CHAPTER - 2
CHILD LABOUR
IN U.P.
CHAPTER - 2

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in the country accounting for 16.4 per cent of the country’s population. It is also the fourth largest state in geographical area covering 9.0 per cent of the country’s geographical area, encompassing 2,94,411 square kilometres and comprising of 83 districts, 901 development blocks and 112,804 inhabited villages. The density of population in the state is 473 person per square kilometres as against 274 for the country.

Population

The total population of the state was 8.8 crores in 1971. It increased to 11.1 crores in 1981 and then reported to be 13.9 crores in 1991. The increase, in population in these two decades was almost identical at 25 per cent. As against this, the national population shows a declining trend from 25 per cent in 1971-81 to 23.8 per cent in 1981-91. Since 1971-81 the decadal variation of U.P. population in percentage forms has remained higher than that of the national.

Urbanization

The pace of urbanization has been lower in the state. The level of urbanization has also been lower than most other states.
The numbers of urban centres with more than one lakh population have grown slowly over last thirty years. The growth of urban centres with population less than five thousand have, on the other hand, have grown more significantly and these centres have grown in larger numbers in the western part of the state.

**Economy**

The per capita income of the state at Rs. 4787 in 1993-94 is one of the lowest in the country except Orissa (Rs. 4726) and Bihar (Rs. 3620). The per capita of the state in 1950-51 at Rs. 259 was very close to the national per capita income of Rs. 267, short by only Rs. 8 i.e. 3 per cent only. In 1995-96 this shortfall stood at Rs. 35.8 and is likely to go up. The average annual growth in total income of the state in the period between 1951-74 was always far less than the country. However, the population growth in the state being lower in the country during the period, the gap in the per capita income between the state and the country was constructed to some extent.

The post 1974 period was, however, marked by a significant improvement in the total income of the state. The state achieved a growth of 5-7 per cent per annum, which is higher than the national growth of 5.3 per cent. But this gain in higher growth rate of total income in the state was lost to the state due to increase in the growth rate of population from 1.8 per cent per
annum in 1961-71 to 2.3 per cent in 1971-81 which is higher than the country's population growth rate of 2.2 percent.

The increasing trend of growth in income in the period following 1974 is likely to be replaced by an average annual growth of even less than 3 percent which is much lower that the country's growth rate of almost six per cent. This means that the shortfall in the states per cepita income, which was 35 percent in 1994-95, is unlikely to change in recent time.

Thus the lower rates of growth in the total income of the state during the period 1951-74 was followed by high population growth in the last two decades. But the state is now faced with the reappearance of lower growth of income while the population growth remaining unchanged in foreseeable future.

The Structure of state income shows that the contribution of primary sector has declined to 41 percent of the state income though the sector still sustain 73 percent of the total working force. This shows the continued pressure of working population in the primary sector. The share of secondary sector, on the other hand, has gone up to 20 percent of the total state income which now employ 9 percent of the total workers in the state. This percentage is the lowest among all the major Indian states except Bihar (4.6 percent in 1991 census), Madhya Pradesh (8.4 percent in 1991) and Orissa (7.5 percent in 1991). The share of tertiary sector has been more impressive from 25 percent in 1970-71 to
37 percent in 1994-95 and the percentage share of workers employed by this sector has risen from 15 percent to 18 percent in 1991. It thus shows that the U.P.'s growth has been more capital intensive than labour intensive, more urban based than rural based and the shift income from primary to other sectors is not accompanied by corresponding change in employment pattern.

Distinguishing feature of Uttar Pradesh's economy is its regional imbalances. In terms of economic indicators like agricultural productivity, infrastructural facilities, industrial growth, the Uttar Pradesh's economy can be categories into five regions, Western, Eastern, Central, Ruhelkhand and Hill. The Western Uttar Pradesh is agriculturally prosperous. It is comparatively industrialized and has seen greater degree of urbanization. At the other end is Bundelkhand. Low agricultural growth, less number of industrial units, lesser gross value of industrial products marks out his region as the least developed in the state.

Poverty

Poverty estimation in India is based on (a) the concept of poverty time which is the prescribed minimum calorie intake necessary for a normal human being to survive and (b) size and distribution of population by expenditure obtained from the household consumption surveys conducted by national sample survey. Evidently, the incidence of poverty in the state has fallen
from about 57 percent in 1973-74 to 42 percent in 1987-88. The fall in the incidence of poverty is slightly more in the rural areas. However, the number of population below the poverty line have increased by 31% between 1977-78 and 1987-88. This increase is more in the urban area than in the rural area i.e. there has been urbanization in the root of poverty in Uttar Pradesh during the last two decades. Further, there has been increase in the intensity of poverty in the state over all these years.

2.2 UTTAR PRADESH - AN OVER VIEW

Almost all social indicators of the state show that the state stands on 13th or 14th position among the sixteen major states. Bihar and in some cases Orissa, are the only two states which lag behind U.P. in terms of social development indicators like medical facilities, teacher – pupil ratio in primary schools, birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate, literacy, per capita income, electrification of villages, per capita power consumption etc. Uttar Pradesh is often seen as a case study of development in a region of India that currently lag behind other parts of the country in terms of a number of important aspects of well being and social progress. Their region consists of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. There are important differences between these four states. But the cause of social backwardness in these four different States, never the less, appear to have much
in common and recent comparative research have pointed to many similarities in the social, cultural and even political makeup of these states which have contributed to their backwardness.

**Health**

Life in Uttar Pradesh is short and uncertain. Female expects to less than 55 years and the under-fire mortality rate is as high as 141 per thousands. In these respects Uttar Pradesh resembles Saharan Africa for with 53 years of life expectancy and 160 under five mortality rate, among all major Indian states, Uttar Pradesh has the highest under five mortality rate, the second highest crude death rate and the third lowest life expectancy figure. The number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live birth in the state estimated to be 931 in the mid 1980s. If a girl is born in Kerala she can expect to live 20 years longer than if she is born in Uttar Pradesh. The probability that she will die before the age of one is more than six times as high in Uttar Pradesh than in Kerala. According to the recent National Family Health survey, Uttar Pradesh comes second to Bihar among the major Indian states in terms of the incidence of under nutrition among children below the age of five. This corroborate as well as explain to a large extent the lower possibility of child survival in Uttar Pradesh.
Further, the demographic transition of U.P. has been slow. Among all the major Indian states, Uttar Pradesh has the highest birth rate and the highest fertility rate.

**Education**

Four states identified as lagging behind other major states in terms of democratic transition turn out to be the four states with the lowest literacy level. The 1991 census indicates that the age literacy rate in these four states in the age group between 7 years and above ranges from 38 percent in Bihar to 44 percent in Madhya Pradesh.

Female literacy situation in Uttar Pradesh is dismal. Only one out of four in the 7+ age group was able to read and write in 1991. This figure go down to 19 percent for rural areas, 11 percent for the scheduled castes, 8 percent for scheduled castes in rural areas, and 8 percent for the entire rural population in the most educationally backward districts. The 1981 census figures suggest that in Uttar Pradesh the crude female literacy rate among scheduled castes in rural Uttar Pradesh in 1981 was below 18 percent in 18 out of Uttar Pradesh's 56 districts and below 2.5 percent in a majority of districts.

