Chapter 8
SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Children are the future architects of the nation and they should be brought up with love, care and protection. But, in reality, children are the victims of all kinds of inhuman activities. They are abused, trafficked and even used in smuggling and terrorist activities. Child labour is one of these social challenges which not only affect children's ability but also their personal development. Developed or underdeveloped, urban or rural, working children are found in every society. Child labourers in Silchar town come from the poorest sections of the society. They discontinued their studies at a tender age due to poverty. They work in such a tender age for the survival of their families but do not get adequate money from their employers. They are coming from rural areas of Cachar district or the slums of Silchar town where they live in poor living conditions. Children work for long hours at a stretch with only a small break for meals. The meals are also not nutritious. Their income is essential for their families' survival. The attitude of parents and employers towards child labour is also very awful. Parents view them as wage earners and some time the whole family depends on the meager income of child labourers. Their economic condition, living standard, parental attitude leads the child to get into the labour market. This chapter summarises the study, presents the findings and concludes it along with social work implications and recommendations.

1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In India child labour contributes to 20% of the Gross National Product (GNP) which actually subsidises higher education for privileged children. The State of the World's Children Report 1997 points out three key factors responsible for child labour; namely, (i) the exploitation of poverty, (ii) the absence of education and (iii) the restriction of tradition (http://www.unicef.org/sowc97). In India, high household expenditure and low parental education are the two main factors responsible for the increasing trend of child labour. Social factors are also one of the important reasons for working of children at tender age. Child labour is a global problem that has attracted International agencies, activists and NGOs worldwide. It is more common in the developing and the underdeveloped countries. By and large, a problem of poor and destitute families where either parents cannot provide education to their children, or they have to depend on the earnings of their children. Child labour is found both in rural and urban sectors of all the geographical regions. It is prominently demonstrated in relatively backward regions, and in the urban centres it does reflect market based commercial exploitation. North East, one of
the backward regions of India, has witnessed the growth of a number of urban centres after Independence and these centres openly employ child labour in various commercial activities. A town like Silchar, a trade centre, demonstrates the employment of a huge child labour in transport vehicles, hotels and stalls, motor workshops and domestic sector. This striking feature of the growing urban centre is being taken up for investigation, especially in the context of Silchar town. A question is posed: **What structural patterns of child labour are perceived in the urban areas of Assam, especially in Silchar town?** The question has been attempted to achieve the following objectives:

(a) To understand the social background of the child labour;
(b) to know the child labour mechanism (recruitment, wage structure and working conditions);
(c) to examine the attitudes of the children and their parents and employers towards child labour;
(d) to suggest measures for elimination of child labour.

II. THE METHODOLOGY

The study is based on empirical/primary data which has been collected from the respondents of three different categories; viz., working children, parents and employers in four sectors; namely, motor workshops, transport services, hotels and stalls, and domestic sector in Silchar town. The main sample consists of 536 respondents who were drawn from the child labourers and their parents and employers. Hence, it comprises three sub-samples, one each, from the categories of the units. A sub-sample of 200 working children, 50 each, from the four areas of work; namely, transport, motor workshops, hotels and stalls, and domestic sector was drawn by using accidental sampling method as total number of child labourers in these work areas is not known and figures are not available. Besides, 200 parent(s) and 136 employers of those children were also selected. Of the selected employers, 22 were from transport sector, 50 were from domestic sectors; 44 were from hotels and stalls and 20 were from motor workshops. In the three sectors of work there are less than 50 employers because some of these employers had employed more than one child labourer. The field data were collected during the period of 01.01.2011 to 04.03.2012 by administering three interview schedules one each to the child labourers, parents and employers of the child labourers. These are (a) interview schedule for the selected child labourers, (b) interview schedule for parents of the child labourers and (c) interview schedule for employers of the child labourers.
III. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Silchar is situated on the left bank of the Barak River. It is surrounded by the Borail hills on the north, Mizo hills on the south, Manipur on the east and Bangladesh on the west. Silchar is a trade and processing centre for tea, rice and other agricultural products. There is a limited industry, principally papermaking and tea-box manufacturing. As of 2011 Indian Census, the total population of Silchar town is 1,72,709 of which males are 86,812 and females are 85,897, so maintaining the sex ratio of Silchar city is 989 of 1000 males, i.e., way above the national ratio of 940. Silchar has an average rate of literacy of 91.74%, much higher than the national average of 59.5%, male literacy is 93.97% and female literacy is 89.50%. In Silchar 8.96% of the population is less than 6 years of age. Major religions are Hinduism and Islam. (www.Census2011.co.in). Silchar town is developing day by day, with moderate economy status, education level, and communication facilities and so on. But quite surprisingly, the second largest urban centre as well as the commercial centre in Assam, i.e., Silchar town is not free from the evil of child labour. In every nook and corner of Silchar town, child labourers are found.

