

CHAPTER – TWO

PERSONAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND OF CHILD LABOURERS

Personal background :

The prevalence of child labour is generally attributed to the poverty of the individual households and backwardness of the society. The study on child labour in Siliguri town indicates that poverty, illiteracy and unemployment have forced the small children to enter into the labour market. The prevalence of child labour has been seen more or less in all periods of time with varied natures and dimensions, depending on the existing socio-economic structure of a society. In the past, child labour has been a part of the social organisation in which all members pooled their labour to produce for the subsistence and survival. This was and is particularly true for rural subsistence farming where the work of the child formed a part of the labour necessary for the reproduction of the system and value of labour taken as part of child's socialization for reproduction of the labour force.

The socio-economic study on child labour has been conducted in Siliguri among 318 child labourers. They are engaged in various types of occupations in different parts of Siliguri. Their personal background is analysed here on the basis of their age, sex, religion, caste, mother tongue, birth place, marital status, migration, nature of work, wages, education, punishment and future thought, etc. These components may help to get an idea about their personal background. If some components are excluded from this subject, it will not give their complete personal background and cannot make a complete idea about their personal profile.

Age Composition :

While selecting children for the survey, the only consideration is that the children selected for the study should be below the age of 14 years as per the definition of a child given by the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1996. Singh (1992) has indicated in the study of Gujarat that the working child labourers largely belong to fourteen years of age. The highest numbers of child labourers

working in hotels/restaurants are in the age group of 14 years and that is 36.36 per cent of the total number of children included in the particular service sector. The table (No. 2) shows the age of 318 children studied in the Wards 28 and 18 in Siliguri.

Table no. 2
Child labours and age groups

Age group	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
6 – 8	19	10.50	16	11.68	35	11.00
9 – 11	58	32.04	59	43.07	117	36.80
12 – 14	104	57.46	62	45.25	166	52.20
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

The above table reveals that majority of the children belong to the age group of 12 – 14 years (52.20 per cent) followed by the children belonging to the age groups of 9 – 11 (36.8 per cent) and 6 – 8 (11 per cent). On an average, children enter into the labour market at the age of 6 – 8 years.

Sex Composition :

Pandhe (1979) has identified in Delhi that a good number of male children are engaged in various occupations. They are working in large numbers in tea-shops and dhabas, domestic service, shoe shining, auto repairing and cycle repairing shops, collection of rags and other waster materials, hawking of evening newspapers and home delivery of milk bottles. In the study area it has been identified that a good number of male children is engaged in different types of occupations. Among 318 children interviewed, 181 children are male and 137 children female. It is a common feature that male children work outside home where female children engage themselves mainly in domestic work in their own house and also outside. Table 3 shows the sex composition of the child labourers, where 181 (56.92 per cent) children are male and 137 (43.08 per cent) children female.

Table no. 3

Sex composition of the child labourers

Sex	Ward no. 28		Ward no. 18		Total	
	No. of child labourers	Percentage	No. of child labourers	Percentage	No. of child labourers	Percentage
Male	110	55.56	71	59.17	181	56.92
Female	88	44.44	49	40.83	137	43.08
TOTAL	198	100.00	120	100.00	318	100.00

Religion :

Multi-religious people live in different slums in Siliguri, they have migrated here for their livelihood. Hindu and Muslim people are more in number than any other religious people. In this study majority of the child labourers are Hindus and the rest belong to the Islam religion. Panicker (1998) also shows that Hindu children are more in number in carpet industry in Mirzapur and in match fire works in Sivakashi, they are 86.2% and 98 % respectively. The table 4 reveals that 136 (74.53 per cent) child labourers are Hindus and 45 (25.47 per cent) child labourers are Muslims.*

Table no. 4

Child labourers and their religions

Religion	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Hindus	136	75.14	101	73.72	237	74.53
Muslims	45	24.86	36	26.28	81	25.47
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Caste Composition :

Child labourers are found from among every caste group living in the slums. The majority of child labourers come from the lower caste groups and very few are from so-called higher castes. Table 5 shows the caste composition of the child labourers of whom 152 (82.08 per cent) belong to the general caste groups and only 29 (17.92 per cent) are scheduled castes.

