SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

The prevalence of Child labour in any form is a curse and at the same time it is a socio-economic evil. It is a problem as serious as one can think. It may destroy the whole country and civilization. It may block the future development of the country as a whole. The practice of child labour is as old as the history of mankind itself. Even in ancient times in pre-industrial agricultural society it existed. But the evil effects of child labour were brought prominence only after the industrial revolution in England. It became rampant due to vast demand for manpower and capitalistic mode of production.

The problem of child labour is global phenomenon. Even today it is not confined to the Third World Countries. It is more or less prevalent everywhere in the World, the difference, if any is only of degree or kind. It is saddening to note that India is the largest employer of child labour in the world and has earned a dubious distinction of exploiting this human resource. We have not yet been able to grapple with this shameful menace. Child labour are mostly in unorganized sector in multifarious occupations. A sizeable population of working children are engaged in health hazardous activities. Incidence of the child labour is higher in rural areas than the urban because of cheap labour supply. Magnitude of child labour varies from state to state due to variation in the levels of poverty, literacy and other such factors. It is the highest in Andhra Pradesh and the lowest in Kerala. Female
child labour are mostly found in unorganised sector both male and female child labour belongs to SC, ST and backward casts in 95 per cent of cases.

There is high incidence of child labour in our state also due to the same factors as mentioned above. The incidence in the state also varies from one district to another district. It is definitely because of variations in the contributory factors. Like other states of India U.P. has also incidence of child labour in rural areas than urban. Child labour are mostly found in unorganized sector in various types of occupations. In this case study also similar scene is to be seen with minor differences in Saharanpur also above 80 percent of child labour belong to Muslim, SC and backward caste among whom high illiteracy rate, poverty and high fertility rate exits. Most of the working children are in a mentally very depressed state, they have to work in very unhealthy conditions and their master attitude are always harsh. Their physical and mental development are retarded. They are forced to work for longer hours at very low wages. Majority of child labour are in age group of 8 to 14 years.

Child labour is cause and consequence of exploitative system prevailing not only at the national level but also at the international level. Child labour practice causes unemployment for adult persons also. Insufficient utilisation of labour power at lowest productivity level which precludes full development of children’s potentialities and ultimately harms economic development of a nation. Since children are the future hope of
society, they are destined to play important role in shaping the destiny of the nation.

Mass poverty and illiteracy are the breeding ground for child labour system. There is positive correlation between poverty, illiteracy and child labour. Kerala where literacy is the highest in the country. Child labour problem is almost non-existent there. Poverty along with illiteracy force the children to work. These two important factors poverty and illiteracy also form vicious circle of child labour and it perpetuates generation to generation. Both these factors cause child labour and again child labour cause illiteracy and poverty ultimately and this continues. Besides it, child labour is also linked with socio-economic and cultural factors, high fertility ratio, feudal structure of land system in the state rural and urban amounting, unemployment, industrial and agricultural backwardness, ignorance of the people, political apathy and ineffective or non-enforcement of legislation etc. Thus, we find here a cause and effect relationship. In fact, the phenomenon of child labour is so complex and deep-rooted in socio-economic and cultural fabric of our society that it may not be wise to rely on any single approach to tackle this problem. Moreover, factor intensity and social conditions vary from one district to another district. Therefore, uniform type of measures will not be helpful in eradication of this problem.

Our constitution has embodied certain provisions for children’s welfare. Articles 15, 23, 24, 39, 43, 45 and 47 all are related to children’s
rights. Announcement made by union Human Resources Development minister in a conference held at Delhi on 26-11-1999 to make primary education free and compulsory for all by bringing amendment is of course a welcome step.

