

## CHAPTER - THREE

### NATURE OF WORK OF THE CHILD LABOURERS

#### *Types of work :*

In Siliguri children are found to work in different shops, restaurants, hotels, garages and construction works. They are engaged as vendors, scavengers, rag pickers, shoe-shiners, petty-hawkers and wage labourers particularly loading and unloading of goods. The elders to help in smuggling goods, drugs, etc. and also for selling liquor use some children. Child labour implies something different that children under the 14 years of age are being exploited, or over-worked or deprived of their rights to health or education or to childhood. It hampers their health, their overall physical, mental and social growth. In the slums under my study in particular, children are engaged in different types of works as rag pickers, restaurant or hotel workers, tea stall workers, garage workers, helpers to shopkeepers, maid servants, sewing workers, sweepers, *khalashis*, rickshaw/van pullers, wage labourers, small traders, hawkers, etc. They have taken up these jobs because these works are available to them on low wages. They prefer to work within the Siliguri City.

Table No. 24

Child labourers and their works in Ward No. 18 and 28 (Eleven slums)

Nature of Works	Child labourers		Child labourers		TOTAL Child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
GLEANERS/RAG PICKERS [ Collecting iron, plastic, Glass, coal etc.]	98	54.4	76	55.48	174	54.72
RESTAURANT OR HOTEL WORKERS	5	2.76	-	-	5	1.57
TEA STALL WORKERS	8	4.42	-	-	8	2.52
MAID SERVANTS	-	-	44	32.11	44	13.84
GARAGE WORKERS	7	3.87	-	-	7	2.20
WORKERS OF DIFFERENT SHOPS [ Jewellery, stationery, cloth, bi-cycle repairing, typing, lottery, hard ware radio, <i>kamarshala</i> etc.]	21	11.60	-	-	21	6.60
CHOCOLATE AND CHAW-CHAW PACKING	-	-	5	3.65	5	1.57
SEWING	3	1.66	1	0.73	4	1.26
HELPERS [ Painting, smith motor-binder, carpenter, fish stockiest, to take the nursery students in the school ]	6	3.32	-	-	6	1.89
SWEOPER	5	2.76	-	-	5	1.57
KHALASHIS (Truck cleaner)	4	2.21	-	-	4	1.26
RICKSHAW OR VAN PULLER	7	3.87	-	-	7	2.20
SELLER [ Fish, vegetable, maize-fry, <i>fuchka</i> , etc.]	12	6.63	11	8.03	23	7.23
WAGE LABOURERS	5	2.76	-	-	5	1.57
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

The table 24 reveals the distribution of child labourers in various occupations. Out of 318 child labourers 174 (54.72 per cent) are gleaner/rag pickers, 5 (1.57 per cent) work in hotel/restaurants, 8 (2.52 per cent) in tea stall, 44 (13.84 per cent) are maid servant, 7 (2.20 per cent) in garages, 21 (6.60 per cent) work in different shops, 5 (1.57 per cent) are engaged in chocolate and chaw-chaw packing, 4 (1.26 per cent) in sewing, 6 (1.89 per cent) are helpers, 5 (1.57 per cent) sweepers, 4 (1.26 per cent) *khalashis*, 7 (2.20 per cent) rickshaw/van pullers, 23 (7.23 per cent) sellers and 5

(1.57 per cent) are wage labourers. It is seen that child gleaners/rag pickers are more in number and the second highest position is for the maidservant.

*Lengh of Present Work:*

It is a common feature that child labourers do not remain engaged in any particular work for a long time. Those who are engaged in hotels/restaurants/tea stalls or in any other works under employers, cannot continue for a long time in a particular type of work. They generally leave the works due to mental and physical torture, rough behaviour, impatience, etc. of the employers. The children who work independently as ragpickers, sweepers, rickshaw pullers, chocolate packers, etc. generally engage themselves for six months or for a year in a particular work at a stretch. Thus, during their working life child labourers may engage themselves in different types of works and at different places under different employers.

The table 25 shows the length of present service of child labourers under study. Majority of the children have been found to be working for about 7-12 months in a particular work, their number is 148. i.e., 46.54 per cent of the total child labourers. Only 88 child labourers (27.67 per cent) have been found working for about 1-6 months, 54 child labourers (16.98 per cent) for about 19-24 months, 13 child labourers (4.09 per cent) for about 13-18 months, 11 child labourers (3.46 per cent) for about 31-36 months and only 3 child labourers (0.94 per cent)

Table no. 25  
Length of present work of the child labourers

Length of present service	Child Labourers		Child Labourers		Child Labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1 – 6 months	47	25.96	41	29.93	88	27.67
7 – 12 months	91	50.28	57	41.60	148	46.54
13 – 18 months	5	2.76	8	5.84	13	4.09
19 – 24 months	31	17.13	23	16.79	54	16.98
25 – 30 months	-	-	1	0.73	1	0.32
31 – 36 months	7	3.87	4	2.92	11	3.46
37 – 42 months	-	-	-	-	-	-
43 – 48 months	-	-	3	2.19	3	0.94
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

are found to be working for about 43 –48 months and only 1 child labourer (0.32 per cent) has been found working for about 25 – 30 months.