Table no. 5
Child labourers and their caste background

Caste	Child labourer		Child labourer		Child labourer	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
General	152	83.98	109	79.56	261	82.08
Scheduled Caste	29	16.02	28	20.44	57	17.92
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Mother tongue :

Multi lingual people live in Siliguri, most of them are Bengali, Hindi and Nepali speaking people. Most of the Hindi-speaking people have migrated to Siliguri from Bihar and have taken shelter in different slums here. In this study majority of the child labourers have been found to be Hindi speaking and the rest are Bengali speaking. Most of them are born in Siliguri and a very few of them are born outside Siliguri. The table 6 shows the mother tongue of the child labourers. In this study, all of them are divided into two major language-speaking groups, i.e., Bengali and Hindi. Out of 318 respondents interviewed, 120 (57.74 per cent) are Bengali speaking and 198 (62.26 per cent) are Hindi speaking.

Table no. 6
Mother tongue of the working children

Mother Tongue	Child labourer		Child labourer		Total Child labourer	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Bengali	55	30.39	65	47.45	120	37.74
Hindi	126	69.61	72	52.55	198	62.26
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Marital status :

Now a days, the practice of early marriage has declined considerably due to the rapid growth of urbanization and modernization. Early marriage can still be seen among the people migrated from Bihar who have kept up their tradition till now. The range of age of the child labourers is 6 - 14 years; childhood ends with the attainment of 14 years of age. Most of the children under this study are un-married. They do not

practise early marriage because they know the demerits of it, very negligible Percentage of families practise early marriage due to their traditional beliefs. The table 7 reveals that only 2 (0.63 per cent) female child labourers are married and 316 (99.37 per cent) are unmarried.

Table no. 7

Marital status among the working children

Marital Status	Child labourer		Child labourer		Total Child labourer	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Married	-	-	2	1.46	2	0.63
Unmarried	181	100.00	135	98.54	316	99.37
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Migration :

Siliguri town is the second largest town in West Bengal, and it is the gateway to north-east regions of India. It is also a big labour market of the sub-Himalayan West Bengal where job opportunities are high. Due to these reasons a large number of people have migrated here to earn money for their livelihood.

Table no. 8

Migrant and non-migrant families of the child labourers

Migrant and non-migrant family	No. of families	Percentage
Migrant	158	89.27
Non-migrant	19	10.73
TOTAL	177	100.00

Table no. 8 shows the Percentage of the families of the child labourers who are migrants and non-migrants. All 318 child labourers have been interviewed from 177 families. Out of 177 child labourers' families 158 (89.27 per cent) are migrants to this town and only 19 (10.73 per cent) families are non-migrant.

The patterns of migrations are of different types among the respondents, these are inter-district migration, inter-state migration and inter-country migration. These

migrant people are living permanently or temporarily in various localities of Siliguri town.

Table no. 9
Patterns of migration

Patterns of Migration	No. of families	Percentage
Inter-district migration	37	23.42
Inter-state migration	107	67.72
Inter-country migration	14	08.86
TOTAL	158	100.00

Table 9 shows the patterns of migration. The inter-state migrations of families are highest in number, being 107 (67.72 per cent). Tripathy (1997) has examined in Orissa where Inter-state migrant child labourers are very high in numerical strength, 55 per cent inter-state migrants are engaged in various types of occupations. They have migrated from Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Assam state. Only 8.86 per cent of families are inter-country migrants who are lowest in number, and 23.42 per cent of families are inter-district migrants. In inter-district migration, migrants have come from Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, South and North Dinajpur district. In case of inter-state migration people have migrated from Bihar followed by Assam and Sikkim. In the inter-country migration, migrants have come from Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

Often people from various places have migrated to Siliguri for different reasons and purposes. Earlier, the population of Siliguri was very low. Immigrants have started to enter into Siliguri when it started developing. Different groups of people have migrated to Siliguri due to various economic opportunities, better communication, transportation, medical treatment and educational facilities.