In terms of more demanding criteria of educational attainment on the completion of primary or secondary education, in Uttar Pradesh, in 1992-93 only 50 percent of literate males and 40 percent of literate females could complete the cycle of
eight years of schooling involved in the primary and middle stages. One other distinguishing feature of Uttar Pradesh education system is the persistence of high level of illiteracy in the younger age group. Within the younger age group, the illiteracy was endemic in rural. In the late 1980s, the incidence of illiteracy in the 10-14 age group was as high as 32 percent for rural males and 61 percent for rural females, and more than two thirds of all rural girls in the 12-14 age group never went to school.

The problems of education system is exacting. Due to public apathy the school are in disarray, privately run school are functional, but beyond the reach of ordinary people. The State government has taken programmes to make the population totally literate. There are special programmes like World Bank aided DPEP. Steps are being taken with the help of NGOs and other organizations to raise popular participation. At the level of higher education and technical education Uttar Pradesh has 16 general universities, 3 technical universities, one Indian Institute of Technology (Kanpur), one Indian Institute of Management (Lucknow), one Indian Institute of Information Technology and large number polytechnics, engineering institutes and industrial training institutes. This provides the State with firm basis for providing opportunities for higher education to its youth.
2.3 WORKING CONDITIONS OF CHILD LABOUR IN U.P.

Child labour is a situation when a child, below the age of fourteen years, is made to work in factories, mines, hazardous employment etc. Children are made to work miserably in order to earn little money. They struggle to earn enough money to feed their families.

India has the largest number of children under the age of 15 forced into labour. Some estimates put the figure at 100 million children. Child labour accounts for nearly 20% of our total Gross National Product.

These children work as rag pickers, domestic servants etc. for most of the time in a day. Going to school to learn the basics is out of the question. A majority of them start at the age of four or five, and bad working conditions permanently harm the health of the child by the time they reach adulthood.

Child labour in India is a socioeconomic problem arising essentially out of unrelenting poverty, large size of families and lack of development. Children serve as cheap supplements to adult labour. The traditional sector of the Indian economy like agriculture, the unorganized sectors etc often provide employment for all members of a family. Sometimes family also sell their children to get money. This is termed as "Bonded labour" and it is illegal in India.
"Salavery is not dead" it is found in the practice of forced or bonded child labour, which is considered to be the most exploitative and egregious form of child labour.

There are millions of children whose labour can be considered forced, not only because they are too young to choose to work, but also because they are, in fact, actively coerced into working. These include child bonded labourers – children whose labour is pledged by parents as payment or collateral on a debt – as well as children who are kidnapped or otherwise lured away from their families and imprisoned in sweatshops or brothels. In addition, millions of children around the world work unseen in domestic service – given or sold at a very early age to another family.

Forced child labourers work in conditions "that have no resemblance to a free employment relationship". They receive little or no pay and have no control over their daily lives. They are often forced to work beyond their physical capacity and under conditions that seriously threaten their health, safety and development. In many cases their most basic rights, such as freedom of movement and expression are suppressed. They are subject to physical and verbal abuse. Even in cases where they are not physically confined to their workplace, their situation may be so emotionally traumatizing and isolating that once drawn into forced labour they are unable to conceive of a way to escape.
Forced child labour is found primarily in informal, unregulated or illegal sectors of the economy. It is most common among the economically vulnerable and least educated members of society such as minority ethnic or religious groups or the lowest classes or castes. Children are especially vulnerable to exploitation because their lack of maturity makes them easy to deceive and ensures that they have little, if any, knowledge of their rights.

Exploitation of the weak by the mighty has existed in various forms down the ages. Whites reducing the blacks to slavery, economic superiority dictating terms to the less fortunate, the subjugation of women in all its repugnant shades have all existed, been regularly condemned and to some extent been outlawed. The most heinous, reprehensible and tragic of them all is the exploitation of little children, unfortunately in India too we have a record of child labour that is both shaming and alarming.

Tiny children are the bread winners of their families. They are treated like bonded labour, devoid and indeed, ignorant of their right to a life of dignity. Long working hours, inhuman working conditions, cramped living spaces, woeful nutrition and ridiculously low wages make the plight of hundreds of children pitiable and bring dishonour to the country. The fireworks industry, the carpet industry, the zari industry and the more
unorganized ones like the automobile and service industries have all earned their millions working little children to death in the most hazardous of conditions.

The reasons for something as ugly as child labour are manifold, while crippling poverty and illiteracy top the list. Sometimes the parents of these children are so abjectly poor that they sell their children for a paltry amount. Children earning some money have entire households dependant on them. The illiterate parents are convinced that more children mean more working hands. A high infant mortality rate, again abetted by poverty and illiteracy, adds to the belief that the more children the better. The population then exert an unbearable pressure on already scarce resources. Needless to say, these children never get even a rudimentary education, health care or indeed, a childhood. This vicious circle is hard to break.

The only long term, viable solution is the total eradication of poverty and illiteracy and hence over population. Its time all the children of this country get their fair share of caring and the chance to make something of their lives.

2.4 TRENDS AND OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

The demand for child labour related to technological change in today's developing economies, has not received much attention in contemporary debates on child labour. The study on Impact of Technology on the Demand for Child labour in Moradabad
Brassware Industry, conducted by Dr. Helen R. Sekar, is an important initiative to assess the effects of technological change and industry restructuring on the existence of child labour. This research study is especially relevant at the present time for developing countries because of the accelerated technical change and industry restructuring they are experiencing. These changes are occurring along with economic liberalization and openness to global competition that provides opportunities in foreign markets as well as threats from foreign competitors.

A unique feature of this study is the scale of research. It is noteworthy for its detailed analysis of the phenomenon of introduction of technology and its impact on not only the employment of children but also on the employment and earnings of skilled and unskilled adult workers.

There are many issues of concern highlighted. According to this study the Moradabad Brassware Industry has undergone tremendous change in terms of technology, craftsmanship, the produce and its marketing strategy. Moradabad's Craftsmen have responded to technological and have shown adaptability. The attitude of the exporters has definitely resulted in drastic change in the structure and organization of the industry. A Predominant proportion of workers who have been displaced with the introduction of technology in all the units of different production categories belonged to the lower age groups (15-25 years and 26-
36 years) which is indicative of the fact that the younger age group is totally unprepared for absorption into the labour market that requires educated and skilled workers. In all the processes where child workers have been displaced, the proportion of female child workers is predominantly high as compared to their male counterparts. The INDUS Child Labour Project of the ILO, National Child Labour Project of the Ministry of Labour and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan of the Ministry of Human Resource Development are being implemented in Moradabad.