III. THE FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are as follows:

A. The Child Labour in Transport Sector

1. Most (90%) of the child labourers in transport sector belong to the age group of 13-14. The child labourers from the age groups of 9-10 years and 11-12 years constitute one tenth of the total child labourers. This pattern is by and large found across the caste categories and religions. The employers in transport sector are all males.

On the other hand, one third of their employers, each, are from the age group of 20-30 years and 31-40 years.

2. Most (88%) of the child labourers are literate and over one tenth of them are illiterate. This pattern is found across the caste categories and religions. The literate respondents are the drop-outs from school and they do not want to resume their studies. It indicates their economic conditions have made them disinterested towards studies.

Half of their employers are high school pass and near about one fifth are graduates.

3. Most (82%) of the child labourers live in Assam type houses of bamboo and mud walls with tin roof and the rests are live in Assam type houses with bamboo roof half brick wall, bamboo and mud walls followed by Assam type houses of bamboo walls with thatched roof and Assam type houses with
polythene roof and bamboo walls. A few of Muslim respondents live in Semi-RCC houses. Thus, house type indicates their poor living condition.

Over half of their employers live in Assam type houses with brick wall and tin roof and over one fourth live in semi-RCC houses.

4. Most (88%) of the child labourers have kachcha latrines and over one tenth of them do not have latrines in their houses. This pattern is found across the caste categories. None of the respondents have Pacca latrines in their houses. This shows their poor sanitary conditions which are hazardous to health.

All the employers have well constructed sanitary facilities in their houses.

5. Parents' of the child labourers are either jobless or working are also engaged in petty, low income, casual jobs. Over one fourth of the parents have no work and near about one fifth are farmers. One tenth are masons. The rest are hawkers, rickshaw pullers, shopkeepers, garden laboureres etc.

6. Over half of the parents' monthly income is ranging from Rs.2001-3000 and over one fifth of their monthly income is ranging from Rs. 5001-6000. Average of the monthly income of parents is Rs. 833.33/-. All the parents who are not working, their families have been sustained by their sons' income, out of which one third are handy boys, in one case mother also shares the family sustainability.

7. Over three fourths of the members in child labourers family are literate and the rest are illiterate.

On their other hand little more than one fourth of the family members of employers are high school pass and over one tenth of the family members, each, are High School and Higher Secondary School pass.

8. Near about one fifth of the child labourers' families' monthly income is Rs. 7001-9000/- and over one tenth of the families' monthly income is Rs. 9001-11000/-. On the other hand, over half of the employers’ monthly family income is Rs. 15,000-30,000/- and one fifth of the families’ monthly income is Rs. 31,000-Rs. 45,000/-.

9. Over two thirds of the child labourers are working due to poverty and over one tenth are working because either their father died or is sick. Less than one tenth of them (8%) are working because they do not have interest in studies. Over one third of the child labourers are working for last 1 year and over one tenth, each, are working for last 2 years and 3 years. This pattern is found across among the Muslim respondents also.

10. The child labourers work as handy boys; of which most (88%) clean motors, collect fares and help passengers and a few of the respondents change the tyres of motors, perhaps, they are comparatively grown up and have been working in the vehicles for long years. Over three fourths of the child labourers work for 12 hours a day and near about one fifth work for 10 hours a day. All the child labourers hang outside and stand on steps of the motor to collect the fare which is a clear evident of the hazardous situation to which they are exposed.
11. Near about one fourth of the child labourers get Rs. 80/- per day and fifth get Rs. 30/-. One tenth of the Muslim child labourers get Rs. 100/- per day. On the other hand, none of the Hindu child labourers get Rs. 100/- as wage. Most of the child labourers want to become driver in future as they live a small world of vehicles, where they constantly dream of one day handling steering.