Table no. 10
Period of migration of the families of child labourers

Period of Migration	No. of families	Percentage
5 Years back	11	06.96
6 - 10 Years back	13	08.23
11 - 15 Years back	11	06.96
16 - 20 Years back	22	13.92
21 - 25 Years back	21	13.29
26 - 30 Years back	23	14.56
31 - 35 Years back	14	08.86
36 - 40 Years back	20	12.67
41 - 45 Years back	14	08.86
46 - 50 Years back	05	03.16
51 and above Years back	04	02.53
TOTAL	158	100.00

Table no. 10 shows the migration periods of the families of the child labourers. During the last 26 - 30 years highest number of families, i.e., 23 families (14.56 per cent) are found to have migrated to the Siliguri city. It is very clear to say that the period of 1970-1975 was the time of highest incidence migration. Only 2.53 per cent of families migrated here 51 years ago. More than single factors have influenced their migration. Poor economy is the main cause that forced them to migrate to Siliguri.

Table no. 11
Causes of migration

Causes of migration	No. of families	Percentage
Economic problem	117	74.05
Familial problem	15	09.49
For taking job (better work)	26	16.46
TOTAL	158	100.00

Table 11 shows the causes of migration of the families of child labourers. Three factors have played important roles for their migration, namely, economic problem, familial problem and better job prospects. About 74.05 per cent of the

respondents have migrated here due to their economic problem. Only 9.49 per cent have migrated due to their familial problems, and 16.46 per cent have migrated for better job opportunities. Most of the child labourers' families have migrated here due to economic reason.

Family background :

Family is the main institution in shaping the child's personality. Therefore, the form and character of the family is of utmost importance for developing the child's personality. It has been seen that the form of a family is greatly affected by the social and economic changes that have taken place in recent years. But the basic biological and social needs, which guide the essential functions of the family, have not yet changed. Though some of the original functions of the family such as educational, economic, recreational and religious have been taken over by other social agencies, yet its basic functions, which centre round the bio-psycho-and social needs of man have not been affected. The importance of the family has been rightly summed up by Mc Iver and page (Mittal; 1994) in these words " of all the organisations, large or small which society unfolds none transcend the family in the intensity of its sociological society".

The psychological and environmental influence of the family on the child is so deep, and it takes place so rapidly that psychologists say that the child acquires all the traits of his personality and character of his adulthood before the attainment of 5 years of age and, in some cases, even earlier. Since the family forms such an integral part of the child's life, it is essential to study his family background.

Size of the family :

During fieldwork, the average size of the family has been found quite large. The main reason is that they have the opinion that Islam prohibits family planning, and they also believe that they need extra hands to earn and contribute to the family income. Unfortunately, they cannot understand the underlying fact that large size of families means that there are extra mouths to feed. Large numbers of children who come from these families have been selected for this study.

Table no. 12
Number of Siblings per family

No. of Siblings	No. of families	Percentage
1 Child	04	2.26
2 - 3 Children	67	37.85
4 - 5 Children	75	42.37
6 Children	31	17.52
TOTAL	177	100.00

Table 12 shows that the highest number of families have 4-5 number of siblings, followed by the families having 2-3 number of siblings, six siblings and one sibling in the order. The average number of siblings per family is 3-4. In this study, 42.37 per cent of the families have 4-5 children, 37.85 Per cent of the families have 2-3 children, 17.52 per cent of the families have six children and 2.26 per cent of the families have single children.

Table no. 13

Size of the families of the child labourers

Family size	No. of families	Percentage
Within three members	4	2.66
4 - 5 members	52	29.38
6 - 7 members	82	46.33
8 - 9 members	37	20.90
10 - 11 members	02	01.13
TOTAL	177	100.00

Table 13 shows the size of family. The highest number of members, i.e., 10-11 members is found between 2 families (01.13 per cent). The families having 6-7 members are the second highest in number being 82, i.e., 46.33 per cent followed by the families having 4-5 members being 52, i.e. 29.38 per cent. Then there are families having 8-9 members being 37, i.e., 20.9 per cent. The lowest number of members, i.e. 3 is found in 4 (2.26 per cent) families only.

Child labourers with or without parents :

A good number of children are working under hazardous conditions in Siliguri, who do not have either father or mother or both the parents. They are compelled to work for long hours for low wages and under conditions damaging to their health, psychology and mental development. These children are deprived of healthy childhood, love and affection. Every parent has a vital role to their family for upbringing the children. In absence of them a child cannot develop mentally or physically.