Table no. 26  
Length of working life of the child labourers

Length of work	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1 year	129	71.27	85	62.04	214	67.29
2 - 3 years	42	23.20	41	29.93	83	26.10
4 - 5 years	8	4.43	7	5.11	15	4.72
6 - 7 years	2	1.10	2	1.46	4	1.26
Above 8 years	-	-	2	1.46	2	0.63
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Table 26 shows the length of working life of the child labourers under this study. Most of the children are found to be working for about one year only. Their number is about 214 (67.29 per cent). Only 83 children (26.10 per cent) have engaged themselves for about 2-3 years, 15 children (4.72 per cent) are working for about 4-5 years, 4 children (1.26 per cent) for about 6-7 years and only 2 children (0.63 per cent) are found to be working for longer period, i.e., more than 8 years. It is interesting that girl children are found to be working for the longest period, i.e., 8 years and above.

*Previous employers where he/she has already worked :*

Child labourers do not work for a long time under one particular employer. They generally work under more than one employer during their working life. Some employers pretend to show sympathy on the child labourers and thus exploit them. Apart from mental tortures, often the employers assault them physically. This ill treatment forces the children to move to another employer.

Table no. 27  
Number of previous employers under whom child labours already worked

Numbers of employer	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
One employer	7	35.00	5	25.00	12	30.00
Two employers	6	30.00	14	70.00	20	50.00
Three employers	3	15.00	1	5.00	4	10.00
Four employers	3	15.00	-	-	3	7.50
Five employers	1	5.00	-	-	1	2.50
TOTAL	20	100.00	20	100.00	40	100.00

The table 27 shows the number of previous employers where he/she has already worked. All total 40 children have been found to work under one and more employers. Out of them 20 (50.00 per cent) children work under two employers, 12 (30.00 per cent) children under one employer, 4 (10.00 per cent) under three employers, 3 (7.50 per cent) under four employers and only one child work under five employers.

#### *Satisfaction of work :*

Child labourers do not work continuously in one type of work. Naturally they are not satisfied with what they do. They are compelled to do the work under pressure of their family in spite of inhuman condition of work. But most of the time they cannot express their feelings. It is clear from the present study. The employers disfavouring the employment of child labour have said that working at the tender age under harsh working conditions for long hours and at low wages has a dangerous impact on child psychology. As a consequence, the child labourers feel unsecured and have an inferiority complex. This hampers the growth of their personality. In addition to the disadvantage of those who employ them as such, they manifest their internal reaction in job dissatisfaction which badly tells upon the quantity and quality of production extracted from them in duress.

Table no. 28

#### *Opinion about present work of the child labourers*

Opinion about work	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Satisfied	165	91.16	131	95.62	296	93.08
Not satisfied	16	8.84	6	4.38	22	6.92
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

The table no. 28 shows the opinion of the child labourers about their present works. As revealed here 165 (93.08 per cent) child labourers have expressed their satisfaction with their works and only 16(6.92 per cent) child labourers are found not satisfied with their work.

#### *Other works of the child labourers :*

Children are found to be engaged in helping their parents in running their shops, planting on the forest land, wood cutting for commercial purposes, road

construction on contract, etc. The children, generally, work with and on behalf of their parents. Parents would like to expedite the completion of contract work and therefore, press their children to assist them in the work. Children generally dig earth, carry loads of mud or mortar, prepare mortar, remove debris, cut and bend iron rods. These are the jobs in which the child workers engage themselves, which is the hardest, tiresome and hazardous with little promise or prospects. It has been found that only 9.12 per cent children are engaged in various other works, and 90.88 per cent children have been found to do some other works. It is very interesting to note that all the children intend to do some works. They want to do works for economic reasons.

#### *Habit of absent from work :*

Absence from work is one of the common characteristics of the children because the sense of responsibility has not fully developed in their immature mind. Consequently, most of the time their employers suffer due to absence of the child labourers. As a result, some employers are compelled to deduct money from their wages and they consider some child labourers according to their rate of absence. In this study, it was also identified that those who work independently, do not regularly to the work.