12. Three fourths of the parents take children's help at home and do purchasing and a little less than one tenth help their mother and go for purchasing.

13. Over two fifths of the employers do not have any problem with their child labourers. Over one third find child labourers frequently absent and over one tenth find their child labourers very lazy. A few respondents find their child labourers disobedient.

14. Most (84%) of the child labourers are not aware of the law prohibiting child labour while over one tenth of them do know the law prohibiting child labour. Over half of the parents are not aware of the Law Prohibiting Child Labour and two fifths aware of the Law Prohibiting Child Labour. Most (90.91%) of the employers are aware of the law prohibiting child labour and little less than one tenths of the respondents do not know about the law prohibiting child labourers.

B. The Domestic Child Labour

1. Near about two thirds of the respondents belong to the age group of 13-14 years and over one fifth belong to the age group of 11-12 years. Most of the respondents are Hindus and nearly one tenth of the respondents are Muslim. Of the respondents, over one third are in the age bracket of 9-12 years and they come from these social groups; viz, SCs (28.95%), OBCs (33.33%) and Muslim (75%).

Half of their employers are from the age group of 31-40 years and nearly one fourth is from the age group of 41-50 years.

2. Domestic child labourers come from two linguistic communities of Cachar district, i.e, Bengali and Bhojpuri. Most (94%) of the respondents are Bengali and a few of them have Bhojpuri as their mother tongue. All SC and Muslim child labourers are Bengali.

Most of their employers have Bengali as their mother tongue and a few have Hindi as their Mother tongue.

3. Nearly three fifths of the respondents are literate and over two fifths are illiterate. Almost all the illiterate respondents are from SC and Muslim. Over one third of the child labourers discontinued their studies in class 5, over one tenth, each, discontinued their studies in class 4 and class 7. Thus, child labourers discontinue their studies in primary or primary level. Of 5 respondents, 4 SC and 1 Muslim are continuing their studies.

Almost all of their employers are literate. Only one Muslim female employer is illiterate. Half of the employers are graduates and over one fourth are
High School pass. Literacy level of child labourers and their employers reflects a wide inequality of their social status.

4. Over three fourths of the respondents live in rented houses and over one fifths of the respondents live in their own houses. Over half of the respondents live in Assam type house with bamboo and mud walls with tin roof and nearly one third live in Assam type house with bamboo walls and thatched roof and most of them have one living room in their houses. Thus, living condition of domestic child labourers is very poor.

Over three fifths their employers live in RCC houses and near about one third live in semi RCC houses. A few of them live in Assam type houses with brick wall and tin roof.

Thus, the living condition of child labourers and employers show the huge economic gap between the two groups. All the child labourers are landless whereas,

5. Water facility and sanitary condition also show their low standard of living. None of the respondents have water facility in their houses. They collect water for drinking and cleaning and washing from different sources like river, public ponds etc. Most of them do not have bathrooms and take bath in river and public ponds. All the respondents have kaccha latrines without septic tank. It indicates that families of child labourers are least health conscious.

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On the other hand, all of the employers have supply water as the source of drinking water and source of water for cleaning and washing. All the employers have sanitary latrines in their houses, over three fifths of them have attached bathrooms and over one third have pacca bathrooms outside their home.

6. Most (84%) of the child labourers do not have electricity facility in their houses. On the other hand all the employers have electricity in their houses. Over half of the employers have light, fans and inverter in their houses and the rest have both lights and fans in their houses. Almost all of the child labourers use firewood as cooking fuel. Most of them do not have any household gadgets.

Most of their employers of General Caste Category have light, fan and inverter in their houses. None of the Muslim employers have inverter in their houses. Most of the respondents (84%) have gas stove and water filter and refrigerators in their kitchens.

Over half of their employers have clock, radio, television, news paper and almirah in their houses. Over two fifths of the employers have clock, radio, television, news paper, almirah and computers in their houses.
7. The parents of the child labourers are engaged in low income jobs which are one of the major detriments of child’s development in their families. Over three fifths of the parents are working as domestic servants and nearly one tenth are house wives. The rest are insignificantly engaged in the occupations like cook, day labourers, cart pullers and rickshaw pullers.