Table no. 14

Child labourers with or without father and mother

Father	No. of families in %	Mother, no. of families in %
Alive	126 (71.19)	171 (96.61)
Dead	49 (27.69)	6 (3.39)
Missing	1 (.56)	-
Separated	1 (.56)	-
Total	177 (100.00)	177 (100.00)

Table 14 shows that 126 (71.19 per cent) fathers and 171 (96.61 per cent) of mothers are living with their children, 49 (27.69 per cent) of fathers and 6 (3.39 per cent) of mothers has died, 0.56 per cent fathers are missing and 0.56 per cent fathers are separated and live with their second wives.

Literacy of the parents of the child labourers :

Majority of the population of poverty-ridden section of the society are illiterate. They think about their present condition and never bother about the future. Similarly, future of their children is not their concern. They involve their children in earning from the very childhood for supporting their own families by contributing money. With this they remain satisfied. They do not feel the need of sending their children to schools for education. They are, thus deprived of any education and opportunity to achieve any higher occupation at the later age. As they are employed at the very childhood, they suffer from many diseases.

They are in this way transformed into wage labours when they attain adulthood (Saha, 1992). Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has mentioned tradition, poverty, lack of adequate awareness among parents for educating children, large family, unemployment and lack of land as the causes of child labour. Child labour is common in the lower socio-economic groups because of the lack of appreciation on their part of the role that education plays in improving life and living conditions of people. Adam (Saha, 1992) has predicted "The child labourers today will be the paupers of tomorrow, they are the boys and girls who will grow up without either formal schooling or knowledge of a trade; sooner or later, their youthful energies exhausted, they will become dull shiftless, drift less".

It is also stated that one of the major causes of child labour is said to be illiteracy and ignorance of parents. This leads to a lack of appreciation of education on the part of the parents and also limits the outlook towards life. Such parental handicaps are at once reflected in the child, as it is primarily in the family that the early socialization of the child takes place. Mittal (1994) has seen in his study that only 25 per cent of the children's fathers are literate and 74 per cent of the children's fathers are illiterate. Only six per cent of the children have lost their fathers. In his study only 10 per cent of their mothers are found literate. Educational statuses of fathers are better than that of mothers. In the families where both the parents are illiterate, children are bound to be called upon to take up some occupations to contribute to the income of the family. In my study, I have found that 25.40 per cent of the fathers are literate and 74.60 per cent are illiterate. While 11.11 per cent mothers are literate and 88.89 per cent of mothers are illiterate.

Occupations of the parents :

Most of the parents are employed in occupations requiring little or no skill. Most of them work in the unorganised sector. Unorganised sector has been defined as that sector which has not been able to organize itself in pursuit of common objectives. Casual nature of employment, ignorance, illiteracy of the workers, small size and scattered nature of establishments, and superior strength of employers are some of the characteristics of unorganised occupations. There is also little security of

employment or assurance of a stable income in these occupations. Under such circumstances parents have little choice but to send their children to work.

In the present study, 84.92 per cent of the fathers of the child labourers are employed and 13.49 per cent are unemployed, while 64.91 per cent of their mothers are employed and 35.09 per cent are unemployed.

Table no. 15
Types of occupation of fathers of the child labourers

Types of occupations	No. of families	Percentage
Sweeper	12	11.22
Rickshaw/Van puller	13	12.16
Maker of Shoe, Bi-cycle, Rickshaw, Mattress, Small wicker basket etc.	06	5.61
Mason, Painter, Carpenter	11	10.28
Seller of Vegetable, Cloth, Clove, <i>Fuchka</i> (one type of fast-food) Country liquor, Fish, Broken things, etc.	09	8.41
Barber	04	3.74
Tailor/Sack sewer	07	6.54
Gleaner/Rag Pickers	03	2.80
Driver	04	3.74
<i>Beedi</i> binders	03	2.80
<i>Chowkidar</i>	05	4.67
Tea stall owner and hotel owner	04	3.74
<i>Khalashis</i>	01	0.93
Vendor	05	4.67
Beggar	01	0.93
Wage labourers	19	17.76
TOTAL	107	100.00