Table no. 29  
Rate of absence in a month of the child labourers

Absent in work in a month	No. of male child labourers		No. of female child labourers		No. of total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1 - 2 days	10	5.52	7	5.11	17	5.35
3 - 4 days	20	11.05	30	21.90	50	15.72
5 - 6 days	40	22.10	28	20.44	68	21.38
7- 8 days	47	25.97	24	17.52	71	22.33
9 - 10 days	31	17.13	27	19.71	58	18.24
11 - 12 days	17	9.37	14	10.21	31	9.75
13 - 14 days	6	3.32	4	2.92	10	3.14
15 - 16 days	5	2.76	3	2.19	8	2.52
17 - 18 days	5	2.76	-	-	5	1.57
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

The rate of absence of the child labourers is seen from the table 29. Out of 318 child labourers 71 (22.33 per cent) are absent from work for 7-8 days in a month. It is

the maximum rate of absence. Only 5 (1.57 per cent) are absent for 17-18 days. The other rates are, 17 (5.35 per cent) child labourers are for 1-2 days, 50 (15.72 per cent) for 3-4 days, 68 (21.38 per cent) for 5-6 days, 58 (18.24 per cent) for 9-10 days, 31 (9.75 per cent) for 11-12 days, 10 (3.14 per cent) for 13-14 days, and 8 (2.52 per cent) are for 15-16 days.

Under this study, 101 children have been found working under employers. Inspite of irregularity in attendance only 31(30.69 per cent) of the child labourers have been paid wages by their employers and 70 (69.31 per cent) of them have not been paid any wages. The rest of the child labourers have not been found to work under any employers; they have been found as independent workers with their families.

#### *Persons who motivated the children to work :*

There are some persons who have influenced the children to work on wages. They are sometimes family members, and at times friends and non-kin's. While others are kin's.

Table no. 30  
Persons motivated the children to work on wages

Persons motivated the children to work		No. of male child labourers		No. of female child labourers		No. of total child labourers	
		Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Family members	Father	37	20.44	2	1.46	39	12.26
	Mother	34	18.78	91	66.42	125	39.31
	Elder brother	29	16.02	20	14.60	49	15.41
	Elder sister	6	3.32	15	10.95	21	6.60
<i>TOTAL</i>		106	58.56	128	93.43	234	73.58
Non-kin's	Friend	38	21.00	5	3.65	43	13.52
	Neighbour	22	12.15	3	2.19	25	7.86
	Employers	9	4.97	-	-	9	2.83
<i>TOTAL</i>		69	38.12	8	5.84	77	24.21
Kin's	Relatives	1	0.55	1	0.73	2	0.63
<i>SELF</i>		3	1.66	-	-	3	0.95
<i>OTHERS</i>		2	1.11	-	-	2	0.63
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>181</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.00</b>

From the table 30 it has been found that 43 (73.58 per cent) of the child labourers have been motivated by their family members i.e., father, mother, brother and sister. Only 77 (24.21 per cent) have been motivated by non-kin's like friends,

neighbours and employers, 2 (0.63 per cent) by their relatives, 2 (0.63 per cent) by the other persons and only 3 (0.95 per cent) child labourers have engaged themselves on their own.

*Income of the child labourers :*

The earnings of the labourers have a great significance for them as they primarily determine the standard of living of their families. The earnings of the workers have been ~~for~~ inadequate to enable them to make their both ends meet. As a result, most of the workers are kept at starvation level. The actual wages differ from <sup>to worker</sup> worker depending on the degree of skill, age and performance. These workers are subjected to economic exploitation by using various corrupt devices. Firstly, there is no fixed method of payment of wages. Sometimes they are paid in cash and sometimes in kind, i.e., poor quantity rice or wheat flour etc. Instead of daily wages, the employers stick to fortnightly payments and these too are not made regularly. No proper accounts are maintained. The child workers, being ignorant, are unable to calculate their wages correctly.