8. About two fifths persons of child labourers’ family constitute non-working population (0-14 and 60+) and the rest is working population (15-59). Thus, in these families there is too much dependency for survival and meager resources are extremely strained.

Over one fourth their family members of employers constitute non-working population (0-14 and 60+) and the rest is working population. Therefore, in employers families economic burden is less.

9. Near about three fifths of the family members are literate and over two fifths of the family members are illiterate. Among the Muslim families there is wide literacy gap of females with males.

Nearly two fifths of the family members of employers are graduate and over one fifth are Higher Secondary pass.

10. Nearly half of the family members of child labourers got married before reaching their legally marriageable age (13-17 years) and two fifths got married at a very early age (18-22 years). Over one third of the male members got married at the age of 26-30 years and one third got married at the age of 21-25 years.

Over two fifths of the females from employers’ family got married at the age group of 18-20 years and one fifth of them got married before reaching their legally marriageable age (15-17 years). Over two fifths of the males got married at the age group of 21-24 years and over one fifth got married at the age group of 25-28 years.

Thus, child marriage is more practicing in child labourers’ families.

11. Nearly two thirds of the child labourers have been working for 1-2 years and over one fifth have been working for less than one year.

12. All of them do cleaning and washing, however, over half are engaged in only cleaning and washing in their employers’ houses and over one fourths of the respondent are engaged in cleaning, washing and helping mistress. Over two fifths of the child labourers are working for 12 hours, over one fifth are working for 5 hours a day and over one tenth of them are working for 3 hours a day.

13. Most (86%) of the child labourers find that their masters are concerning towards them and the rest are scolded by their master.

14. Nearly one third of the child labourers get Rs. 300/- per month and around one fifth, each, get Rs. 500/- and Rs. 1000/- per month. Around one tenth of the child labourers, each, get Rs. 200/- and Rs. 400/- per month. The difference in their daily wage is according to the number of houses they are working. Around three fourths of child labourers themselves receive their payments from their
employers and in case of over one fourth parents—mostly mother receive payments from their employers.

15. Over three fifths of the child labourers are not aware of the Law Prohibiting Child Labour and over one third are aware of the law.

Over two fifths of their parents are not aware of child labour act and over one third of them are aware of child labour act who came to know from their friends.

Most (96%) of the employers are aware of law prohibiting child labour and a few of them are not aware of the Law. The employers who are aware of the Child Labour Act they appointed the child labourers because child labourers or their family members contacted with them to appoint these children.

16. Over half the parents said that children should not work instead of going to school because education is very important to build a wealthy life and over two fifth said that children should work instead of going to school because poor children do not have any other option.

All the employers said that child should go to school instead of working because education is important for building up their future.

C. The Child Labour in Hotels and Stalls

1. Over three fifths of the child labourers are from the age group of 13-14 and over one fourth are from the age group of 11-12. Most of the child labourers are Hindu and a few are Muslim. Most of the child labourers belong to Scheduled Castes and over one tenth belong to General Castes. A few of them belong to Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Tribes.

On the other hand, most of the employers are Hindus and rests are Muslims. Over two fifths of the Hindu employers belong to Scheduled Caste Category, nearly two fifths are General Caste and over one tenths belong to Other Backward Classes. Over half of the employers are from the age group of 31-40 years and over one third is from the age group of 20-30.

2. Over two thirds of the child labourers are literate and the rest are illiterate. All the Muslim child labourers are illiterate while nearly one fourth of the Hindu child labourers are school dropouts.

Over two fifths of their employers are primary school pass and over one third are high school pass.

3. Over three fifths of the child labourers live in rented houses and over one fourth live in occupied waste lands. One tenth of the child labourers live in their own houses. Over two fifths, each, of the child labourers live in Assam type house with bamboo and mud walls with tin roof and Assam type house with bamboo walls and thatched roof. Over one tenth of the child labourers live in Assam type house with half brick wall, bamboo and mud walls.

Three fourths of their employers live in Assam type house of brick walls and tin roof and one fifth live in semi-RCC houses.
4. Child labourer living in one room, with low level of sanitation and bathroom facility shows their poor living condition. Around three fifths of the employers have 3 living rooms and over one fifth have 4 living rooms in their houses.