Technology has a place at some point in every industry and productive activity and it has gone hand in hand with rise in labour productivity level, thereby underlining its importance as a determinant of productivity. The association between productivity levels and emolument per worker is significantly positive for almost all activity groups where hired labour exists, indicating that higher productivity levels are transformed to higher remuneration for the labourers. Technology is normally introduced in such a way that it modifies and improves an existing activity rather than transforming it. Nevertheless there is still a danger that attention will focus on the idea that difficult and unfamiliar changes will have to be made in the tasks that people perform rather than on the positive benefits that the use of technology will create.
People normally experience the introduction of new technology as something connected with problems with which they are familiar. However, the importance of technology should not be underestimated. Introduction of technology has been seen as a mechanism to displace workers when applied to processes, but as a job creator through product innovations. Innovation in products is seen as a potential source of additional employment. It is entirely wrong to draw conclusions about the net effect of technology on workers from the example of its effect on individual industries. This is partly because technology is likely to lead to a shift in employment from one activity or industry to another. Certain types of skill are inherently more likely to be replaced by technology equipment than others. Skilled manual work, which could be replaced by production machines, is another area of concern.

The logic of international trade creates a situation wherein labour is moribund in the national context. This is because international trade while depending on free-floating capital makes sure of restrictive labour movement. The arrangement ensures organized trade as is evident in WTO, but the same is not the case with production. Production processes are increasingly informalised resulting in the mushrooming growth of unorganized sector. Informalization of labour is the result. This practice of organized capital and unorganized labour is setting the terms of reference for economy. The issue of welfare and common good,
targeted for the benefit of labour, comes as a sort of outside intervention in the market economy. This is because labour has been pushed to the social sector where laws relating to economic regulations and welfare is of limited use.

The vast body of unorganized labour remains 'invisible' through a system of contracting and sub-contracting of numerous processes. These processes are located in household units with minimal or no capital, using traditional and primitive technology, depending on intensive labour and surviving on subsistence wages. Some identify this increasing in formalization with "indiscriminate and unstructured globalization" which is "throwing larger number of children in hazardous and other works (Mohan, 1999). Many associate labouring children with easily available cheap and docile labour. There are others who would equate its availability with family based traditional craft, expertise of which is passed on to the younger generations right from the childhood. In whatsoever way child labour is contextualized, it is typically related to underdevelopment, poverty, illiteracy, health, nutrition and habitation problems. This begets a counter posing relation within the developing economies like India-between a macro economic formations in search of capital and micro realities of subsistence labour. Child labour is typically caught in between as a 'productive' force.
There are speculations about the productive capacity of the child labour force. The question is posed basically with a demand side perspective. Do the industries need child labour, or if child labour is eliminated what difference would it make in production cost? One recent publication calculates that the difference would be marginal and that child labour be better eliminated with the help of the entrepreneurs.

In the period of rural industrialization, there was maximum use of child labour and the demand for it dropped off with the introduction of more complex machinery and the move into factories. It has also been argued that before industrialization there was a major problem of unemployment and underemployment of children (Cunningham, H., 1995). The process of industrialization under conditions of relatively open competition will lead to an increasing use of child labour unless there are strong counterveiling forces. However, this is not true of all industries. Early factory masters relied heavily on child labour. The cause lay in competition and division of labour. Masters were driven to reduce their costs in order to survive. In industries like boot and shoe industry introduction of machinery led to "the wholesale flooding of the market with boys, and the wholesale discharging of men." In a situation where there is a shortage of labour supply employers might be encouraged to invest in labour saving machinery. If there is continuous supply of labour, which is plentiful and cheap, employers have every
motive to balance the introduction of technology against the supply of labour, or rather to bring the one into harmony with the other. Production processes that do not rely on labour saving devices and/or an abundant pool of unsilled labour can create a demand for child labour, thus it is not technology itself, which affects the level of child labour, but the decisions of employers with regard to the organization of the workforce. On the other hand Technologies that take the place of children in the workplace can help to reduce.

Children work as part of family labour in agricultural activities where the wages are not paid directly to them but to the head of the family. Most of the children who are out of school are actually engaged in some work either paid or unpaid, outside the household sector or in household industries, domestic work, etc. Most of the time children work alongside adults and generally perform manual labour and the lowest skill jobs, where worker substitution could most easily occur. Children do not possess unique attributes that make them better suited for certain occupations or tasks than adults.

In India's Brassware industry, both the capitalist as well as pre-capitalist mode of production exists. However, the pre-capitalist mode predominates. The technology used in this sector is very simple and traditional and the division of labour is very rudimentary. An argument is sometimes made that children are
essential to production because of their small size enables them to move about the brassware manufacturing units faster and with greater ease than adult workers. But studies have found that most of the time children worked alongside adults and generally performed the lowest skill jobs, where worker substitution could most easily occur. Children perform mainly low skill, manual labour that could be done easily and equally well by adults. Thus, rather like adults, children are found working where their skill level allows them to contribute to the earnings of their employers.

Children work because the prevailing organization of production requires a large pool of unskilled labour and the pool of available adult labourer is not large enough to meet this requirement. This is often the case in agricultural areas during peak labour seasons, such as planting or harvesting. Children are often employed not because of lower costs associated with children's wages, but rather by the relative abundance of child workers and the resulting ease involved in hiring them. The main factors that eventually facilitated the reduction in child labour were economic growth and technological changes. Thus the main reasons for both the emergence and disappearance of child labour in nineteenth century Europe were economic (Pierik & Houwerzijl, 2002).
2.5 CHILD LABOUR IN FIROZABAD - GLASS INDUSTRY

History of the City

The name Firozabad was given in the regime of Akbar by Firoz Shah Mansab Dar in 1566. It is said that Raia todarmal was passing through this town, on a pilgrimage to Gaya. He was looted by robbers. At his request, Akbar, sent his Mansab Dar Firoz Shah here. He landed near or about Datauji, Rasoolpur, Mohammadpur, Gajmalpur, Sukhmalpur Nizamabad, Prempur Raipura. The tomb of Firoz Shah and Ruins of Katra Pathan are the evidences of this fact.

Mr. Peter, a businessman working for the British East India Company visited Firozabad on 9 August, 1932 and found the town in good condition. It is written in the gazetteer of Agra and Mathura that in 1596 Firozabad was upgraded to a pargana. Firozabad was bestowed to Nawab Sadulla as Jagir, in the regime of Shahjahan. Jahangir ruled here from 1605 to 1627. Etawah, Budaun, Mainpuri, Firozabad were under first class mansabdar of emperor Farrukhsiar. Bajirao Peshwa looted Firozabad and Etmadpur in 1737 in the regime of Mohammad Shah. Jats of Mahawan attacked Faujdar Hakim Kajim at Firozabad and killed him on 9th May, 1739. Jats ruled Firozabad for 30 years. Gajuddin, Hidayat Vaksh son of Alamgir second his nephew and Mirza Baba the son in law, came to Firobabad. Mirza Nabab Khan
stayed here till 1782. In the end of 18th century, Firozabad was ruled by Himmat Bahadur Gusain with cooperation of Marathas. The French Army chief of Marathas, D. Wayan, established an ordnance factory in November 1794. Mr. Thomas Traving also mentioned this fact in his book Travels in India. Marathas appointed his subedar Lakwadads here who made a fort near old Tehsil, known at present as Garie.

