decades during which the programme is first implemented, the economic burden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Transitional economies</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Sub-Saharan Africa</th>
<th>North Africa and Middle East</th>
<th>Global</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total costs</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>158.8</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>139.5</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>760.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education supply</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>299.1</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>107.4</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>403.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer implementation</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity cost</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>151.0</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>216.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total benefits</td>
<td>140.8</td>
<td>321.3</td>
<td>407.2</td>
<td>723.9</td>
<td>504.1</td>
<td>3,106.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>145.8</td>
<td>330.7</td>
<td>403.4</td>
<td>721.8</td>
<td>500.2</td>
<td>3,078.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net economic benefits</td>
<td>121.2</td>
<td>2862.4</td>
<td>330.6</td>
<td>581.1</td>
<td>414.4</td>
<td>1316.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3.1%)</td>
<td>(27.0%)</td>
<td>(9.3%)</td>
<td>(10.0%)</td>
<td>(23.2%)</td>
<td>(22.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer payments</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>125.8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>211.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net financial benefits</td>
<td>111.1</td>
<td>2736.6</td>
<td>307.1</td>
<td>555.1</td>
<td>122.3</td>
<td>1132.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.6%)</td>
<td>(25.9%)</td>
<td>(8.7%)</td>
<td>(11.3%)</td>
<td>(22.0%)</td>
<td>(21.1%)</td>
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</table>

would exceed its return. After this, the net flows would turn positive, dramatically so after 2020, since at this point there are no further costs, only the benefits derived from improved education and health. Hence, taken as a whole, the delayed benefits would more than recoup the costs. While this study falls within an economic tradition espoused by the World Bank and others on the importance of human capital formation for development, it has to be noted that some very critical benefits, such as those of investing in education, can hardly be measured in monetary terms – benefits in terms of personal development and enhanced choice. Demonstrating that eliminating child labour is a high-yielding global investment adds impetus to advocacy efforts within the worldwide movement.

As the above table shows that we will be greatly benefited, particularly Asian countries, by eliminating child labour. In all the major sectors like economic, education and health there will be huge development if the national governments take appropriate steps now. The cost for eliminating child labour is huge but we should not overlook its benefits in the long run and at the same time states cannot escape from its responsibilities towards its citizen and particularly the children, when millions of children are working in exploitative conditions.

SUGGESTIONS

Hazardous and exploitative child labour violates child rights as enshrined in the Constitution of India and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Any action to eliminate exploitative labour must be guided by the best interests of the child. Since the causes of child labour are complex hence solutions
must be comprehensive. Some specific actions, which are urgently needed, are recommended by the study as follows:

- **Positive economic incentive and poverty eradication**

  Economic incentives to compensate children and their parents for loss of income once the children have been removed from work are essential. To eradicate child labour it is necessary to convince parents and the community of the benefits of education and the damaging effects of child labour. Incentive schemes to be combined with employment and income-generation activities for the parents, with a goal of reducing the parents' dependence on their children's contribution to household income. Poverty Eliminative Programmes for child labour and their families as a community participatory project has to be introduced in all backward districts. Coordination between central and state governments departments is required towards child labour elimination efforts. The central and state governments should internalize the linking up processes of poverty alleviation, health, rural development and elementary education in a unified manner to eliminate child labour supply effectively. Besides, micro financing for the poor families and a minimum wage for adult workers should be implemented to discourage the practice of child labour.

- **Provision of free and compulsory education**

  Government must fulfill their responsibility to make relevant primary education free and compulsory for all children and ensure that all children attend primary school on a full-time basis until completion as child labour and education cannot go together. Government must budget the necessary resources for this purpose. Affordable and accessible primary education of good quality is the
centrepiece of any strategy to eliminate child labour. Legislation, which clearly sets out the minimum age for entering employment, must form the backbone of any strategy against child labour. School infrastructure and quality of teaching must be improved to ensure full implementation of Article 21-A of the constitution. Review of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and more budgetary allocations is necessary in view of large number of out-of-school children in India.

- **Legal protection and strict enforcement of laws**

  Laws on child labour and education should be consistent in purpose and implemented in a mutually supportive way. National child labour laws must accord with both the spirit and letter of the international Conventions. Legislation must encompass the vast majority of child work in the informal sector where majority of children are engaged. Legislation alone will, however, achieve very little unless it is accompanied by adequate enforcement mechanisms. Laws should be strictly enforced in order to exercise control on the problem of child labour by removing the practical problems like integration of all child labour related laws, which come in the way of strict enforcement of laws. Imparting training to the enforcement machinery responsible for proper enforcement of the child labour laws is another important issue as well. Since we have the largest number of child labour, there is a need to set up National Child Labour Commission to look after all the issues concerning child labour in India.

- **Birth registration of all children**

  All children should be registered at birth as prescribed in the article 7 of the Convention of the Rights of Children. Birth registration is essential to permit the exercise of the child’s rights, such as access to education, health care and
other services, at the same time this provision will provide employers and labour inspectors the evidence of a child's age. In the long run, adequate data on children would help the government to formulate necessary plans for children.

- **Data collection and monitoring**

  The availability of timely and reliable data is of crucial importance to the analysis of causes, forms and consequences of child labour and to the programming of activities. Proper systems must be put in place to gather and analyse data on child labour. Special attention must be paid to the 'invisible' areas of child labour, such as on the family farm or in domestic service. The data collection and monitoring systems on child labour and questions about child labour should be included in national census surveys. Monitoring by communities themselves is important, and working children should actively participate in assessing their situations and in proposing means to improve their conditions.