Over three fourths of their employers have Supply Water as the source of drinking water in their houses and near about one fifth have tube wells in their houses. Over three fourths of the employers have supply water and over one tenth have pond as the source of water for cleaning and washing. All employers have sanitary latrines in their houses. Most of the employers have pacca bathroom in their houses and over one tenths have kachcha bathroom in their houses.

5. Two thirds of the parents are working as maid servants and one tenth are working as rickshaw pullers. Over one tenth of the respondents are not working. Near about three fifths of the parents are working for last 5 years, over one fourth for last 10 years and one tenth for last 20 years.

Three fifths of the parents are working for last 5 years, over one fourth for last 10 years and one tenth for last 20 years. Nearly two third of the parents are working for 10 hours a day and one third for 5 hours a day. 1 Muslim mother works for 12 hours a day. All the respondents of General Caste, OBC and ST category work for 10 hours a day. Nearly three fourths of the parents get Rs. 0-1000 per month and over one tenth get Rs. 2001-3000 per month.

6. Over three fifths of the family members of child labourers are males and the rest are females. Of Muslim families three fifths are males and the rest are females. Of Hindu families over three fifths are males and over one third are females. This pattern is perceived across all the caste categories.

Over two fifths of the family members of employers are in the age group of 15-35 years and near about one fourth from the age group of 0-14 years. Over one fifth of the family members are in between the age group of 36-50. Nearly three fourths of the family members constitute the working class (15-59 years). Nearly one third of the populations are dependent.

7. Near about two fifths of the family members of child labourers are working as domestic maid servant and over one tenth of are working as rickshaw puller. Over one third of the families’ monthly income is Rs. 5001-7000/- and over one tenth of the families’ monthly income is Rs. 7001-9000/- followed by Rs. 300-1000/-. One tenths of the families’ monthly income is in between 1001-2000/- followed by Rs. 3001-4000/-. On the other hand, Over three fifths of the family members of employers are hotel and tea stall owners and over one tenths of the family members are Business man. Near about one tenth of the family members are Service holders. Two fifths of the employers’ families’ monthly income is Rs. 5,000-10,000/- and around one fourth of the families’ monthly income is Rs. 15,001-30,000/-. The average income of the families is Rs. 11, 66, 667/-.
8. Over one third, each, of the child labourers are working because of poverty and their fathers' death. Over two fifths of the child labourers are working for last 2 years around one fourth for last 1 year and over one tenth for less than a year.

9. Over half of the child labourers are serving food items and washing utensils in the hotels and over one fourth are serving food items, washing utensils and cleaning the rooms and kitchens in the hotels. Over one third of the child labourers have been introduced to their work by their fathers and over one fifth have been introduced to work by their brothers.

10. Near about two fifths of the child labourers work for 10 hours a day and one third work for 12 hours. Over one tenth of the respondents are work for 8 hours. Most (86%) of the child labourers are carrying heavy utensils and heavy buckets and near about one tenth of the child labourers are cooking on the stove, carrying heavy utensils and heavy buckets. Near about three fourths of child labourer reported that their employers are concerning towards them but also scold them.

11. Fourth fifth of the child labourers get meal from their employers in the afternoon and over one tenth get meal in the morning, afternoon and night. Half of the child labourers get Rs. 400/- per month and one third get Rs. 300/- per month. Over one tenth of the respondents get Rs. 200/- per month. Their average monthly income is 133.33/-.

12. Around one fourth, each, of the child labourers want to become hotel owner cook and businessman. These small children have very simple dream about their future. Most of the parents (88%) said that their children go for purchasing grocery items and vegetables from the shops and the rest said that their children look after their siblings followed by cooking and marketing both.

13. Most (86.36%) of the employers said that they have only one child labourer in their hotels and stalls and about one tenth of the respondents said that they have two child labourers in their hotels and stalls. Three fourths of the employers said that they do not have any problem with their child labourers and over one tenth of the respondents said that their child labourers are very lazy. Most (84.09%) of the employers do not have any future plan for the well being of their child labourers and over one tenth want to help their child labourers in settling down in future.

14. Most (82%) of the child labourers are not aware of the law prohibiting child labour and near about one fifth are aware of law prohibiting child labour. Near about three fifths of the parents are aware of the law prohibiting child labour and the rest are not.

On the other hand, over three fifths of the employers are aware of the child labour prohibiting Act and over one third are not aware of the child labour prohibiting Act.
15. The child labourers came to know about the Act from their friends, teachers and neighbours.