Table no.31  
Occupations and income of the child labourers

OCCUPATIONS AND PERCENTAGES

TOTAL	551 - 600	501 - 550	451 - 500	401 - 450	351 - 400	301 - 350	251 - 300	201 - 250	151 - 200	101 - 150	51 - 100.	50.00	Monthly income in Rupees
174	3	-	2	1	4	-	81	3	55	15	8	2	Gleaners/Rag pickers
54.72	1.72	-	1.15	0.57	2.30	-	46.55	1.72	31.61	8.62	4.60	1.15	Percentage
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	2	-	-	Restaurants or hotel workers
1.57	-	-	-	-	-	-	60.00	-	-	40.00	-	-	Percentage
8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	4	2	-	-	Tea stall workers
2.52	-	-	-	-	-	-	25.00	-	50.00	25.00	-	-	Percentage
44	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	-	25	2	-	-	Maid servants
13.84	7	-	-	-	-	-	38.64	-	56.82	4.54	-	-	Percentage
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	5	-	Garage workers
2.20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28.57	-	-	71.43	-	Percentage
21	-	-	2	-	3	-	-	2	7	3	4	-	Workers of different shops
6.60	-	-	9.52	-	14.29	-	-	9.52	33.33	14.29	19.05	-	Percentage
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	-	-	Chocolate or Chaw Chaw Packing
1.57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.00	-	60.00	-	-	Percentage
4	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	Sewing
1.26	-	-	-	-	-	100.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	Percentage
6	-	-	1	2	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	Helpers
1.89	-	-	16.67	33.33	16.67	-	16.67	-	16.67	-	-	-	Percentage
5	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	Sweeper
1.57	-	-	-	40.00	-	20.00	-	-	40.00	-	-	-	Percentage
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	Khalashis
1.26	-	-	-	-	-	-	25.00	-	75.00	-	-	-	Percentage
7	2	1	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Rickshaw pullers
2.20	28.57	14.28	28.57	-	28.57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Percentage
23	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	4	7	8	-	Sellers
7.23	-	-	8.70	-	-	4.35	4.35*	-	17.39	30.43	34.78	-	Percentage
5	1	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Wage labourers
1.57	20.00	-	40.00	20.00	20.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Percentage
318	6	1	11	6	15	2	106	9	101	34	25	2	TOTAL
100.00	1.89	0.31	3.46	1.89	4.72	0.63	33.33	2.83	31.76	10.69	7.86	0.63	Percentage

The data on wages are included in table no.31. The data indicate that so far as the monthly wages are concerned there are 106 (33.33 per cent) child labourers belonging to the Rs.251-300 monthly income group, 101(31.76 per cent) belong to the Rs.151-200 income group, 34 (10.69 per cent) are in the Rs.101-150 income group, 25 (7.86 per cent) in Rs. 51 - 100 income group , 15 (4.72 per cent) in Rs.301-400 income group, 11 (3.46 per cent) in Rs. 451-500 income group, 9 (2.83 per cent) in Rs. 201-250, 6 (1.89 per cent) in Rs. 401-450 income group, 6 (1.89 (per cent) in Rs. 551- 600 income group, 2 (0.63 per cent) in Rs.50 only and only 1(0.31 per cent) child labourer belongs to Rs. 501-550 income group.

Among the rag pickers 46.55 per cent earn Rs. 251-300 per month while only 0.57 earn Rs. 401- 450. The hotel and restaurant workers earn lower than the rag pickers, 60.00 per cent of them earn Rs. 251- 300 and 40.00 per cent of them Rs.101-150, 50.00 per cent of tea stall workers earn Rs.151- 200 and 25.00 per cent of them Rs.101-150 and Rs. 251-300. The maidservants earn more or less equal wages earned by the tea stall workers. About 56.82 per cent of them earn Rs. 251- 300 and 4.54 per cent of them Rs. 101-150. About 71.43 per cent garage workers earn Rs.51-100 and 28.57 per cent earn Rs. 201- 250. About 33.33 per cent workers of shops earn Rs. 151-200 and 9.52 per cent earn Rs.451-500. Sixty per cent of packing workers earn Rs.101-150 and 40.00 per cent earn 201-250. All sewing workers earn Rs.351-400. Among the helpers 16.67 per cent earn Rs. 451-500 and 33.33 per cent earn Rs. 401- 450. Among the sweepers 40.00 per cent each earn Rs.401- 450 and Rs. 151-200 which 20.00 per cent Rs. 301-350. Among the *khalashis* 75.00 per cent earn Rs. 151-200 while 25.00 per cent earn Rs. 251-300. Among the rickshaw pullers 28.57 per cent earn Rs.351-400 each Rs. 510-550 and Rs.551- 600. Among the sellers 34.78 per cent earn Rs.51-100 while 4.35 per cent earn Rs. 251- 300 and Rs. 301- 350 each. Among the wage labourers 40.00 per cent earn Rs. 451- 500 and 20.00 per cent each earn Rs. 351- 400, Rs.401- 450 and Rs. 551- 600.

#### *Wages of child labourers :*

Majority of the adult labourers consider that child labourers are undesirable because the employers use it as a tool to reduce the bargaining power of adult workers. They argue that the employers substitute child labourers in lieu of adult workers whenever the latter demand higher wages or register to work for longer hours under bad conditions. They

further state that both adults and children equally perform certain jobs. Hence, the employers find it advantageous to employ children instead of adult workers. Thus, child labour is undesirable as it increases adult unemployment and influence to reduce the wages of the adult.

