PREFACE

Child labour has always been a part of society existing from years which could not be counted. In the Pre-industrial era, children used to help their parents in family work, farm operations or family occupations, situation has not changed even today. In the Post-industrial era, child labour exists on account of its low wages and profitability for their employer. Child labour is mostly prevalent in developing countries like ours, India. Child labour is a blot not only on those employers who use and exploit them; but also on people using their produced goods and above all on the Nation.

Child labour problem has increased in today’s environment and it has become central problem for the Nation, Non-Government Organizations, International Organization like International Labour Organizations, researchers and others too. Several steps have been taken and special attention has been paid by frequently implemented new and revised schemes by the Government of India and State Governments to eradicate the problem of under age children involved and employed in employment and especially in hazardous employment.

Child development is the foundation of human development and national development. “Investment in children is the best investment in human resources development in spite of its long gestation period. There is overwhelming international evidence that investment in people makes sense not just in human terms, but also in hard-headed economic terms”. Development of children postulates provision of higher standards of nutrition, health, education, better environment, equality of opportunity and freedom in developing countries. Investment in children increases their longevity,
productivity, social efficiency and human development that is conducive for economic development and national development.

In India, where more than one fourth of its population yet lies below the poverty line, child labour is a massive problem with poverty being labeled as the prime cause for its creation, provisions and furtherance. As there are variations with regard to the exact estimates of child labour in the country due to difference of age of entry in work and as per the concepts and definition considered. While there may be variations with regard to the exact estimates of child labour in the country, its seriousness, complexity and implications cannot possibly denied. Children were always found working in small hotels, shops, garage, workshops, etc. but today many of the children are found working and engaged in hazardous industries manufacturing carpets, locks, glass/bangle, brassware, fireworks, beedi, etc. These children are working in the most inhuman conditions within the closed walls of the factories/workshops and are less visible and worst exploited.

The present study focuses on the identified hazardous sectors where children were working in Uttar Pradesh, like Lock Industry in Aligarh, Glass/bangle Industry in Firozabad, Carpet industry in Bhadoi, and Brassware Industry in Moradabad. An attempt has been made here to delineate the factors that perpetuate child labour by looking into the demand as well as the supply side factors. The study is divided in nine sections first one comprising of the problem of child labour in India along with the concepts and definitions. In the second part, the structure and processes in which children are employed have been shown. Magnitude and socio-economic conditions of the children were discussed in the third section; how children became a part of economic
development has been explained in the fourth section; subsequently the causes why children work has been discussed; effect on health and education of those working children have been discussed later; after that the remedial measures adopted by The Government and other Non-Governmental Organizations and International Organizations have been talked about; followed with the constitutional provisions adopted and the last part comprise of the conclusions drawn and suggestions made.