Near about half of the parents have come to know about the child labour law from children’s teachers and over two fifths have come to know about the child labour law from their friends.

16. Over three fourths of the child labourers are working after knowing the Law because of poverty and the rest are working as they are not interested in studies.

Over three fifths of the parents said that child should work instead of going to school because poor children have no other options and near about two fifths of the parents said that child should not work instead of going to school because education is important for building up their future.

Most (88.64%) of the employers said that they employ child labourers because children are cheaper and a few said that child labourer’s father insisted the respondents to employ their children.

Four fifths of the employers said that child should not work instead of going to school because of their better future and over two fifths said that child should work instead of going to school because poor people do not have any other options.

D. The Child Labour in Motor Workshops

1. Over half of child labourers belong to the age group of 13-14 years and over two fifths are from the age group of 11-12 years. Only one Muslim child labourer is from the age group of 9-10. Three fifths of the child labourers are Hindus and two fifths are Muslims. Two fifths are from Muslim and half of them are from Scheduled Caste Category and one tenth is from the Other Backward Classes. Both these categories are from Hindu.

Half of their employers belong to the age group of 31-40 years and over one third belong to the age group of 41-50 years. One tenth belong to the age group of 20-30 years.

2. Three fifths of the child labourers are literate and the rest are illiterate.

Half of the Muslim child labourers are literate. Most (80%) of the OBC and two fifths of SC child labourers are literate.

On the other hand, over one third of the employers are primary school pass and one fourth, each, are high school and HSLC pass. Therefore, the employers are not well qualified. It may be because they also started their career as helpers of mechanics at their very early age.

3. Most (84%) of the child labourers live in rented houses and over one tenth live in their own houses. Nearly half of the child labourers live in Assam type house of bamboo and mud walls with tin roof and two fifths live in Assam type house of bamboo walls with thatched roof. A few live in Assam type house of brick wall, bamboo and mud walls with tin roof.
Two fifths of the employers live in Semi-RCC houses and over one third live in RCC houses. One fourth of them reside in Assam type house of brick wall and tin roof. Two fifths of the employers have more than 4 living rooms in their houses and nearly one third have 4 living rooms. One fourth have 3 living rooms.

4. Most (80%) of the child labourers collect drinking water from roadside water supply and one tenth collect it from public well. Around one tenth collect it from public tube well. Half of the child labourers collect water for cleaning and washing from river and over one tenths of the child labourers collect water for cleaning and washing from public pond.

All of their employers have water facility in their houses. Most (80%) of the employers have water supply and the rest have tube well as the source of drinking water in their houses. Three fifths of the employers have water supply and over one third have tube well as the source of water for cleaning and washing in their houses. Only one employer has pond for cleaning and washing.

5. Nearly half of the family members of child labourers constitute the non-working population (0-14 and 60+) and the rest is working population. Over one third of the family members of employers belong to the age group of 0-14 years and little more than one third are from the age group of 15-35 years.

6. Over three fifths of the female family members of child labourers got married at the age of 13-17 years and over one fourths got married at 18-22 years. Over one third of male family members, each, got married at 16-20 years and 21-25 years. One fourth got married at 26-30 years. Thus, child marriage is prevailing in their families.

Over half of the family members of employers are married and rests are unmarried. Three fifths of the female members of their employers got married at the age of 23-27 years and one fifth of them got married at the age of 13-17 years. Over three fifths of the male family members of employers families got married at 26-30 years and over one tenth of them got married at 31-35 years.

7. Nearly third of the families’ monthly income is Rs.5001-7000/- and nearly one fifth of the families’ monthly income is Rs. 1001-2000/-. The average monthly income of families of child labourers is Rs. 1500/-. On the other hand, Most of the family members of the employers are workshop owners and the rest are businessmen and teachers. Three fifths of the employers’ family-monthly income is Rs.15, 001- 30,000/- and One fourth families’ monthly income is Rs. 30,001-Rs.45, 000/-. The average monthly income of the families are Rs. 11,250/-.  