Table no.32

## Wages of child labourers

Wages	No. of male child labourers		No. of Female child labourers		No. of total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Lower than that of adult	39	21.55	17	12.41	56	17.61
Slightly lower than that of adult	132	72.93	113	82.48	245	77.04
Equal to that of adult	10	5.52	7	5.11	17	5.35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.00</b>

It is revealed from the study that 245 (77.04 per cent) of the child labourers get slightly lower wages compared to the adult labourers and 56 (17.61 per cent) get very low wages as compared to the adult labourers and only 17 (5.35 per cent) child labourers get equal wages compared to the adult labourers in the similar occupations.

*Satisfaction of child labourers with the wages :*

I have seen that the child labourers have to do different types of works, and sometimes they also collect pieces of iron, plastic, glass, paper etc. for selling in the market. It has been observed that the child labourers are satisfied with their wages in some works where they independently work. They can bargain with their customers for reasonable rate of wages. On the other hand, some child labourers fully depend on their employers. In the occupations of hotel/restaurant workers, garage workers and maidservants, they are in a bitter position. In these cases employers intend to give them minimum wages in return of maximum work. As a result, child labourers are not satisfied with their works and wages.

Table no. 33

## Child labourers satisfied or not satisfied with wages

Opinion about the wages	No. of male child labourers		No. of female child labourers		No. of total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Satisfied	124	68.51	94	68.61	218	68.55
Not satisfied	57	31.49	43	31.39	100	31.45
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

In this study, 218 (68.55 per cent) of the total child labourers are found to be satisfied with their wages, and only 100 (31.45 per cent) of them are not satisfied with their wages. Those who have been doing work independently have to collect reasonable wages. Child labourers are satisfied with wages, who sell fruits, vegetables, fish and pull rickshaw/van.

*Other facilities to the child labourers :*

The child labourers under study do not get any additional facilities, except a very few instances, from their employers. They are usually under the pressure of the employers to do more works in addition to usual daily routine works. Sometimes, a very few employers give them additional facilities like tiffin, meal, old or new garments and medicines at the time of illness. The study reveals that out of 101 child labourers who have worked under various employers about 55 (54.46 per cent) child labourers get some sort of additional facilities provided by their employers who are kind enough to them. The remaining 46 (45.54 per cent) of the child labourers do not get any additional facilities from their employers.

Table no. 34

## Nature of additional facilities given to the child labourers

Nature of extra facilities	Male child labourers		Female child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Tiffin	7	46.67	31	77.5	38	69.09
Lunch	1	6.67	-	-	1	1.82
Tiffin and lunch	5	33.33	5	12.5	10	18.18
Tiffin, lunch and garments	2	13.33	4	10.00	6	10.91
TOTAL	15	100.00	40	100.00	55	100.00

The data reveals that out of 55 child labourers who enjoy additional facilities 38 (69.09 per cent) get some sort of tiffin, 10 (18.18 per cent) get tiffin and lunch both, 6 (10.91 per cent) get tiffin, lunch and garments while only 1 (1.82 per cent) gets only lunch.

This study reveals that out of 101 child labourers who have been working under various employers, about 15 (14.85 per cent) child labourers enjoy treatment facilities by their employers at the time of illness and the remaining 86 (85.15 per cent) of the child labourers do not get any treatment facilities at the time of illness by their employers. So they are depending on their parents or any family members at the time of severe illness.

#### *Working hours :*

The length of working hour has direct impact on the physique and health of children. The experiences of labour economists and production managers have proved that there is a positive correlation between hours of work and worker's productivity. But the employers seem to be unaware of these correlations so far, as they without exception fix longer hours of work for labour working in their workshops. Most of the child labourers work every day in a week, and those who are working under their employers, have to work for 6 days a week.

Table no. 35

#### Working hours in a day of child labourers

Working hours in a day	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1 - 2 hours	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 - 3 hours	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 - 4 hours	8	4.42	18	13.13	26	8.18
4 - 5 hours	25	13.81	32	23.36	57	17.92
5 - 6 hours	62	34.26	59	43.07	121	38.05
6 - 7 hours	23	12.71	17	12.41	40	12.58
7 - 8 hours	12	6.63	3	2.19	15	4.72
8 - 9 hours	7	3.87	1	0.73	8	2.51
9 - 10 hours	9	4.97	-	-	9	2.83
10 - 11 hours	3	1.66	-	-	3	0.94
11 - 12 hours	29	16.02	2	1.46	31	9.75
12 - 13 hours	1	0.55	-	-	1	0.31
13 hours and above	2	1.10	-	-	2	0.63
Whole time (for ever)	-	-	5	3.65	5	1.58
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Table 35 shows the working hours in a day of child labourers. It is revealed that 38.05 per cent of the child labourers work for 5- 6 hours a day, who are mostly gleaners/rag pickers. They work independently. While 17.92 per cent work for 4-5 hours, 12.58 per cent for 6 -7 hours, 9.75 per cent for 11-12 hours, 8.18 per cent for 3-4 hours, 4.72 per cent for 7- 8 hours, 2.83 per cent for 9 - 10 hours, 2.51 per cent for 8 - 9 hours, 0.94 per cent for 10 - 11 hours, 0.63 per cent for 13 + hours, 0.31 per cent for 12 - 13 hours in a day and only 1.58 per cent child labourers live in the working place as whole time workers.