General Lek and General Vellajally attacked Firozabad in 1802. In the beginning of British regime Firozabad was in Etawah district but after some time it was attached to Aligarh district. When Sadabad was created a new district in 1832, Firozabad was attached to it. Later on, in 1833 Firozabad was attached to Agra. In 1847, the business of lac was flourishing at Firozabad.

In 1857, Chauhans of Mainpuri, Jamidar of Chandwar with local Mallahs took active parts in freedom struggle. Famous Urdu poet Munir Shikohabadi too was sentenced to Kala pani by the British East India Company Government. People of this city took part in "Khilafat Movement," "Quit India Movement," and "Namak Satyagrah" and went to the jail during these national movements. In 1929, Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi, in 1935 Semant Gandhi, in 1937 Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and in 1940 Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose visited Firozabad. Firozabad district was finally established on 5th February, 1989.
Evolution of Firozabad Glass Industry

During ancient periods, invaders brought many glass articles to India. These glass articles when rejected were collected and melted in locally made furnace called as "Bhainsa Bhatti." This was the start of the glass industry in Firozabad. In this furnace, wood was used as a fuel. These old traditional furnaces are still in use in Sasani near Aligarh and at Purdal Nagar. During that time only small bottles and bangles were made. At this time only one bangle at a time can be made. In this bangle there was no joint. These bangles were called "kadechhal Ki Choodi." Since then Firozabad is the home of the glass industry, white and coloured glass pieces being manufactured for the purpose of assembling Jhad and fanus (chandeliers) which were in demand by royal courts and nobles for decorating their assembling and drawing rooms. Later on phials for Itra, scents, and other cosmetic products were made. Slowly and steadily Indian marriage items like bangles, Kangans, Kada etc. were produced in bulk for the general public. Today it is nicknamed Suhag Nagri because it fulfills almost all the demand of bangles Kadas, Kangans and other items of Suhagins (married women).

Since 1989, Firozabad has produced artistic glassware in different colours and shades used in chandeliers and other items. About four hundred glass industries are registered in Firozabad, making different types of glass products. They use normal gas instead of coal. Half of the production of these units is exported.
Now-a-days, blowing/modeling is done by the pot regenerative tank furnish process in the factories.

**Products**

All sorts of glass articles, including jars, candle stands, glasses, flower vases, and electric wares such as decorative lights, bulbs and every other sort of glass articles are prepared in this city. These articles are painted with various colours and innovative patterns. Etching is done on some products to enhance their beauty. Decoration work is also done on some products by fixing other material on them.

Firozabad glass industry broadly consists of following types of products–

Glass artware like toys, candle-stands, crosses, Christmas trees, different fruits, mini-trees, images of birds, animals, personalities, Gods and Goddesses are made here for Indian as well as foreign markets.

Firozabad glass industry for the last two centuries has been involved in manufacturing drinking glasses, beer glasses, wine glasses, dinner sets consisting of bowls, plates, lemon sets, pudding sets, etc. in attractive cuttings, charming designs.

- **Glass Chandeliers** – Since the Mughal period, Firozabad has been producing different shapes and shades of magnificent hanging chandelier. Many innovative designs have been added to suit different tastes.
• **Glass Marriage wares** – Bangles, Kangans and Karas are made here since ancient period as traditional Indian woman wardrobe accessory. Bangles made here are distributed throughout India. Bangles do not get that much opportunity in the international market, since it is a traditional Indian accessory. But still due to globalization the market for bangles is expanding internationally.

**Glass Hardwares**

All types of glass hardwares are manufactured here for house decoration and other purposes. Glass scientific and Lab wares since last 10 years beakers, flasks, test tubes, containers and other scientific wares are being manufactured here, which are needed in various laboratories.

**Glass Automobile Wares**

The glass accessories for automobiles like light bulbs, mine battery bulbs and other light and sight equipments are produced here for two wheelers and four wheelers.

**Glass Street And Domestic Light Wares**

For the lighting of urban and rural areas and other utility purposes many glass items are being produced including miniature bulbs and high power voltage bulbs. It is estimated that 6% demand of bulbs is being fulfilled from Firozbad.
Glass Beads

Firozabad is known as the world capital for beads. Glass beads produced here are exported to all over the world for use in all kinds of items including clothing, accessories and shoes.

Child Labour In Glass Factory – Firozabad

Firozabad an Administrative unit in Agra district of Uttar Pradesh is the home of glass bangle and glassware industry in India. It is estimated that about 50,000 children below the age of 14 work in this industry. This is one of the highest concentrations of child labour in the world. According to forecasts, if the child labour were eliminated, production in the glass and bangle industry would go down by 25 percent.

Two types of furnaces are used for making glass in Firozabad, a town in Agra district where 99 percent of India's glass bangles are made and that is the centre of India's glass blowing industry. The pot furnaces are smaller. The temperatures in these furnaces range between 700 °C and 800 °C. Tank furnaces are much larger with temperatures as high as 1800 °C. Glass bangles are made illegally in the tank furnaces, which have a larger capacity and can run round the clock, though the bangles are of slightly inferior quality as the colour is added after the molten glass is removed. Bangles are arranged on the trays by small boys for the pakai-wala – the man who places the trays of bangles into the furnace. Child workers also carry burning loams
of glass struck on the tips of four-foot-long iron rods without handles, known as labias. The workers are constantly on the move with the blazing materials. The labias, with the ball of blazing glass on their tips, are given to the glass blowers. The blown glass is then put into a mould and carried by the children to another worker who cuts it. The children work close to the heated furnaces and sometimes draw molten glass from the furnace. The air is full of chemical fumes, soot and coal dust. The floor is littered with broken glass.

Dr. Burra Neera in her field research in the glass industry in India notes that the children's faces were only about six to eight inches away from furnaces that were burring at 1500-1800 centigrade.

In the larger factories all the workers are paid by the hour or day. In small units where bangles are joined, workers are paid on a piece-rate basis. These small units employ about twenty workers including three or four children each. In poorly ventilated rooms acetylene flames are used to join the ends of the bangle to form a ring, a process called judai. Other processes include creating grooves (katai), baking (pakai) and painting the grooves with minute portions of liquid gold before it is again baked to remove impurities. Some of these processes are hazardous, particularly when the bangles are placed against whirling wheels that generate glass dust and high heat. Children are employed in the these processes.
The factories of Firozabad process a great variety of glass products: bangles, bulbs, tumblers, jugs, chandeliers, cut glass utility items. Factory owners do well by selling these products and by reselling unutilized coal that had been allocated to them by the government at prices well below market prices. Skilled workers are paid sixty or sixty-five rupees per day, but working lives in this industry are short. Few workers are able to continue past the age of thirty-five. Children are paid ten rupees per twelve-hour shift and when they are old enough to move into glass blowing positions they can double their daily wages.

According to the Labour Department of the Government of Uttar Pradesh, 13 percent of the 65,000 to 70,000 workers employed in these glass units are children. But non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with children in this area estimate this number is closer to between 150,000 to 200,000 children working in the glass industry. The Labour Department at Firozabad has recommended that child labour should not be banned because unless a child starts working at very young age he will not get acclimatized to the intense heat. Children are also valuable because they can move at a great enough speed so that the molten glass does not harden before it can be fashioned by the adult workers. The Labour Department has suggested that hostels should be constructed so that children who are on the night shift will have a place to stay nearby. Though night work for children is forbidden under the 1948 Factories Act children as young as seven and eight work on the
night shift. Factories run all night to avoid the expense of having to shut down the furnaces every evening.