Table 15 reveals the different types of occupation of the fathers of the child labourers. In this study 11.22 per cent fathers are sweepers, 12.16 per cent rickshaw/van pullers, 17.76 per cent wage labourers, 5.61 per cent engaged in making shoe, bi-cycle/rickshaw mattress and small wicker basket; 10.28 per cent are involved in the work of masonry, painting and carpentry, 8.41 per cent sell vegetables, cloth, clove, *fuchka*, country liquors, fish and broken things etc.; 3.74 per cent barber, 6.54 per cent tailors, 2.80 per cent gleaner or rag pickers; 3.74 per cent driver, 2.80 per cent *beedi*-binders, 4.67 per cent *chowkidar*, 3.74 per cent tea stall and hotel owners; 0.93 per cent *khalashis*, 4.67 per cent vendors and 0.93 per cent fathers are beggars.

Table no. 16

Types of occupation of the mothers of the child labourers

Types of occupations	No. of mothers	Percentage
Sweeper	13	11.71
Maid Servant and mid wife	28	25.22
Seller of firewood, vegetables, fruits, fish, soil, maize	15	13.51
Mason labour (helper)	21	18.92
Tea stall owner	06	5.41
Chocolate packing, <i>fuchka</i> preparation, <i>beedi</i> binding, sewing	11	9.91
Gleaner/Rag pickers	17	15.32
TOTAL	111	100.00

Table 16 shows different types of occupations of the mothers of the child labourers. Among the mothers of child labourer 11.71 per cent are sweeper, 25.22 per cent maid servant and midwife, 13.51 per cent sellers of wood, vegetables, fruits, fish, soil and maize; 18.92 per cent mason labour, 5.41 per cent tea stall owners, 9.91 per cent engaged in chocolate packing, *fuchka* preparation, *beedi* binding and sewing and 15.32 per cent mothers are gleaner or rag pickers.

Income of the parents of the child labourers :

It is of immense importance to look at the family income. One of the major causes of child labour is low income of the family along with its general poor economic condition. The family income comprises of the income of the head of the household, and income of the other members of the family, that is, wife and children or of any other person living in the family. The unwillingness on the part of the family members to disclose the actual income has left a wide margin of error to get the real picture of income of the families of the child labourers. The estimated family income has been calculated along with the secondary sources of income of the family members. I have depended on the observation method to check the income by the standard of living of the family. It has been revealed that income of the families is not sufficient for maintaining the family.

Table no. 17
Monthly income of the child labourers family

Monthly income of the family	No. of families	Percentage
Within Rs. 1000	24	13.56
Rs. 1,001 - Rs 1,500	42	23.73
Rs. 1,501 - Rs 2,000	50	28.25
Rs. 2,001 - Rs 2,500	31	17.52
Rs. 2,501 - Rs 3,000	25	14.12
Rs. 3,001 - Rs. 3,500	05	2.82
TOTAL	177	100.00

The total income of all members in a family has been included in the monthly family income by which Table no. 17 shows the percentages of the different income groups. As found in this study 13.56 per cent family belong to 1000 and below income group, 23.73 per cent family to Rs. 1001 - Rs 1,500, 28.25 per cent to Rs. 1,501 - Rs 2,000, 17.52 per cent to Rs. 2,001 - Rs 2,500, 14.12 per cent to Rs. 2,501 - Rs. 3,000 and 2.82 per cent family to Rs. 3,001 - Rs 3,500 income group.

Views of the parents of the child labourers :

The problem of child labour is basically an offshoot of the problem of low income of parents to support a large sized family. For maintenance of children of the large family, poor parents are forced to fill up the deficit of the family budget by the little wages earned by their children.

Many parents argue that they are forced to send their children to work due to lack of opportunities of education, which can provide vocational training. Some of the parents have reported that they are education-conscious and appreciates that education can improve their lot. They do not think that only poor economy is responsible for making of child labour. Sometimes, bad association of a child may be avoided by employing him to do some work and earn.

Table no. 18
Parent's view of desirability of child labour

Parents' view of desirability of child labour	No. of parents	Percentage
Solution of economic problem	68	58.12
Solvation of economic problem and development of <i>bastee</i>	11	09.40
Development of <i>bastee</i> culture	07	05.98
Could not replied	31	26.50
TOTAL	117	100.00

Table 18 explains the arguments of the parents on the desirability of child labour. In this study 58.12 per cent of the parents argue that solving economic problem and maintenance of children are reasons for sending them to the labour market; 09.40 per cent of the parents have argued that for solving economic problem and development of *bastee* they have to send their children to work. Only 05.98 per cent of the parents have stressed desirability of child labour for development of *bastee* culture and 26.50 per cent of the parents did not have any reply.

