The term child labour is defined as that any child between the age of 5 and 14 years who are directly or indirectly forced to work at home or outside for money or for the sake of apprentice. As a consequence, children are not only deprived of their dignity but also their freedom to play and spend some time as they spend. More over, their scope to develop physically, mentally and emotionally is lost. These children are also denied education that is a fundamental right and is supposed to have been available to them under any circumstances.

It is unfortunate to say that, even today the problem of child labour greatly exists in our country and in many parts of the world. These child laboures are paid less for their hardship, which generally fails to get one square meal a day. Driven out to work at a crucial formative age and burdened with hard labour, these ill-fated children are deprived of nutritious food, playtime and education. They lead a pathetic life, devoid of simple childhood pleasures and do not even get the opportunity to develop into valuable human resource.

Children are the important assets for the future development of any Nation. They are supposed to be the future builders of any society. The destiny of a country depends directly on how its children are nurtured to fulfill the requirements of its society. In India, education is the joint responsibility of both the State and central governments and the constitution of India envisages free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 years. Ironically, in reality, a large number of children are denied their fundamental rights and are subjected to undergo hard labourship in pathetic conditions.

Child labour policy in India concentrates more on amelioration than on its total abolition. Only 3.9 per cent of India’s Gross National Product (GNP) is spent on education out of which only 1.4 per cent on primary education. It is quite a miracle and unfortunate that the same India spends 85 thousand crore rupees of money for
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‘Defense’ in a year. Lack of social and cultural based anthropological study of the problem, strong political will, under use of available resources and low economic growth are some of the basic factors that lead to the failure of many anti child labour programmes in India.

Recent World Bank report (1999) has revealed that, more than 9 crore children are working in India, which is largest in terms of any country in the world. These nine crore working children includes one and half a crore bonded working children. No doubt, the complete elimination of child labour is a big challenge for the country. Various government are keep-framing number of policies and programmes to eliminate or just to control the problem atleast. Progressive as well as integrated approaches have been adopted by these Governaments to resolve the intense socioeconomic issues embedded in this problem. A multidimensional action plan to create awareness among all sections of the society is most essential. This research study has proved that Social and Cultural factors, Poverty, Larger family size, and Legal failures are few major reasons for the existence of child labour problem as far as studied samples is concerned.

The existence of poverty in different forms is one of the major and vital reasons behind this problem. Various kinds of cultural and social factors are embedded on poverty. The cultural analysis on poverty is most urgently required. Widespread poverty may leads to increase labour size of the family. Also, many cultural beliefs plays a vital role in increasing the family size. As long as, these twin problems continue to exist, it will not be possible to effectively tackle the problem of child labour. So “it hardly of any use to talk about abolition of child labour which is not only unrealistic but is also likely to do more harm than good to the millions of poverty stricken people in the county who are forced by their awfully poor economic condition to seek the help of their children to come out and work for their existence” (Mittal, 1999).
Another major problem is that difficulty is inherent fact that children working in rural areas, in urban informal sector and in domestic service are not readily visible. An integrated and effective measure to save children from hazardous or abuse should, therefore, begin by exploring the invisible visible. As long as child labour is part of the harsh reality that makes good economic sense, the conditions for change will not be met.

A Balanced Approach

As for as India is concerned Child labour problem is a complex of both social and economic issues. This problem needs an analysis from different kind of approaches. A lot of research works have been done /or still going on the specific issues on child labour. But an intensive social and cultural factors which embeded in household fertility behavior, cultural concept on risks, household decision-making, labour market and advanced technology should be explored as soon as possible. A conventional research provides a useful framework for integrating these variables in analyzing child labour problem.

Cultural and social backgrounds, economic strength and demographic characteristics are largely responsible for the supply of child labour in Bangalore City. It is evident that education level of the parents, and the employment status of the family members also affects on the supply of the child labour. When the number of family members increases, invariably it increases the dependency ratio which naturally increases the likelihood of a child will need to generate income to maintain the household.

Since the Government concentrated and spending crores of rupees money on higher education, primary education market has gradually been to the state of failure. Along with poverty, it has been proved that failure of the education market
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also plays a major portion for perpetuating of this problem in the Indian society. Low quality of education, poor learning achievements by the children, excessive cost, educated unemployment, lack of roll models in the community, absence of forward and backward linkage that strengthen primary education, lacunas in universalisation of primary education are some of the different reasons for the failure of the Indian education market. If Government decides to impose ban on child labour or come out with new laws, which may contain provision to punish the parents who send their children work will absolutely lead to a further detritus status of the children who have already limited opportunities. Imposition ban on the child labour is not quite logic and it will be a meaningless move by the State. Further, this move may affect the basic structure of the welfare economics of the any family. Because, on one hand children cannot work and on the other hand children may not want to go to the school. So, forceful imposition on child labour issue is likely to be failed, as it would threaten the survival of the entire household in the community.