Table no. 36

## Working days in a week of the child labourers

Working days in a week	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
05 days	8	4.42	-	-	8	2.52
06 days	54	29.83	47	34.31	101	31.76
07 days	119	65.75	90	65.69	209	65.72
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Table 36 explains the working days in a week of the child labourers. From this study it is found that 65.72 per cent of the child labourers work 7 days a week and 31.76 per cent 6 days a week. These workers work mainly under some employers. They have to work for 6 days a week and only 2.52 per cent of the child labourers work 5 days a week.

*Recess break :*

In hotels and *dhabas*, the child labours work from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. with a recess of two hours during the summer season and during the winter, they work from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. with two hours recess break. Thus they work for 15 hours and 14 hours during summer and winter respectively. The domestic servants usually start their work at 8 a.m. and continue up to 10 a.m. and again from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in a day. Some domestic servants usually start their work when all members of the employers family are in their beds and they finish their work when the last members of the family goes to his or her bed. They do get certain hours of recess after preparing and serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. But strictly speaking, this is a misnomer to call it recess. Rather these are the soft hours of work. In this sense, it will be appropriate to say that they do not get any recess. In fact, they

have to be ready for work round the clock. The employers have complete freedom as there exists no legislation to regulate the hours of work. Those who have been doing something independently have to work from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. in a day. Moreover, they work on an average from 9-10 hours and enjoy one to two hours of recess break.

Table no. 37  
Recess break for the child labourers

Hours of recess break	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Within one hour	41	22.91	-	-	41	13.10
1 - 2 hours	22	12.29	-	-	22	7.03
2 - 3 hours	20	11.17	20	14.93	40	12.78
3 - 4 hours	96	53.63	114	85.07	210	67.09
TOTAL	179	100.00	134	100.00	313	100.00

The table 37 shows the recess break for the child labourers. In this study, 67.09 per cent of the child labourers enjoy recess break from three to four hours, because most of them are gleaner/rag pickers and others are maidservants, sweepers and sellers. They work independently. Only 13.10 per cent enjoy one-hour recess break a day. They work in hotels, restaurants, garages etc. About 12.78 per cent enjoy two to three hours recess break. They are rickshaw/van pullers, sellers, *khalashis*, etc. and only 7.03 per cent enjoy recess break from one to two hours. They have to work in chocolate packing, *beedi* binding, etc. It is important to note that only 5 children work in the employers' houses on whole time basis.

#### *Holidays :*

In Siliguri town, the child labourers who work under different employers have to work six days a week, because they enjoy one weekly holiday. Besides this, they enjoy special holidays at the time of strike. They also get one holiday during "*Durgapuja*". Maidservants do not get any holiday as well as others. They have to pray for leave to their employers. Those who work independently are fully free from any bindings.

Table no. 38  
Holidays of child labourers

Holidays	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	22	39.29	1	2.22	23	22.78
No	34	60.71	44	97.78	78	77.22
TOTAL	56	100.00	45	100.00	101	100.00

Table 38 shows the holidays enjoyed by the child labourers. In our study, out of 318 child labourers only 101 child labourers work under different employers in Siliguri town. Only 22.78 per cent of them enjoy holidays given by their employers and 77.22 per cent do not enjoy any as their employers refuse to give them. In this group of child labourers maidservants are more in number.

Table no. 39  
Holidays in a year of child labourers

Holidays in a year	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Within 20 days	2	9.09	-	-	2	8.69
21 - 30 days	1	4.55	-	-	1	4.36
31 - 40 days	2	9.09	-	-	2	8.69
41 - 50 days	15	68.18	1	100.00	16	69.57
51 - 60 days	2	9.09	-	-	2	8.69
TOTAL	22	100.00	1	100.00	23	100.00

Table 39 shows the total holidays of child labourers in a year. In this study, 69.57 per cent of the child labourers enjoy 41 - 50 holidays in a year, 8.69 per cent children enjoy 20 days, 31 - 40 days and 51 - 60 days respectively. Only 4.36 per cent child labourers enjoy 21 - 30 holidays in a year.