- **Codes of conduct for employer**

  Employers must adopt the codes of conduct guaranteeing that neither they nor their subcontractors will employ children in conditions that violate their rights and not to buy from any supplier that exploits children. Even at the individual level, we can apply the norms of not buying any thing made by child labour and employing children.

- **Ratification of ILO Convention No. 182 and 138**

  Ratification of ILO Convention No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by India is another serious issue, as these ILO Conventions
are perhaps the most significant legal instrument to tackle child labour. It defines the worst forms of child labour and asks all Governments to ban them immediately. Ratification of the Convention should be the first and immediate task for our Government. Once Government has ratified the Convention, they must apply it in law and in practice. Besides, Government should: Introduce action programmes to remove and prevent the worst forms of child labour; provide direct assistance for the rehabilitation of children; ensure access to free education; identify children at special risk; Governments must also report regularly to the ILO regarding the application of the Convention and be accountable for all allegations of violations.

- **Creation of grand social alliance**

  Governments alone cannot solve the child labour problem, which is so complex and deep rooted in our socio-economic system. In order to be able to take effective action a broad social alliance, based on the concept of creating synergies and complementarities, is essential. In general actors should include governments, NGOs, workers' and employers' organizations, research institutions, teachers and educators, the media as well as local communities and working children.

- **Prevention, removal and rehabilitation**

  It is increasingly being realized that in order to eliminate child labour prevention is more important than other strategies. An approach that gives emphasis to prevention is likely to achieve the target of elimination of child labour. In the long run, prevention is the most economical method and for that affordable, relevant and quality education should be the chief element of the preventive strategy. The removal of children from work and the subsequent
rehabilitation are equally important tasks. In fact removal and rehabilitation are two sides of the same coin. After withdrawal of children from hazardous work there must be accompanied with educational, health and economic support for the children and their families so that later on these children are rehabilitated properly.

- **International assistance**

  While child labour is essentially a national problem, assistance of the international community in the form of technical and financial cooperation is crucial to the success of national efforts. Many of the national actors neither have the technical capacity nor the financial resources to effectively address the problem of child labour, particularly in India where millions of children are still working. Countries should benefit from each other’s experiences and international assistance can be an important facilitator of such information exchanges. The IPEC should be expanded to more areas where the incidence of child labour is increasing.

- **Awareness rising**

  Information, sensitisation and mobilisation of public opinion and concerned groups, including children and their families, to join in the efforts against child labour is another important area. Launching campaign for mass awareness and obtaining cooperation of all sections of society for the elimination of this practice is necessary. For the elimination of child labour, the foremost priority is to bring about attitudinal change of Government and all sections of the society towards the issue of child labour. Here the media can sensitise general people by publishing more and more news on child labour.

  Experience shows that the problem of child labour can be solved through concrete national strategy and international cooperation. Children are
the future and we must provide the best opportunities to them so that they can develop in a healthy manner. We have to create a “protective environment” for children, ensuring a safety net for all children at risk, to protect children from exploitation and abuse by challenging popular attitudes and prejudices that result in abuse. We must ensure that governments are truly committed to protecting all children, and that it put the right laws in place and enforce them and giving children the information they need to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation. At the national level, our government is doing whatever it can do, however lots of work have to be done for which all round cooperation is very much crucial on the part of civil society, NGOs, political parties, students organisations, trade unions, mass media, employers and parents. Although the problem of child labour is a great challenge before us but there is hope and opportunities and we must work for it. The study was just an attempt to analyse the condition of child labour in local context, which at the same time compares it with some national and global contexts.

The main lesson that can be derived from experience so far is that child labour is not an insoluble problem. Given the political will on the part of governments and the mobilization of sufficient public support, much can be done to reduce the extent of child labour. At the national level this political commitment should be reflected in national legislation and plans of action for the child, including strategies for the eradication of child labour and to ensure the necessary resource allocation for their implementation where international actions and co-operations should be mainly in support of national actions. Eliminating child labour will not be achieved just through projects and piecemeal arrangements. The change is going to come with a genuine commitment - government, employers,
workers and general people should be prepared to work on this issue beyond politics. We have to create a system by which society rallies around the commitment where child labour is unthinkable and unnecessary. As Kofi Annan (2002) says “Few human rights abuses are so widely condemned, yet so widely practised. Let us make [child labour] a priority. Because a child in danger is a child that cannot wait.”

The effective solution to the problem will lie in sustained economic growth and social development. To achieve this objective, the primary responsibility lies with governments and it must acknowledge that as a welfare state it has a primary role in the efforts to eliminate child labour and to provide all the necessary assistance to the children and their families. Governments must display the political will to address the fundamental causes of the problem, and allocate the necessary resources to create the socio-economic conditions that will make it unnecessary for poor families to put their children in employment. Perhaps we should be aiming for in the next phase of the fight against child labour by making a time bound commitment to eradicate the menace of child labour and for that matter both the national and international institutions must integrate and mainstream the struggle against child labour into their policy-making. We must act together to make the world free of child labour, a world where children grow up not in conditions of exploitation but in conditions of freedom where they realise their potential to become the adults of tomorrow; and to fully develop their talents and strengths for a better world.