The parents of bonded children take advances from middlemen. The children are expected to pay off the loan from their wages. In an Interview in a village, just outside Firozabad, two boys aged eight and twelve, said that they had been left behind by their parents, who had received advances. The two boys lived alone in the factory where they worked and cooked their own meals. Their job was to arrange glass bangles on trays before they were put into the furnace.

While working in the glass factory workers suffer from asthma, bronchitis, eye problem, liver ailments, skin burns, tuberculosis and chronic anemia. Children in the glass factories have been reported to suffer from mental retardation. One doctor found genetic damage to occur in the body cells of glass factory labourer who work close to the furnace heat for three years or more.

February, 1995 news report stated that Indian Labour Department officials raided two glass factories in Ferozabad that were illegally employing children. Twenty children from age 7 to 11 were released from the factories. They had been working 10-11 hour, days for only ten rupees (approx. 30 cents) per day. They suffered from multiple burn injuries chest pains and chronic coughing, but had received no medical treatment for their injuries while at the factory.
The United States imported $4 million of manufactured glass products from India in 1994.

2.6 CHILD LABOUR MORADABAD BRASSWARE INDUSTRY

Introduction

Moradabad city is known as Peeta Nagari or the city of brassware. The sandy soil of the place was suitable for molding brass. The original method of moulding was the Para Method in which earthen moulds were used to give the shape to molten metal. This was replaced by 'Darja Method' in the 1920s but, at the present time, the soil is not essential for brass works. But a tradition of craftsmanship had developed; it seems, on two counts: one from the manufacture of heavy kitchenware and other utility utensils serving the local and regional market, and the other from ornamentation know from the Mughal days as 'Nakashi' or 'Engraving'. Today Moradabad is known all around the world for its brass works of exquisite beauty.

Along with the development the tradition has played a role by adjustment with the demands created by the global market forces. Child Labour has to be understood in terms of these two forces: The demand of the family to preserve a tradition and the market forces that has made the family dependant on it.
History of the City (Moradabad)

The City is situated on the left banks of river Ramganga. The township was established by Rustam Khan in 1624, after he was made Subedar (Governor) by Emperor Shahjehan. Rustam Khan had named the town after Prince Morad. About 225 kilometers away from Delhi, the city is connected by roadways and a railway station to regional and national centers, including the Indian capital and the state capital of Lucknow. It is the headquarter of Moradabad district. The district is part of Ruhelakhand, the region associated in popular imagination from time immemorial – in Mahabharata as part of the Panchal country, in historical evidences as belonging to numerous kingdoms like that of Asoka, Harshavardhana, the Chauhan kings, the Mughals, the Ruhela chieftains and in the 18th century to the kingdom of Avadh. Nawab Sujaudaula of Avadh had divided the Ruhelakhand into three areas. Moradabad, Bareilly and Badaun. As an administrative unit, Moradabad district had faced many changes in its area. In 1950, after the demise of the princely state of Rampur, Moradabad became the part of Rampur district. Later on, it was made a separate district by incorporating the Tahsil and the town together with Amroha, Hasanpur, Sambal, Bilari and Thakurdwara. Moradabad town was converted into a city in 1994 by incorporating 19 villages, and its municipal administration was put under a Corporation. With this, the brassware household industry had come under one urban
conglomeration in place of previous rural-urban divide. The old township is highly congested with inhabitations settled earlier. The rural turned urban areas were divided into two distinct settlement patterns – New Moradabad, with affluent to comfortable residential quarters and new production units, and the unplanned spread of working class settlements with least municipal facilities. The working class settlements are old, by about nineteen years. The localities in Moradabad city are clearly segregated into Muslim and Hindu dominated areas. The brass workers are not Hindus: about 99% of them belong to the Muslim community. The households engaged in brass works can be found all over the City, but some areas find heavy concentration.

**Child Labour in the Industry**

The exact number of child labourers in brassware industries is difficult to estimate and this is because the numerous processes are located in unregistered household units where children may or may not be part of the household work force. Moreover, they may not always be working because of the irregular and contractual nature of the jobs procured. Still more, some of the processes like casting are so hazardous that the workers must rest for equal number of days they had worked, before resuming back to their work. It is not a scenario of full time round the year household operation. Over and above, a
complete enumeration is impossible because people are apprehensive of official harassment, if the facts related to child labour are brought to the open. Whenever one visits these thickly populated unhygienic localities, scores of children would be seen playing or loitering. While moving through the narrow by-lanes; one can find child labour covered with metal dust beyond recognition. They invariably belong to the poor, illiterate families. The labourers who are permanently employed in the brassware manufacturing units are very few. A major part of the work is outsourced and carried out outside the factory in small units, which do not come under the purview of labour law. The labour is generally employed through personal contact at cheaper rates. Most of the household units are located adjacent to the living places of the labour. Generally artisans perform their work under poor working condition, which endanger their health and safety. They work with simple tools and age-old appliances. In these units children and women also work as part of the family labour.

**Extent of Child Labour In Industry**

The brassware industry of Moradabad has undergone an organizational change in terms of increase in the average number of workers per establishment, number of multiprocessor units or Kankhanas, number of manufacturers, suppliers and exporters and decline in the category of workers described as "self employed".
Estimated figure provided by the different agencies are as follows:

1. The District Industries Centre estimated that there are 5000 child workers.

2. A study by Kulshreshta and Sharma in 1980 estimated the figure as 24000 child workers in the brassware industries.

3. Study conducted in 1979-80 by the Industrial Development Services in Moradabad says that of about 70000 workers in which 80 to 85% are males, 10 to 15% children and the rest are female.

4. According to NIDC report among 29100 workers 2370 are men, 7566 are children and 1164 are women. Those 70% of all workers are men and more than 25% are children.

The number of children working in the brassware industry has thus been estimated as 1800 to 2000 as 5000 as 7000 to 10500 as 7566 and as 24000.

Children work as paid or unpaid helpers, mostly employed on day to day basis or as apprentices with or without remuneration. In sand casting children are mostly employed for rotating the wheel of hand driven blowers which is called as Pankha to keep the furnace fire burning and for taking out crucibles containing molten brass and passing them to the adult worker for pouring in the moulds. Furnace pit cleaning is
normally carried out by the children. In welding workshop there are normally 2 adult workers and there is also a child employed on daily basis to work as a helper whose job is to hold the pieces to be welded. In threading normally one skilled worker operates the machine and he is helped in his work by the child labour or unskilled worker. In scraping process brass poured during the casting of articles is scraped out by mounting the round shaped articles on a rotating shaft and holding a tool against it to remove the material. Normally a skilled worker scraps the excess brass by holding a tool (small iron rod) on the rotating shaft. He makes the judgment on the amount of brass to be scraped so as to make the piece in desired shape and weight. He is usually helped in his work by an unskilled worker or child helper. In scrapping by Emery machine and Grinding machine two adult skilled workers are helped by a unskilled worker or child labour. After scrapping the articles are dipped in Hydrochloric acid bath. Children are employed for dipping the articles in the bath, as well as in tying and untying of the articles with copper wires to facilitate the dipping. In a Polishing machine normally one adult skilled worker is involved in the polishing work and he is assisted in his work by a helper usually unskilled workers or child labour.