Table no. 40  
Number of child labourers paid during holidays

Paid for holidays	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	14	63.64	-	-	14	60.87
No	8	36.36	1	100.00	9	39.13
TOTAL	22	100.00	1	100.00	23	100.00

Table 40 explains the percentage of child labourers who get and don't get any payment during holidays. It has been observed that 60.87 per cent of the child labourers get payment and only 39.13 per cent don't get payment during holidays.

*Medium of entertainments :*

In Siliguri many child labourers are habituated with watching cinema, television and with gambling by evasion of work or during leisure time. Generally they have to gamble and watch cinema and television for their entertainment and as a recreation they have to stick to these habits. In the study only 34.28 per cent of the children get opportunities of entertainment and 61.95 per cent do not. Only 3.77 per cent (only males) get chance, which is very rare (see Table no. 41).

Table no. 41  
Entertainment of the child labourers

Entertainment	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	84	46.41	25	18.25	109	34.28
No	85	46.96	112	81.75	197	61.95
Very rare	12	6.63	-	-	12	3.77
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Table no. 42  
The media of entertainment among the child labourers

Medias of entertainment	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Cinema	75	89.29	4	16.00	79	72.48
Television	2	2.38	21	84.00	23	21.10
Cinema and television	3	3.57	-	-	3	2.76
Gambling	2	2.38	-	-	2	1.83
Cinema and Gambling	2	2.38	-	-	2	1.83
TOTAL	84	100.00	25	100.00	109	100.00

The above table 42 shows the percentage of child labourers who have the scope of different media of entertainment. In the study, only 109 child labourers can resort to these habits and the rest are not habituated to these. Among the child labourers 72.48 per cent are able to watch cinema, 21.10 per cent are habituated to watch television, 2.76 per cent watch

both cinema and television, Only 1.83 per cent are gamblers and the same percentage of child labourers are gamblers as well as cinema viewers.

*Expenditure :*

The most important factor forcing children to take up employment is poverty. In India where 60% of the population live below the poverty line, due to poverty parents are compelled to send their children to seek employment. Children are forced to work with a view to supplementing the family income. In my study in Siliguri, most of the child labourers are compelled to handover their whole income to their family and a very few of the child labourers handover their major portion of income to their family. They keep some amount for their own use to spend for Tiffin, tea, cinema etc. Negligible number of child labourers who have titular income, do not handover their income to their family, because they try to spend that income for their own consumption to take Tea, Tiffin, sometimes meals, watching cinema, etc. Major portion of the child labourers handover their income to their parents as a supplementary earner of their family. It is evident from this study that they are completely unable to save any money from their income after use for their family. They are in a position to live from hand to mouth.

Table no. 43

Child labourers' contribution of income to their families

Contribution of income to their family	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Whole income	91	50.27	96	70.07	187	58.81
Part income	87	48.07	41	29.93	128	40.25
Not give	3	1.66	-	-	3	0.94
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

In ~~this~~ study 58.81 per cent of the child labourers handover their whole income to their family, 40.25 per cent give a portion of their income and 0.94 per cent do not contribute their income to their family. These child labourers do not earn any fixed amount (Table - 43).

### *Education :*

Child labourers and their illiteracy have direct link with poverty. Many children work, because there is nothing else to do. Many children do not go to school because, schools are too expensive for them. A good number of female children discontinue their studies to look after their younger brothers and sisters at home when their parents go to work. There is also discrimination in educating female children. The illiterate parents do not realize the importance of educating their children. They are unaware of injustice done to the children by making them work instead of sending them to schools. They are also ignorant about the rights and needs of children. Some parents, even though realize the importance of educating their children, are compelled to send their children to work due to economic pressure. A large number of parents of poor families find no meaning in children's education, as there is no guarantee of job in future. They prefer to send their children to work at an early age instead of sending them to school with the hope that the children will at least acquire a skill or learn a trade by the time they become adults.

The migrant labourers and those who are engaged in construction and seasonal work cannot even think of sending their children to schools as the whole family moves from place to place in search of work. Their children also move along with them working and supplementing the family income.

Table no. 44  
Literacy level of the child labourers

Status	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Literate	22	12.15	23	16.79	45	14.15
Illiterate	159	87.85	114	83.21	273	85.85
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Table no. 45  
Educational level of the child labourers

Education	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
I - II Class	7	31.82	6	26.09	13	28.89
III - IV Class	5	22.73	10	43.48	15	33.33
V - VI Class	10	45.45	6	26.09	16	35.56
VII - VIII Class	-	-	1	4.34	1	2.22
TOTAL	22	100.00	23	100.00	45	100.00

In our study 45 (14.5 per cent) child labourers are found literate and 273 (85.85 per cent) illiterate (Table no. 44). Among the literates, 16 (35.56 per cent) child labourers have studied upto V - VI standard, 15 (33.33 per cent) upto III - IV standard, 13 (28.89 per cent) upto I - II standard and only 1 (2.22 per cent) upto VII - VIII standard (Table - 45). Only 3 (6.67 per cent) of the literate child labourers are found to continue their studies while 42 (93.33 per cent) have discontinued (Table no. 46). There are three causes of discontinuation of education; 31 (73.81 per cent), 8 (19.05 per cent) and 3 (7.14 per cent) child labourers discontinued their studies due to economic reason, family problem and self-negligence and bad atmosphere respectively (Table no. 47).