8. Over half of the child labourers are working because of poverty, about one fourth are working because of their father’s death and one tenth because of their parents’ death. Over two fifths of the child labourers are working for last 2 years and over one fourth of the respondents, each, are working for last 1 year and less than 1 year. Near about three fourths of the child labourers will continue their works as long as their families want and the rest will continue their work as
long as they wish. Thus, the family plays a major role in the decision making of their future.

9. Over two fifths of the child labourers repair motor and over one fourth pump the tyres of the motor followed by those who wash the motor with electric compressor. The rest are distributed insignificantly into those who dent and paint the motor, which is a clear evident of the hazardous situation to which they are exposed. Over two thirds of the child labourers work for 10 hours a day, near about one fifths for 12 hours a day, one tenth work for 8 hours a day and the rest for 6 hours a day.

10. Over three fifths of the child labourers find their employers concerning towards them and the rest find their employers scolding. Thus, overall the treatment of the employers towards the child labourers is ok. 21 Child labourers met with accident during their work. They were provided allopathic treatment by their employers.

11. Two fifths of the child labourers get Rs. 300 per month and over one tenth of the child labourers, each, get Rs. 900 and Rs. 1000 per month and the rest are distributed insignificantly to Rs. 200 to Rs. 600/-. The average monthly income is Rs. 114.29/- Over two thirds of the child labourers give their income to their parents and over one fifths keep a part of their monthly income with themselves and a part give to their parents. Near about one tenth of the respondents keep their monthly income. Over half of the child labourers’ aim is to become workshop owners in future and one fifth aim to become businessman in future. Near about one fifth of the respondents aim to become rich men in future.

12. Over two fifths of the employers reported that three child labourers are working in their motor workshops and one fourth of the employers reported that two child labourers are working in their motor workshops. One tenth of the employers reported that more than four child labourers are working in their motor workshops followed by four child labourers and one child labour. The employers who employ more than one child labourer find it cheaper to employ the child labour instead of adult labourers. In the place of one adult labourer they can employ two or more child labourers with minimal wage.

Two fifths of the employers reported that their child labourers are frequently absent in their work place. One tenth of the employers said that their child labourers are very lazy followed by the employers who said that their child labourers are disobedient. Two fifths of the employers have no problem with their child labour. This pattern is found across the religions and caste category.

13. 14 child labourers out of 50 child labourers are aware of the Law Prohibiting Child Labour. Of the Muslim child labourers 5 are aware of the Law. Of the Hindu child labourers 6 SC and 3 OBC child labourers are aware of the Law Prohibiting Child Labour.

Over three fifths of the parents are not aware of the Child Labour Prohibiting Act. This pattern is found across the religion and caste category.
On the other hand, Most (90%) of the employers are aware of the Child Labour Prohibiting Act and one tenth are not aware of Child Labour Prohibiting Act. This pattern is perceived across the religions and caste categories. All the respondents of General Caste Category are aware of the Law.

14. Most (86%) of the child labourers want to continue their present work instead of going to school because of their family needs.

Over three fifths of the parents said that children should work instead of going to school because poor children have no other option. Over one third of the parents said that child should not work instead of going to school because education is important for building up secured life. This pattern is found across the religions and caste category.

Most (80%) of the employers said that children should not work instead of going to school because they think education is important for building up the life and one fifth of the respondents said that children should work instead of going to school because they think that poor children do not have any other option.

IV. SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To eliminate child labour from the society there are perceived some social work implications and there are suggested a few measures here.

1. Child labour is a knotty problem not only in Silchar town but also all over India. The practice of child labour denies children education, good health and opportunities for their all round development and therefore child labour is a dark side of development and in order to dispel this darkness, the government should take necessary action to eliminate child labour. The laws supporting the elimination of child labour should be implemented in a proper way. It is well clear that government alone can’t enforce effectively the laws banning the child labour. Therefore, government efforts have to be combined with people’s cooperation. For this, there is need to create a multi-level agency of representatives from government, civil society, NGOs and social workers right from the national level to the village/ grassroots level to conceive and implement strategies for elimination of child labour and to monitor them.