To combat child labour problem in the country several labour legislations enacted even during British period. The first legislation related to it was passed in 1881. Before independence the acts were passed by then government such as the Child Labour Act, 1933, Employment of Child Act, 1938. After independence acts were passed by our government such as the Factories Act, 1948, The Mines Act, 1952, Plantation Labour Act, 1951, The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, Motor Transport Workers’ Act, 1951, Bidi, Cigar Workers’ Act, 1966 and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. But due to loop-holes in the Acts these could not yet be proved effective in protecting children’s welfare. Corrupt and weak government machinery are also responsible for poor enforcement of these acts. As a result, child labour problem went on increasing in our country. At the same time it is also a reality that even with the strongest of legislation and most efficient implementation machinery, child labour cannot be eradicated overnight. It is deep rooted problem to be whisked away by mere legislation.

International agencies like ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO are making every efforts to eradicate this problem. The ILO has adopted 18 conventions and 16 recommendations with regard to child labour so far. Even though India has
ratified almost all the ILO conventions on child labour, no concrete measures and machinery has been adopted to curb this problem. Mere ratification of the ILO conventions is not sufficient to curb the exploitation of child workers. Voluntary agencies are doing better in this field but financial constraint and other difficulties always hamper their functioning. Role of judiciary is also very important in this direction. In a landmark judgment given by Supreme Court on 10-12-1996 while setting out a long list of child labour monitoring obligations of the State Governments, it has also prescribed heavy fines for employers and compensation to the child employed in case of violating Child Labour Act, 1986.

Based on the analyzed data formed after the survey on child labour the following important aspects have been extracted and given.

1. The largest group of child labour were those 10–13 years of age (46%) of the total number of children interviewed. Table 4.2 shows that there were very few girls (4%) who were involved in child labour in the wood carving as compared to boys (96%). Several factors were associated to this particular phenomenon. In Saharanpur, this was because working in wood carving which is considered as an activity for men. Also they could be made to do more work for prolonged hours.

2. It is clear from the above table that the education profile of the working children indicates that 67% of the working children had dropped out of primary education and 6% of the interviewed children had not enrolled in primary education at all. During interviewing the children, it was
observed that their family had to fight for two meals a day, leaving them no option but to work.

(3) In sample survey, it was found that 82% of the children belong to Muslim community where the number of children is huge. Due to more number of children, the parents are unable to fulfill the basic needs of their kids and encourage them or force them to work in early age. In this toned, the male children were sent to work in this industry where as the female children work after their younger siblings and household work.

(4) In the sample survey it was found that nearly 60% of the child labour belongs to the family where there are more than 6 children. Only 2% children were there who belongs to family where there are only two children.

(5) It was found that 70% of the children engaged in wood carving industry belong to those family where both father and mother are illiterate, they can’t even read and write. Where as only 2% of this group belongs to the family where their parents are literate and completed their primary or junior level of education. 22% children are found whose only father are literate and 6% children are there where mother can only read and write.

(6) 66% of the child wood carver’s father are found engaged in wood carving industry. Where as only 12% children belong to agricultural background. 7% children found that their father engaged in business related to wood carving.
(7) It was analysed from the survey that 72% children are born in urban areas (in Saharanpur). As wood carving industry has the greatest scope for child labour. Maximum children join this industry. It attracts the rural children also. 28% of this group are those who belong to rural areas.

(8) As poverty is the main reason which encourages the children to work in an early hour, it is found that nearly 69% of child labour live either in kuchcha houses or in jhuggies. Only 31% children are there who live in pucca or mixed houses, which clearly indicates their poor economic and social condition.

(9) Their miserable economic condition is found from the survey about their living condition. It was found that 59% of the children are there who belong to their family living with two or more family in a house. As they could not bear the high rent, they did not have independent house to live in. 75% families are found who live in one room. These houses are situated in slum areas. 53% of the child workers lived in slum areas.

(10) Survey on their working conditions shows their miserable condition in work place. 55% child workers were found who work more than 9 hours in a day. Near about 60% of them did not have any fixed time far interval or lunch. Their children suffered from asthma, Tuber Clousis or some other diseases in very early age.

These children generally work in open areas, so are directly affected by the natural temperature of the atmosphere and pollution.
There is no toilets and urinal facilities for these children due to which they get affected by various infectious diseases.