It has been mentioned earlier that child labour is a socio-economic problem, the principal causes of which are poverty, large family, and absence of opportunities of education, illiteracy and ignorance of parents. Solvating basic problem is necessary for the ameliorating the lot of child labour, it may be solving economic problem, provision for compulsory primary education for the children and over-all development of the slums where they live.

Table no. 19
Parents' view of amelioration of the lot of child labour

Parents' view	No. of parents	Percentage
To solve their economic problem	49	41.89
To change their dirty culture	18	15.38
To send the children in the school and to solve the economic problem	15	12.82
Could not reply	35	29.91
TOTAL	117	100.00

Table 19 shows the parents' view of ameliorating the lot of the child labourers. The arguments of the parents for ameliorating the lot of child labourers are very important to prevent this social problem. The overall opinion highlights the two major points :

- (i) Proper policy to solve their economic problem.
- (ii) Compulsory primary education for the children.

This study reveals that for removing this problem about 41.89 per cent of the parents have urged in favour of solving their economic problem, 15.38 per cent of the parents have wanted to change their dirty culture of the slums, 12.82 per cent of the parents are eager to send their children to school for compulsory education for which economic support by the government is essential. However, the common opinion is to remove poverty of the people. Only 29.91 per cent of the parents do not have any reply to the questions.

The provisions for abolishing child labour in the Indian Constitution. These are :

1. No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or in any hazardous employment (Article - 24).
2. Childhood and youth are to be protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment (Article - 39)(f)
3. The state shall endeavour to provide with in a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years (Article - 45).

It has been revealed from the present study that a few parents are aware of the Child Labour Act, a few parents known about it partly and most of the parents are not aware of this Act.

Table no. 20
Parents' idea about the Child Labour Act

Idea about the Child Labour Act	No. of parents	Percentage
Rightly known	02	1.71
Partly known	14	11.96
Don't know	44	37.61
Could not reply	57	48.72
TOTAL	117	100.00

Table 20 shows the idea about the Child Labour Act among the parents. Only 2 (1.71 per cent) parents have been found to be aware of this Act. According to them, the Act prohibits the employment of children in certain occupations, who are below the age of 15 years. In this study 14 (11.96 per cent) parents are partly aware of this Act and 44 (37.61 per cent) of the parent do not know of the Act. The majority of the parents 57 (48.72 per cent) have not been able to reply.

Diseases of parents :

Parents of the child labour are exposed to various diseases under the unclean and unhealthy working conditions prevailing in unorganised sector. Working in hazardous occupations exposed to toxic gases, vapours, fumes, dusts, smoke, etc. are responsible for diseases of lungs, respiratory system, throat, ear, eyes and skin. They also suffer from various chronic diseases like T.B., Asthma, Anaemia, diseases of nerves and skins. The combination of poor nutrition and bad working conditions reduces their life span. Hazardous works like making of *beedi*, tobacco, alcohol, *ganja*, *bhanga* etc. affect their health.

The present study shows the diseases of the fathers of the child labour. During the period of fieldwork 53.17 per cent of their fathers are found to be suffering from various diseases and 46.83 per cent are found in normal health condition.

Table no. 21

Diseases suffered by the fathers of the child labourers

Types of diseases	No. of fathers	Percentage
Leprosy	04	5.97
Liver problems	05	7.46
Asthma & respiratory problems	02	2.99
Tuberculosis	14	20.90
Blindness	03	4.48
Mad	01	1.49
Malnutrition	08	11.94
Skin disease	17	25.37
Other diseases	13	19.40
TOTAL	67	100.00

Table 21 shows the types of diseases suffered by the fathers of the child labourers at the time of fieldwork. The study reveals that 4 (5.97 per cent) of the

fathers have suffered from leprosy, 5 (7.46 per cent) from lever problems, 2 (2.99 per cent) from asthma or respiratory problem, 14 (20.90 per cent) from tuberculosis, 3 (4.48 per cent) from blindness, 1 (1.49 per cent) from madness or nerval problem, 8 (11.94 per cent) from malnutrition, 17 (25.37 per cent) from skin diseases and 13 (19.40 per cent) from other diseases.