2. There is need to define child labour in the context of our own society and country. Though the traditional approach to child labour excludes some of the activities from child labour, yet there is need to give a re-look to the definition of child labour and to identify certain activities and areas of work which contribute to the development of children. Hence, in the context of developing countries it is not to exclude child from all activities but education, but child labour-friendly activities have to be found as the poverty and in that case non-functionality of education cannot be insisted. However, India has already taken certain development strides and at this level of development at least age of child labourers should be enhanced from 14 years to 18 years as working at early age
poses physical and mental problems in all round development of children. This will also have some impact on child labour for its elimination in the sense that at least children of tender age which are easily identifiable will be spared and it may be that only children of adolescent age will be victims of labour as identifying them as children is always not easy.

3. Vocational training should be given to the poor and destitute children from the school level so that they can be able to pursue their education and learn skills. In the poor families the formal education has no relevance as it does not guarantee a secured future and livelihood. Therefore, they always look for skill learning or wage earning for their families. Therefore, there is need to combine skills and learning and build capacities of families. Socialization is very important because it is found that some families’ monthly earning is satisfactory and they can able to send their children to the school. But the children themselves do not like to continue their studies. These children told that their friends and neighbours are working and earning money so, they also want to work. Besides, joyful learning is useful for eliminating child labour from the society because many of the children reported that they left school because teachers’ behaviour was very harsh. They could not enjoy studies which pushed them into labour market. Other than that, some child labourers reported that they are continuing their education because their teachers inspire them to study.

4. Employers who employ the child labourers should be dealt with seriously and punished. If public cooperation is also taken and the laws are strictly enforced it will supplement other efforts for eliminating child labour also.

5. The reasons which can be also considered as the causes of child labour are illiteracy, ignorance and unawareness of the parents of the child labourers. Social workers can play an important role to make these poor and illiterate parents aware of the evils of child labour. So, the Government in collaboration with the NGOs should start some projects where they may appoint volunteers or social workers for prompt and quick result. This will enhance the capacity of the poor families on the other front to eliminate the child labour.

6. Above all, poverty and unemployment of adults are the main reasons behind the increasing trends of child labour. Therefore, to eliminate child labour, there is a need to minimise poverty and eradicate unemployment problems of adults. The same agency of government representatives, NGOs, civil society and social workers may put their efforts together to implement projects for employment, specially self-employment programmes to improve their lot and uplift them out of poverty. For implementation social workers should monitor their situation.
V. CONCLUSION

To conclude it can be said that child labourers should be regarded as social evil. The children are socially and economically deprived. The growing trend of child labourers in transport sector, domestic sector, hotels and stalls and motor workshops in Silchar town, throws light on the miserable conditions of poor families. Domestic child labour can be considered as the worst form of child labour among the four sectors as the children who are working in this sector do not have any future vision and options for better jobs. Most of the cases their incomes are taken by their families.

Child labourers working in different sectors of Silchar town are the result of dire poverty. Their economic conditions compel them to work in tender age. Children’s incomes are used for supporting the family expenditure. The children in such a tender age are engaged in dangerous works. The child labourers in transport sector, in hotels and stalls and in motor workshops are often engaged in dangerous activities. Though the domestic child labourers work in household chores, but, at their home they also have to do the same works. Working whole day without taking rest also hampers the physical development of these children. Parents’ lack of awareness is also responsible for child’s work. They count their children as the source of income because with petty income they cannot bear the expenditure of the family. They want that their children should settle down in their future but they are not aware of the value of education. Either they are aware of the Law Prohibiting Child Labour, or not, they want that poor children should work. The parents who are not aware of the Law want to know it out of curiosity. It shows that they are not at all interested in children’s bright future. They view their children as the bread winners. It exhibits the economic vulnerability of the child labourers and their families. The employers are keen to employ child labourers with a minimal wage. In the unorganised sectors like transport sector, domestic sector, hotels and stalls and motor workshops, the interest of the labourers are less maintained. There is no job security or fixed pay scale for labourers. The payment is made according to the work experience and physical efficiency. So, in these sectors employers find it easy to employ children with fewer wages. The foremost reason for employing child labourers is that children are cheaper to pay and uncomplaining in nature. Some of the employers reported that child labourers are easy to handle and reliable. Employers never feel that they are the exploiters rather they feel that they are the benefactors of the child labourers. Because they pay them, feed them and extend help towards their child labourers and the families. This is a very common view found among the employers. Therefore, after analysing the socio-economic background, work and work mechanism and attitude of child labourers, their parents and their employers, it can be said that child labour is one of the serious problems and source of child exploitation in a growing city like Silchar town.