**SUGGESTIONS**

On the basis of the study the following suggestions are placed for consideration by the government, the economic planners and the administration -

- The problem of child labour is directly connected with the poverty and illiteracy of Indian masses. Primary education, which is provided for in the constitution and state legislation should be enforced for all children below the age of 14 years. Government should take steps to reduce inequality of income and wealth.

- Poverty elimination programmes such as NREP, IRDP, DPAP, RLGEP, MNREGA, TRYSEM, EAS, JRY, etc. should be effectively worked out in rural areas, Self-employment scheme should be intensified. Beneficiaries of these programme must be those poor families who are child labour. There should be a close understanding among the economists and bureaucrats and political leaders. Such coordination is not only inevitable but also realistic in the sense of improving the present state of affairs. There should be coordination not at the planning level but also upto evaluation stage.

- Government should implement such action plans in the areas where child labour concentration is much higher. These areas should get priority.
Unemployment allowance, old age pension and red-card scheme for supplying the grains at half price among the poor all should be properly and fairly implemented. Benefit should reach genuine and needy people.

The prevailing tribal development and welfare programmes have to be reassessed. Before selecting the beneficiaries for different schemes their felt needs should be identified depending upon their choices.

Poverty alleviation programmes would be formulated and implemented in a decentralized manner with the participation of people at the grass-root level through village panchayats, panchayat samities, Zilla Parishads, etc. Such an approach will contribute to the selection of projects suited to local conditions, and to the integration of poverty alleviation programmes with area development.

The programme would be aimed at the poorest among the poor who will be identified by an annual household income of Rs. 4800. For this purpose detailed household surveys, with maximum involvement of the total community, should be carried out.

Assistance under more than one scheme should be given to different members of the identified household so as to gradually create a capacity for productive absorption of credit and generation of self-sustaining income.
Projects for household enterprises should be worked out. For this purpose equipment and working capital should be provided.

Wage earning schemes are like pain killers and give temporary relief. None of the programmes under the anti-poverty umbrella is executed in a way as may provide a lasting solution. Enough local initiative and discretion is needed to mould and share the programmes as per local needs.

What the poor need is a stake in the land they till; fair wages for their work; education, training and up gradation of skills; credit and infrastructural support for self-employment in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. Above all, they need self-confidence and social recognition to come out of the poverty trap.

The failure to improve the lot of the poor and backward casts, so far, has been the result of complex interplay of economic and political forces and many maladies in the administrative machinery. It seems the failure has been partly due to wrong policies and partly due to inherent weakness in the political and economic institutions and administrative machinery in addition to the faulty planning. All need careful investigations and correction to realize the fruits of the development in the real sense.

Fighting poverty in district is a struggle which need all good will and support from the government and the bureaucracy, academics and social activities, political parties and NGOs, banks and financial
institutions and above all-the people. Women and the youths have to be in the vanguard.

- Land reform programmes should be strictly implemented. Land to the landless must be provided as must to the families of child labour and landless.

- In rural areas investment in better irrigation, credit and market facilities should be made available so that rural people can get more out of their land. Programme of Dairy Development and Fisheries must be started. Agro-based industries should be promoted to all possible stand for income generation among the rural people.

- Rural co-operatives should play a more vital role by giving loans, help in procuring raw material and in marketing so that the rural poor can get out of the clutches of middlemen and big manufacturers. With more income coming in, they can then be persuaded to send their children to school instead of putting them out to work at an early age.

- In urban areas, slum dwellers, casual workers, small artisans, vendors, minority community people, SC and ST and Backward Classes of the population should be the main beneficiaries of anti-poverty programme. Village, cottage and small scale industries should be promoted at large scale for reducing unemployment among the adults. Small and medium enterprises (SME) should be provided micro credit (Small loans to poor people possessing no collateral) at very low rate
of interest as emphasized by 2006 Noble prize winner Prof. Mohammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi Economist to reduce poverty at grass-root level.