As compared to diseases suffered by their fathers there is not much difference in the case of their mothers. It is reported that 52.63 per cent of mothers have suffered from various diseases while the rest, i.e., 47.37 per cent have not reported any diseases suffered by them during the period of fieldwork.

Table no. 22

Diseases suffered by the mothers of the child labourers

Types of weakness or diseases	No. of mothers	Percentage
Nerve problem	01	1.11
Tuberculosis	04	4.44
Malnutrition	29	32.22
Skin diseases	23	25.56
Other diseases	33	36.67
TOTAL	90	100.00

Table 22 shows different types of diseases suffered by the mothers of the child labourers during the time of fieldwork. It is revealed that 1 (1.11 per cent) of mothers have suffered from nerve problem, 4 (4.44 per cent) from tuberculosis, 29 (32.22 per cent) from malnutrition, 23 (25.56 per cent) from skin diseases and 33 (36.67 per cent) from various diseases.

The problem of drug addiction :

Ahuja (1991) has pointed out that the problem of drug addiction is the major problem among the slum dwellers. Slum people are habituated with taking alcohol, cannabis and other sedative drugs. Family, peer group associations and surrounding atmosphere are the primary influences upon the direction which individual takes and maintains in his life. In this study drug use among the parents and their children are influenced by the lack of parental affection in the family and social environment. This study reveals that 29.36 per cent of the fathers are addicted to taking alcohol and

cannabis. It is also found from the study that majority of slum dwellers are addicted to taking liquor, cannabis, etc. *beedi* and tobaccos are the common things among them. Some children also take *beedi* and tobacco.

Property :

Property refers to both moveable and immovable types. The families of the child labourers do not have any land property. They live in the slum and they do not own any land of these slums. These slums have grown up on the public land and Railway land. They have settled down on these lands generally and have constructed their houses for living permanently. They possess some moveable properties like rickshaw, bi-cycle, van, radio, tape-recorder, television etc. No valuable luxury goods have been found in their houses.

Table no. 23

Families of the child labourers settled on land

Nature of house and land	No. of families	Percentage
Rental house on public land	06	03.39
Settled on public/vest land	108	61.02
Settled on Railway land	63	35.59
TOTAL	177	100.00

Table 23 shows the families settling on various types of land. In this study, only 6 (3.39 per cent) of the families are living in the rented houses, 108 (61.02 per cent) of the families are living on the vested or public land and 63 (35.59 per cent) families are living in the houses constructed on the Railway land. A large number of the families of the child labourers have illegally occupied the government's vested land and railway land. Due to their poor economy they are not able to purchase land for construction of their own houses.

The present study reveals that a large number of the families of the child labourers do not have any moveable property. They constitute 59.32 per cent of the families who live from hand to mouth. Only 40.68 per cent of the families have some moveable properties. Their economic condition is better than the rest of the families. Among these families only 6.94 per cent have cattle, 34.73 per cent have domestic

fowls and 58.33 per cent have bi-cycle, rickshaw, van and radio, only two black and white. 12" televisions are found among those families.

The findings of this study indicate the narrow and congested land with improper drainage, lack of drinking water and inadequate sanitary conditions. These houses lack in privacy, and the small *kutchcha* houses offer little protection from rain, cold or sweating heat conditions. Dwellers use water from public tube-well in the near vicinity. They have to use common latrine and commonplace for bath. It is interesting to know that the houses acquire electric connections illegally by hooking system from the street light posts. All the families use the corner beside their house as kitchen. In this study 23.73 per cent of the families are found living in the *kutchcha* houses and with ill ventilation, 21.48 per cent are in *kutchcha* houses and in unclean situations, 0.56 per cent *kutchcha* houses and in clean condition, 15.82 per cent are in the semi-*pukka* houses with ill-ventilations, 7.34 per cent are in semi-*kutchcha* and uncleaned conditions and 31.07 per cent families are living in the uncleaned and ill-ventilated houses.