Beter, we have to search for the needle where we had lost it. The most vital task before the Government, civil society and NGOs is the restoration of education market soon. The Government should revise its National Policy on Education. All its educational programmes should be culturally and geographically specific. A uniform type of education system is not good for the whole country. Government should fill-up the gap between the learning achievements between Government schools and private schools. Studies have shown that a large number of children do not become literate even after four years of schooling. Hence, school effectiveness and actual learning have to be primary concern than universal elementary education (Sharma, 2001). Government should seriously think about improving the quality of education especially in Government schools situated in most backwards areas of any revenue division. More than that, it should bring some radical changes in teacher’s education and it should invest more of its GDP
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on primary education and social development. Next, how effective schools are and success in learning depends not only on school level inputs but also on the factors outside of school. Hence, programmes, which will be useful in understanding schools from the wider context, are highly preferable now a days. Indirect cost on the education on the parents must and should reduced. Alternative income generation programmes of the parents who send their children to school should be the vital initiative and it is very crucial in the retention of the children in schools until the end of the course. Government should think few new approaches to strengthen the forward and backward linkage (link between education and decent job), which gives a new life to the job market. Also there should be a lot of scope for vocational education at least after certain level of primary education. Once the Government can address all these issues, then it can have more effective laws and Acts to ban child labour.

Further, Government and NGOs should make sure on the following three aspects while framing policies to curb this problem; 1) designing special delivery mechanisms for reaching the unreached and marginalised sections of the society; 2) designing and demonstrating innovative and workable models for providing quality of education and 3) identifying basic parameters for ensuring an efficient delivery system for primary education and formal and non formal education through field based studies.

More Anthropological research would be desired to reveal why some of the poor family spends considerable amount of money on education and why not some of the financially sound family would not? Also it is very interesting to find out why many households give more priority to the income from the Childs’ work and less weightage to the child’s schooling than the social optimum? Until getting answer for above cited questions, the only way before the State is to improve the living conditions of families depending on the wages of their children. More over,
income-increasing incentives need to be combined with schooling incentives, especially for girls, in order to increase household well-being and children’s human capital attainment. Next, urban poor also should be brought up within the circumstance of the Employment Guarantee Programme.

Child labour is a socioeconomic problem required multi prolonged strategy should be adopted as a long-term basis. As much as possible all policies and programmes should be culturally and geographically specific. Programmes should be need based one. Understanding the problem from poor people’s point of view is the long way to go. An innovative, well-balanced welfare economics, legislative and social interventions will be succeed in eliminating child labour as per as India in jeneral and Karnataka is particular. Based on the detailed field study on the different aspects of the problem, the present study has got some policy implications. All these suggestions are operative base. This new findings and results may be useful to the policy makers, economic planners, administrators, researchers, demographers and NGOs and social and women activists, who are fighting against this deadly social evil.
**Policy Suggestions**

- In Indian family system, a traditional woman is a real living force of the family. She is the strength of the family. She plays a major role in every household’s decisions. Hence, there is a need to create awareness and consciousness among the urban women, as the *traditional female* who are *conservative* lacks not try to understand the social problems of the present day context.

- Since social and cultural background of the family plays a vital role in taking household decision to send their children to work, all anti child labour and poverty eradication programmes should emphasize on the following four aspects: value, norms and social solidarity of the community, integrative forces in the people’s life, minimum and maximum resistance to modern innovations in their culture and recognizing vital linkages in people’s cultural fabrics.

- The definition and scope of the term child labour should be thoroughly revised. It should include all small households work, various cottage industries work and agriculture sector where large number of children found employed in case of India.

- Since India is a country of having different culture and traditions all policies and programmes should be geographically and culturally specific. All policies should have a lot of waitage to the local cultural norms with enough flexibility.

- No new specific legislation is required if the existing laws are effectively and promptly implemented. In the same time Government should think to have an effective control about the practice of invisible child labour.

- A comprehensive and an integrated approach are required to address sector-specific issues on rural, urban, regional and cultural specific. This necessitates the active participation of civil society and a synergy between the various Government programmes, which are dealing separately with aspects that impinge on child labour.
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- Important and necessary alternatives are required to implement free, relevant, quality and compulsory elementary education for all the children up to the age of 14 years. If implemented, it would certainly help in eliminating the process of children being drawn into the workforce in their early age. Of course, the task of reorganizing or restructuring the current education system is a vital task to any administration.