According to the researcher Burra Neera, about 40000-45000 children are employed in the brass industry in India. Children in the brass industry are employed in different sectors. Moulding is one of the activities, which is very hazardous and
dangerous both to adults and children. More than 15000 children are employed in this sector. If the child is a new recruit, he is given the work of rotating the wheel that fans the underground furnace. Other children in the moulding section must heat the oblong ingot on top of the furnace, break it into small pieces with a hammer and then melt the required amount of brass. When the molten brass is ready, they have to pass the graphite crucible with the raw material to an adult worker holding it with long tongs.

Sometimes they themselves have to pour the brass into the moulds and replace the crucible into the furnace. At times, children have to rotate the fan, remove the crucible and replace it in the furnace. They also may be asked to grind a hot black mixture into a fine powder with their hands and help the adult worker to remove the hot moulded metal from the moulds. These activities have to be done continuously and children in the moulding section would always be engaged in one or other of these activities. They may not receive any breaks in a ten-hour working day, even though a slight distraction or lapse of concentration may cause the child life long injuries. The temperature in the furnace is about 1100 centigrade. If a drop of molten metal falls on the Childs foot, it will create an immediate hole.
Boys between 7-15 years are found in this industry. They work for the whole day and get around 20 cent (Rs. 10/- per day). Small boys can be seen engaged with a small nail and hammer, continuously beating the brass sheet to carve out the designs which are already laid. Most of the carving of the designs (with holes) is done by the children. Pandan industry is one of these oldest heritages of city of Hyderabad.

2.7 CHILD LABOUR IN AGRA - LEATHER INDUSTRY

The constitution of India, as a part of the fundamental rights, has laid down that the state shall direct its policy towards protection of childhood and youth against exploitation and shall not be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any hazardous employment. India has the largest number of urban and rural child workers in the world. The government of India acknowledges at least 17.5 million working children. Footwear industry is also one of the major export oriented industry employing a large number of children. The footwear industry is a significant segment of the leather Industry in India. India ranks second among the footwear producing countries next to China. The industry is labour intensive and is concentrated in the small and cottage industry sectors. While leather shoes and uppers are concentrated in a large scale units, the sandals and chappals are produced in the household a cottage sector. The major production
centres in India are Chennai, Ranipat, Ambur in Tamil Nadu, Mumbai in Maharashtra, Kanpur and Agra in Uttar Pradesh, Jalandhar in Punjab and Delhi. The processes in the footwear making include last making, pattern cutting, clicking, sewing, Assembling and finishing. Children between 10 and 15 years old are mainly employed in assembling shoes. Some 80 percent of children work for contractors at home. Children work in soling (fixing upper portions of shoes to leather or rubber soles) with glue. Children in cramped poorly lit rooms suffer from continuous skin contact with industrial adhesives and breathing vapors and glues. The children working in the footwear industry are exposed to physical factors like poor illumination, noise and poor ventilation, and chemicals like leather dust, benzene that is used as a solvent in glues and P-test butyl phenols which is used in neoprene adhesive. Thus most children suffer from respiratory problems, lung diseases and skin infections through constant exposure of glue and fumes. They are also exposed to risk of nasal cancer, neurotoxicity and adverse physical factors. It is recommended to stop child labour and let the child be bread eater rather than bread earner.

Children are employed in the manufacture of shoes, particularly in Agra. It is estimated that as many as 25,000 children may be involved in shoe making both for the domestic and international markets.
Agra, once known, besides for TAJ, for its glory of being a city of handicrafts, shoes industry, diesel engines and foundry works etc. is today facing the days of glooms. The increasing unemployment, lack of sustained industrial and commercial growth has changed its complete economic profile over the years.

The first blow came to the city, when on a Petition filed by Mr. M.C. Mehta, the Supreme court of India directed for closure of the foundries, to save the TAJ. The decision did not come in the overall perspective of the city. Its habitants and it did not consider all factors except TAJ.

The Foundry Nagar is closed. The entrepreneurs are awaiting for Government's assistance, so that they could settle their business outside the 'Taj Trapezium.' The labourers of Agra is jobless. They have no option to turn rickshaw-pullers. These conditions have gradually brought poverty amongst the masses in Agra. The consequences are increasing emphasis of families to deploy their children to work so that the family income could grow to assize that brings then to living. Lost jobs led the parents to look alternatives and when the same were not forth coming, they had to resort to withdraw their children from school and put them to work.

The Government has shown complete indifference towards rehabilitation of Agra's industry and its labourers. The archaic
law and judicial orders have led the city of glory to the city of increasing poor.

It is not that Agra did not have children at work before the above episode, but this has worked as fuel to the fire. The problems have grown bigger than being overcome.

Leather industry in Agra is largely concentrated to manufacture of footwears and footwear components, although the profile of leather products manufactured in Agra includes shoes, sandals, chappals, country jooties, saddles, harness, leather jackets and other garments, gloves, handbags, wallets, belts, puppets and musical instruments. The footwear components include mainly the Leather Shoe Uppers and Leather Unit Soles.

The following steps may be suggested for eradication of child labour specifically in Agra and leather industry.

1. **Breaking the Poverty Cycle**

   Agra's Child labour is also a consequence of poverty. It does contributes to poverty. Where jobs are scarce in the city child employment means increased adult unemployment, undermining family earning capacity.

   Child labourers also grow up illiterate, unskilled with health problems, which results into the situation that many are unable to provide for their families in adulthood and so become
dependent in turn on the earnings of a new generation of children.

We need to design and implement community development and nutrition programmes that create more stable economic and emotional environments for children, thereby reducing the risk that they will be drawn into exploitative employment. It supports programmes which help rescued children to recuperate from exploitation and abuse by employers as well.

2. Creating More Employment

Agra, today, needs sustained efforts to create more jobs. The foundry industry should be rehabilitated as early as possible and government should provide economic finance and land to the foundry owners to resettle their factories. Gas supplies should be improved so that all the gas operated furnace units may work full time and provide full employment. New avenues and programmes should be designed and developed. Nonpolluting industries should be set up around Agra to provide more and more employment.

3. Meaningful Education

It is essential that the education is made meaningful. The children are not inducted to school with monotonous education. The teaching should be made interesting and imparting purposeful education. The curriculum needs to be designed in
such a way that the children develop interest. There should be vocational training and if possible such vocational training, which brings economic gained may be minor. That would really create interest not only in children but also in the parents. The vocational training should be such as to train them and prepare them as skilled labour over a period of time may be for leather industry itself.

4. **Educating the Employers**

The employers should be educated by a sustained campaign by the Government to desist employment of children at work. Instead they should employ adults on the same job and help breaking the cycle.