- Any legislation for totally prohibiting child labour amount to hardships to the poor parents and their children unless they are rehabilitated or their families are provided alternative source of income.

- Most of Rehabilitation programmes today aim at improving the working environment of the child and were hence helping to perpetuate this evil. The ultimate aim has to be the abolition of child labour and all government programmes must work towards fulfilling this objective.

- Child labour should not be under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour. The rehabilitation programme come under Education Department, Health Department, Rural Development Department etc. Co-operation with these departments is often a major hurdle. Therefore, child labour should be under the Ministry of Welfare because it would be better suited to deal with the problem in its various dimensions.

- The state has to recognize the problem of the Child labour with full responsibility and give the insurance of basic needs of life both to the parents and their children.

- Minimum wages Acts should be strictly followed and the act concerning it should be amended and reformulated to avoid loopholes in them.
Schooling is the obvious and the only best alternative to child labour along with several anti-poverty programme implementations as poverty coupled with mass illiteracy aggravate the situation. All the programmes for education meant for child labour should go side by side with nutrition health care, and social welfare as a package within ICDS.

Laws on child labour and education should be consistent in purpose and implemented in a mutually supportive way.

Expenditure in social sector should be raised of GDP for overall human development as suggested by 98 Nobel Prize laureate Prof. Amartya Sen.

Voluntary efforts to undertake innovative experiments in early childhood education should be welcomed and supported.

Top priority should be given to universalisation and elementary education for children between 6 to 14 years within a time frame not exceeding more than 5 years. The other important programme would be non-formal education to help children who are unable or unwilling to attend full time school. These facilities should be provided by NGO’s.

Curriculum should be reformed to suit local environment, school timings, local community resources. “Earn-while you-learn” programmes should be introduced and expanded according to local requirements. Thus, education has become part of the problem but it must be reborn as a part of the solution on the above guidelines.
Alongwith general education, vocational training should be imparted to the children to make them economically independent in their adulthood.

Adequate medical and recreation facilities should be provided to the deprived children for their emotional and psychological development.

Educating the child is not enough without also educating the parents. Hence, there should be a greater emphasis on adult education which will teach about nutritional needs of the child and also make a parents aware of the hazards of sending their child to work.

Educational programmes should not stop at free tuition fee, but should also exempt children from examination fee and provide them with free text books, stationery, Mid-daymeals, uniform and other requirements as per the provisions of article 45 of the constitution.

There should be more budget allocation for increasing the prospects of child welfare. All children must be registered at birth. Registration is essential to permit the exercise of the child’s rights, such as access to education, health care and other services, as well as to provide employers and labour inspectors with evidence of every child’s age.

Data on child labour are scarce. National and international system must be put in place to gather and analyze globally comparable data on child labour, if the problem is to be addressed effectively. Special attention must be paid to the forgotten or ‘invisible’ areas of child labour, such as
within the home, on the family farm or in domestic service. Monitoring by communities themselves is important, and working children should actively participate in assessing their situations and in proposing ways to improve their conditions. (UNICEF)

➢ The parameters of human development achievement in Kerala are at par with developed countries. Kerala Human Development is an outstanding testimony to the crucial role of female literacy in India, our state should also follow it.

➢ There is tremendous interference from local politicians who have close link with entrepreneurs in case of rehabilitating the working children it should be stopped at once.

➢ Children removed from the work should be provided non-formal education alongwith some vocational training whatever they like. They should also be given some type of stipend. This will make them able to shift to more remunerative, more satisfying and non-hazardous alternative jobs.

➢ The government should implement suitable family welfare schemes and if possible adopt suitable population policy to restrict the family to one child.

➢ Sufficient care must be taken that all rehabilitation programmes take into account regional and occupational variations. Every area has its own peculiar problem and each one has to be dealt with separately.
More research must be undertaken and each child labour concentration area studied separately in its particular context and local setting. It is only after such detailed studies are conducted that rehabilitation programmes can be formulated and effectively implemented.