- State should make sure of every child to have an access to education, which should be relevant in terms of language, dialect, socio-cultural conditions, and history of the region and opportunities prevalent in the region. A special effort must be taken to provide education in those areas where it has been historically absent.

- ‘Crèches’ attached to the primary schools in rural and urban centres are necessary. Young children who are otherwise forced to take care of siblings can be encouraged to attend school if such facilities are provided. Successful programmes have been conducted for the children of construction site workers (combining education for older children and crèches for younger siblings) by different NGOs and are noteworthy to mention here.

- Education must be of high quality in terms of teachers, infrastructure and educational aids. An active programme to control school dropouts is necessary. It can be seen that though enrollment is high, many children are forced to dropouts of school for several reasons including poor teaching methods, lack of infrastructures etc. Teachers need to be further trained to make education interesting, attractive and more meaningful to the life.

- Education should aim at rehabilitation. It is necessary to look at the kinds of jobs that children are forced doing for the formative approach to eradicate child labour. Strategies must address sector specific issues. For instance, children in garage, children in construction work, children working in hotels and domestic works and street children. It is necessary to involve the community, parents and employers to design a comprehensive rehabilitation programmes so as to
have an impact on the context of a widespread campaign against the employment of children (CACL, 2001).

- Efforts also need to be made simultaneously provide to non-formal education, vocational education and training to the child workers. Income increasing incentives need to be combined with school incentives, especially for girls, in order to increase household well-being and children’s human capital attainment.

- Government should target poverty as a vital point embeds with this problem. Policies and programmes should be implemented in a decentralized manner and there should be enough scope for grass root level development. This kind of programme should be more suited to the local conditions and norms.

- Urban anti poverty programmes mainly should cover slum dwellers, people belongs to depressed class, causal workers, etc. More Anthropological research is needed on cultural analysis of poverty and its particular context and local settings.

- The urban anti poverty programme should be threefold: poverty reduction, construction of productive assets and promoting mainstream employment subsequently. We strongly believe that an Act needs to include this long-term focus of the programme, as the strategies use of surplus manpower for sustainable development has to be an important component of any new programme.

- Cost effective health care measures must be put in operation, seeking in particular reduction in infant mortality rates, that will reduce the social pressure on families to have many children as possible as way to insure against high rate of child mortality. More over family planning service must be made available to all at easily and affordable cost.

- To formulate and execute the projects related to child labour, organizational capacity of the institutions and the departments must be strengthen. The
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responsibility of setting priority, coordinating activities, promoting private sectors participation and launching of pilot schemes-etc should be entrusted to these institutions and departments.

• The ultimate objective of the child labour programmes should be convert working children into productive and participative members of the society. This needs generation of public awareness and simultaneous gearing up of the enforcement of the existing machineries to meet with the challenge. Introduction of new methods of monitoring and evaluation of child labour programmes and projects will help to implement a programme in a specific, time-bound, cost-effective and result-oriented manner

• More Anthropological study on child labour should be undertaken on a large-scale basis in different parts of the Bangalore Urban District. This will help in making specific policies suitable to the different cultural and regional settings. Through this we can overcome the regional difference issue also.

Further, what is needed is the creation of an environment where the community would not tolerate child labour in any form. It is only then child labour can be eliminated totally and permanently. If parents or children are to be commenced monetarily or in some other way, the cost of the programme will increase enormous and it may even tempt others to withdraw their children from school just to get the compensation package.

Lost but not least, this study has revealed that majority of the poor families consider children is one of the meance for economic development of the families since long time. It requires a radical change particularly in our society where traditional preoccupation of children is not favorable for their well-being. The dominance of caste sanctions, feudalism and superstitious believes continued for centuries in Indian society, but with the development of science and technology, revolutionization of ideas and ideologies in the western world, in particular and in
the human society, in general, a considerable impact was produced on the traditional ideas and practice of the people who are living in underdeveloped and developing countries. This has to create a rational outlook of the people and requires purposeful efforts to weaken the culturally bounded traditional perception about children and to bring about more enlightened social attitudes towards innocent children.

Finally it can be said that a country’s full commitment to the total abolition of child labour should be judged not merely on the basis of official pronouncements but on whether the child labour objective is consciously considered in the already mentioned policy implications. Moreover practical action and standard setting will have to be combined with policies, which address the root causes of child labour as identified by this study. The policy package suggested in this study offers very thought provoking, more realistic and sober view of the challenges faced in the genuine success of time bound programmes for the elimination of child labour. Unless and until findings of various studies are taken into account, there is a real risk of policies being dominated by hasty, adhoc, often negative short term responses to dealing with a phenomenon which also requires substantial action on core issues having a clear long term significance.