5. **Enforcement of Labour Laws**

The enforcement of labour laws is required to be made vigorously. A squad should be formed to make surprise visit to small and unorganized factories where child workers are employed.

The methodology of enforcement suggests setting up of Mobile Courts, increasing number of enforcing conducting trails at Open places, trade-unions should make demands, setting up of legal cell, periodical training and conduct of workshops to all Inspectors to review the legislative, legal and rehabilitation measurers, constitution of district level co-ordination committees.
with employers, trade union leaders and officials of enforcement machinery and other departmental officers of education, social welfare, police etc. Setting-up of child rights Committee and Advisory Committee on child labour constitution of District Coordination, Enforcement Wing of Labour, Factories, Education, Social Welfare, Women and Child Welfare, NCLP Directors announcing Incentives/ Awards who declare child labour free industry on 1st May of Every year and setting up Child Labour Employment. Elimination Committee in agricultural employment at village level with the officers of Labour, Social Welfare, Education, Mandal Panchayath, Official and villagers.

6. **Eradicating Child Labour Contractors**

The contractors are the most dubious link between child workers families and the employers. These intermediaries motivate, generally the child labour families to send their children at work. Social awareness campaign and ban on contractors could improve the situation faster.

7. **Developing Bargaining Powers in Child Workers**

The child workers union should be constituted to work for collective bargaining for the child workers for their working conditions, safety welfare and economic benefits including wages etc.
These unions would at least help in improvement of working conditions of the child workers, keeping in mind that their immediate eradication to the extent of hundred percent is not possible.

8. **Engaging NGOs on Work**

The non government organization can be taken into confidence and assigned the task of education, improving welfare conditions and social campaigning for eradicating child working in Agra. They can also provide alternative jobs to the workers in the process of training them for future vocations.

9. **Community Participation**

The participation can be invited in a bigger and more serious way from community especially the welfare societies and local bodies. These organizations, being more closure geographically, administratively and socially, help achieving such awareness programmes, monitoring and enforcements.

10. **Earning While Learning**

The vocational education programmes should be designed in such a way that the student earn also while learning.
2.8 CHILD LABOUR IN BHADOI CARPET

INDUSTRY

At the time of the Mughal king Akbar, carpet weaving began in the Jaunpur and Allahabad districts of Uttar Pradesh. During the course of time, the weavers migrated to Mirzapur. Manufacture of carpets first began in the village called Ghosia and then spread to the adjacent village of Madho Singh, which is also in Mirzapur. These places are well known, even today, for their carpets.

Today, the Mirzapur-Bhadohi belt has a pure cottage based export oriented carpet industry. There are four major types of handmade items; Durries, Cotton Carpets, Woolen Carpets and Silk Carpets. The district contributes about 80 percent of the Indian carpet market, of which one fourth is exported.

Owing to several reasons like non-availability of opportunity for education, poverty etc. child labour is very common in this area. Essentially children from poor families are bonded against an advance paid to their parents or are otherwise engaged in the looms under subhuman condition. It is estimated that most of the child workers are engaged in the weaving process of carpet industry in Mirzapur, which is carried out in households, scattered over remote villages and the urban suburbs of Mirzapur district.
According to the 1981 census, the population in the age group of 0-14 years was about 43 percent of the total population of which 17 percent of the population below 14 years was working. With the total population of children at 8,69,034 and an estimated 1,36,432 working children and further assuming 60,000 working children in the carpet industry, it has a share of 44 percent of the working children in the district.

The growth of the service sector, the rapid increase in the supply of part time jobs and the search for a more flexible workforce have contributed to the expansion of the child labour.

Between 3,00,000 and 4,00,000 Indian children work in the manufacture of hand knotted carpets, the most coveted carpet on the market today. These children work in a region concentrated around Bhadoi, Mirzapur and Zaipur in Uttar Pradesh (U.P.). They suffer from endemic tuberculosis, other respiratory diseases, skin trouble eye strain and worn out limbs (a National Council of Applied economic research study found that the children surveyed appeared to be famished and had a stunted growth). In 1993, India exported more than $ 170 million worth of carpets to the US. In Pakistan, about a million children work in the carpet industry.

The Government of India recognized the sharp rise in the recorded rates of child labour during the course of the decade.
Indian business denies not only the ILO numbers, but also the deflated numbers of the Indian government. In 1994, Mr. G.K. Morolia of the Indian Carpet Export Production Council argued that the carpet industry only hires those children whose parents send them to acquire traditional weaving skills. Labour, he said is free to come and to go. For a child of 12, even the formal freedoms of wage slavery must surely be unclear in the face of the supervisors wrath. The apologies of the carpet council are a pathetic attempt to justify its capability. Numerous studies have established the centrality of violence and coercion in the labour process. A UNICEF study of Mirzapur (U.P.) found that most of the child labourers did not come to the place of their employment voluntarily rather they were either kidnapped or dragged away of Mafia gangs from their parents to work as child labour in most appalling conditions. The Indian government admits widespread prevalence of bondage relations and violence in the carpet industry. Other sectors, such as glassware and gemstones, are not much different. The former chief of India P.N. Bhagwati,
found examples of children at work for 14-20 hours/day. They are beaten up branded (with red hot iron rods) and even hung from trees upside down.

India, with Iran and Pakistan, controls the world carpet trade. In 1947-48, the exports earned India a mere Rs. 38 million. By 1972, the exports earned Rs. 136.9 million and then, the numbers increased geometrically Rs. 187 million (in 1977-78), Rs. 1450 million (in 1980-81) and Rs. 1658 million (in 1982-83). India's share of the world market in 1984 is about 16%. In the mid-1980's the export earnings began to decline: Rs. 1490 million (in 1983-84), Rs. 1380 million (in 1984-85) and Rs. 1082.8 million (in 1985-86). The pressure of the US dollar and newly-intensified efforts by the Pakistani state of leverage the market led to this decline. Rather than reassess the social implications of a carpet sector (which uses bonded child labourers as the government itself admitted in 1986), the government offered cash incentives of Rs. 250 million/years and other subsidies to increase carpet exports. In 1991-92, the carpet Industry exported Rs. 8.47 billion and in 1993-94, the industry exported Rs. 18.82 billion. The government overtures helped legitimize the industry, to cast out those who challenge the alliance between the IMF/Indian government/industry and it helped to increase an industry which is built on the backs of little children.
The industrialists and the bureaucracy justify the use of child labour on nationalist grounds i.e. the desire to increase exports in order to make India competitive. To make India competitive, the state tacitly accepts the use of children in industry, children, after all, work for lower wages, without unionization and for longer hours. Kiran Bhatty points out that "children can be early laid off in case of a slack in demand, without compensation, and therefore make ideal employees in export industries where demand is variable. The lower costs thus effected allow exporters to sell at lower prices, thereby apparently giving them a competitive advantage." International bureaucracies, social democratic governments in industrially backward nations and their tutors from the neo-conservative governments in the advanced industrial nations have put forward the nostrums of SAP as the popular prejudice of governance and policy. By pointing to poverty, all we manage to do is to avoid the more pertinent structural causes that outline the phenomena in question and thus also avoid structural policy work.