A wide publicity be given to the evils of child labour and the parents be made aware of the problem of child labour.

Campaigning against child labour can make use of the variety of forms in multi-media which reach varied segment of people. Apart from the conventional format of press magazine advertisements. AVs, TV, Films, Vedio, Direct Mail, brochures and posters, other potent medium for rural areas are puppet shows, plays and street theatre. Full/fledged exhibitions in the capital and state capital would also help in bringing interested people together. Since this is the age of media it can be used as an effective tool in combating the child labour.

The employers who employ child labour should be dealt with firmly and punished. This needs whole hearted co-operation of the officials of labour departments to implement the provisions of Child Labour Act, 1986 to its fullest extent.

Child Labour legislation should be organized and unified as well as extended to occupations in the unorganized sector, like carpet weaving, domestic work, agriculture, etc. The legislation should clearly make distinction between hazardous and non-hazardous occupations for the
children. In hazardous occupations it should be strictly banned and in non-hazardous occupations, steps should be taken for gradual withdrawal of children from work by providing adequate facilities of education, nutrition, medical aid and social security benefits. It is also necessary to sponsor and promote research studies on the impact of laws relating to child labour in order to bring out the strengths and weaknesses of the existing legislations.

- The role of trade unions may be very important and effective in the abolition of child labour system. The immediate task before the National Trade Union Centre should be make their stand clear as far as the background of child labour consisting of many tribes and castes is concerned. They should let the world know that the cumulative injustice have to go in a time bound schedule. The unions should endorse the idea of outright banning and discontinuing of child work.

  The sword which the trade unionists will have to be a double edged sword. On one hand, the onslights of the rural elite are to be resisted and on the other the child labour in the urban areas is to be saved from eternal condemnation.

- Strong policies will is also very important to ensure implementation of all schemes and programmes and legislations related to children’s welfare and their families.
Last but not the least the prevailing corruptions in government machinery must be checked very effectively and properly otherwise our all efforts in the elimination of child labour will be like filling a vessel which has a hole in it. The argument that child labour is a 'necessary evil' or an 'unavoidable by-product' of poverty. We should not accept the exploitation of children under any circumstances and they should not be condemned to a life of poverty and lost opportunity. Instead of accepting child labour, governments must redouble their efforts to eliminate it and ensure that all children in the country attend full-time formal education.

'Why do we have to pay to price of poverty?'

'People believe there are many reasons why children are better off working, but nobody asks the parents of a middle class child why they are sending their children to school. It's a double standard every child, rich or poor must be allowed their right to full-time formal education.' Hence, it is concluded that child labour is a necessary evil.
“Child labour is a necessary evil that is prevailing in Indian Society” The child labour employed in wood carving industry is exploited at a large extent. Despite the various laws that forbid child labour, nearly 20% of the working force includes children of 6-14 age group, obviously, most of these children remain uneducated due to loads of work. So, the future of these children is not secure. The families of such children have more than 6 members. According to the survey, mostly children belong to the Muslim community where poor parents have many children and are unable to nourish them properly. Thus, children remain undernourished. The literacy level of parents of these kids is very low. Nearly 3 quarters have uneducated parents whereas only 2% have literate ones. Thus, the parents do not understand the importance of education and emphasize their children to work. A very less proportion of children belong to agriculture background. Mostly their fathers are also engaged in wood carving industry. Largely, the employed children belong to rural areas. They are the children of rural casual workers. Their social and economic conditions are truly miserable. Nearly 70% of them live in ‘jhuggi jhopris’ or slums and the rest owe pucca houses. Those who live as lodgers have to share their rooms with other families due to mounting cost of rent. The bad working conditions add to their misery. More than half of the child workers work for more than 9 hours a day and have no fixed time for lunch. These children often suffer from fatal diseases like Tuberculosis, Cholera, Asthma etc. Their atmosphere is exposed to mosquitoes, heat, pollution which affect them directly. So, the lives of child labourers are really tough.