2.9 CHILD LABOUR IN ALIGARH – LOCK INDUSTRY

The lock industry of Aligarh is over a hundred years old and is considered to the be traditional occupation of the people of Aligarh district in Uttar Pradesh. It is concentrated, however, in Aligarh city and its adjoining areas.
The total population of Aligarh district according to the 1981 census is 25,74,625 of which 5,92,144 are in urban areas and 19,82,781 in rural areas. There are between 80,000-90,000 workers involved either directly or indirectly in the lock industry. Of the total workers, approximately 7,000-10,000 are children below the age of 14 years. However, these are only estimates and no one is sure of the actual figures. According to the factory owners and government officials, there are only 5,000 children working out of 55,000 workers comprising 9 per cent of the total labour force. It is asserted that these children are working only as part of family labour. The actual numbers are, however, much larger.

**Historical Background**

The lock industry of Aligarh was started in 1860 by the Postal Department. In the early years, the making of locks was a village industry and locks or components of locks were made by the artisan in his home, using his family labour. Many families, who found it difficult to support themselves only by agriculture, started making locks. There were also many castes like the Maithili Brahmins and others whose lands were usurped by the Thakurs and big landlords of the area, who then also joined the lock industry. Most of the padlocks were made in the surrounding villages.
As the demand for locks increased, the lock makers found it difficult to commute to the city and many families sold their lands and shifted to the city. But these were essentially small village craftsmen.

After the partition of India in 1947, there was a sudden shift in the social composition of lock-makers. Many of the traditional lock-makers in Aligarh city were Muslims who went away to Pakistan leaving a void. They were the real craftsmen and for a while there was a slump in the lock industry.

While Muslim artisans or master craftsmen who were the backbone of the lock industry went to Pakistan, there was a migration of Punjabi Hindus to Aligarh. These families were not engaged in lock making traditionally. But realizing that the lock industry was a profitable area, they set up small units by hiring labour and this led to the mass production of locks.

**Present Status of Lock Industry**

The lock industry at Aligarh comes largely under the small scale and cottage industry sectors. Locks or parts of locks are made in almost every home in the old city. The practice of using children as part of family labour is very common. It is estimated that about 80 per cent of the country's locks are made in Aligarh district.
There are two methods of making padlocks. One is the traditional method where the lock maker designs a lock and gets an order from the trader. The trader is usually also the financier who may give a loan to the lock-maker to buy raw material and other components. Once an order is placed, the lock maker gives the raw material, namely brass or iron, to the dhalai or moulder (who usually belongs to a scheduled caste community) along with a model. The dhalai casts all the pieces according to specifications and returns them to the lock maker who then files them. These components like the handle, springs, keys etc, which have not been cast by the dhalai are brought from the market, the lock is assembled and then returned to the trader. The trader gets a final polish given to the locks and his brand name engraved on them and then markets them. Well known locks such as Harrison, Plaza and parker are made thus.

Most of the heavy brass and iron locks made this way. The smaller and less expensive locks with names such as link, Horseman and Mobaj as well as mortice and cycle locks are mass produced in factories. In this process, the lock manufacturers have their own production units where they cut scrap iron sheets called MSA sheets which they get from the automobile industry, on power presses. Thus the outer cover of locks, the lid, flat keys, etc, are all cut from MSA sheets. Other parts of the lock like the handle etc. are also cut and bent and grooves made in the big factories. Once this is done on power presses, the work shifts to
the hand presses where the components are smoothened, holes pierced in keys or key holes pierced in lock cases, etc.

These rusted components of locks are either sent for dhol or drum polishing or polishing on buffing machines. Those parts of a lock which are visible from out-side such as the handle, cover or keys, etc, which need to be electroplated are first polished on buffing machines. Those parts which are not visible are sent for dhol or drum polishing. If visible parts are not electroplated, then they are spray painted.

Children are not working with dhalais, or in dhol polishing, dhol polishing, dhol plating or on power-presses. But in all other processes like working on hand presses, polishing on buffing machines, in electroplating and spray painting units, for filling components, making springs, assembling and packing of locks, children are used.

There is not even one factory where all the processes (of which there are approximately 45) are carried out in the same premises. Most of the factories get some parts made outside. The work is given on a contract basis and it is the responsibility of the contractor to get the work done. All workers are paid on a piece rate basis and work for anything upto 48 hours at a stretch when the work load is heavy.

In the big factories, components are cut and then farmed out to artisans to do the filling, finishing etc. There are different
contractors for different jobs and varying systems for getting the work done. Some people are paid by the gross, others are given a weekly wage and still others are remunerated according to lots. Ninety five per cent of the workers have no protection as they are piece rate workers.

In some units, popularly known as Karkhanas (legally they would come under the Factories Act, 1948), the premises and machines may belong to a man who directly hires labour and gets work done on a lot basis. In yet others, the man who owns the machines may rent them out to different sub contractors who arrange for the labour. Sometimes a sub-contractor may himself work on the machines.

Studies reveal that more than 60 percent of the workers in this sector are children under 14 years of age. Children do polishing, electroplating, spray painting and working on hand presses. They cut different components of locks for nearly 12-14 hours a day with hand presses. Exhaustion causes accidents, many lose the tips of their fingers, which get caught in the machines.

The most hazardous job for children in the lock industry is polishing. The boys who do polishing stand close to the buffing machines. The buffing machines that run on electric power have emery powder coated on bobs. While polishing the locks, they inhale emery powder with metal dust and almost all polishers
suffer from respiratory disorders and tuberculosis. In the small units, about 70 percent of the polishers are children.

Electroplating is another extremely hazardous process in which more than 70 percent of workers are children below the age of 14 years. Children work with naked hands in dangerous chemicals such as potassium cyanide, sodium phosphate, sodium silicate, hydroelectric acid, sulphuric acid, sodium hydroxide, chromic acid, barium hydroxide, etc. Children besides being affected by the usual consequences of chemical substances, are also at risk of shocks as these substances also produce electricity and the floors are usually wet. The children have their hands in these solutions for the better part of the twelve-hour day. Some cases of electrocution have been due to illegal electric connections obtained by some of these units from streetlights.

About 50 per cent of the workforce in the spray-painting sector of the lock industry is comprised of children. While at work, these children inhale large quantities of paint and paint thinners, leading to severe chest disorders. They suffer from breathlessness, fever, tuberculosis, bronchitis, asthma, and pneumoconiosis and from such symptoms and diseases. Work in the lock industry is dangerous and very hazardous for all employees, but is especially so for children.

Thus, in India children do all kinds activities, from household work to brick making, from stone breaking to selling in
shops and on streets, from bike repairing to garbage collecting and rag-picking. Most children work on farms and plantations or houses, far from the media scrutiny and the reach of a labour inspector.

Often, child labour is considered to be a "necessary evil" in poor countries such as India for the maintenance of the family. In that context, some consider it virtuous to give a job to a child. In fact, some academics and activists campaign not for the reduction of child labour but only for a reduction in the exploitation of children. However, the question has to be asked whether it is justifiable to allow children from poor families to undergo physical, cognitive, emotional and moral hazards because they must help their families. Is the joy of childhood reserved only for some, privileged, children?