Table no. 46

## Continuation and discontinuation of education

Continuation of education	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	3	13.64	-	-	3	6.67
No	19	86.36	23	100.00	42	93.33
TOTAL	22	100.00	23	100.00	45	100.00

Table no. 47

## Causes of discontinuation of education

Causes of discontinuation	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Economic problem	16	84.21	15	65.22	31	73.81
Familial problem	-	-	8	34.78	8	19.05
Self negligence and bad atmosphere	3	15.79	-	-	3	7.14
TOTAL	19	100.00	23	100.00	42	100.00

*Nature of punishment :*

The basic requirement for normal psychological development of child is warm and accepting environment, stable parents who can understand child's emotional needs, conversational interchange, opportunities to play, discipline, supervision and support. Psychological development of child also needs increasing autonomy, independence, interaction with other children and opportunities to learn. Each of these basic requirements are jeopardized if children are put to work. Children are compelled to work for long hours,

which deprive them of education, play, recreation, love and parental affection. Generally, their employers separate working children from their parents for days, even months and years. Employers of child labourers are generally rude and rough, neglectful, unsupportive to the emotional needs of children. Their employers physically, emotionally and sexually abuse working children. Psychologically disturbed children may take to nightmares, ill temper, lying and stealing habits. Consumption of drugs, alcohol and tobacco smoking are often some of the ways they choose toward off their despair and feelings of inadequacy. Aggression, anti-social behaviour and delinquency are often the efforts children take recourse to boost self-esteem or may serve them as self punishing behaviour for them who often feel inadequate and worthless.

In our study 62 (61.39 per cent) of child labourers are found to be punished by the employers and only 39 (38.61 per cent) are not punished. About 30 (48.39 per cent) of the child labourers are punished by altercation and <sup>money</sup> curtailments and 20 (32.26 per cent) are punished with altercation and beating while 12 (19.35 per cent) child labourers are punished with altercation (Table no. 48).

Table no. 48

Nature of punishments given to child labourers

Nature of punishment	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Altercation	8	18.61	4	21.05	12	19.35
Altercation and beating	18	41.86	2	10.53	20	32.26
Altercation and money curtailment	17	39.53	13	68.42	30	48.39
TOTAL	43	100.00	19	100.00	62	100.00

*Employers' behaviour in the view of child labourers :*

Children who work under any employer always feel worry. They remain scared every moment of works, because the employers' behaviour with the children is peculiar or odd. The employers try to get the work done by any way and to fulfil this purpose, sometimes they play the role of affectionate relation or threat them. The main purpose of the employers is to get the allotted works done and try to extract excess labour from them. They sometimes pretend to be affectionate with the children, but it is fake. A very few employers try to keep really good relation with the child workers, but most of them show brutish behaviour. Opinions collected from the child labourers show that 45 (44.56 per

cent) of them get bad behaviour from their employers, 39 (38.61 per cent) have experienced indifferent behaviour from their employers and only 17 (16.83 per cent) are satisfied with the good behaviour of their employers (Table no. 49).

Table no. 49

## Behaviours of employers toward child labourers

Behaviour of employers	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Good	10	17.86	7	15.56	17	16.83
Bad	8	14.28	37	82.22	45	44.56
Indifferent	38	67.86	1	2.22	39	38.61
TOTAL	56	100.00	45	100.00	101	100.00

*Health of the child labourers :*

The worst effect of the practice of child labour is that it leads to physiological and psychological deformities in the child. The longer hours of work, bad and unhygienic working conditions lead to retarded growth, orthopaedic diseases (like Kyphosis, scoliosis etc.) respiratory problems, cardio and gynaec problems (in case of female) are common among the working children. They also feel insecure and suffer from an inferiority complex. Working children are easily exposed to biological disorders. Unclean, unhealthy working conditions prevailing in unorganised manufacturing units. Contaminated drinking water and polluted air, which affect their health causing diarrhoea, typhoid, malaria, jaundice etc. and jeopardize biological growth of children resulting in reduced life span.

Sending children to work or employing them means depriving them of their legitimate rights of childhood. Practice of child labour jeopardizes the possibilities of their becoming productive adults and to take their legitimate place in the society. Putting children to work may be temporarily beneficial to the family, but casts heavily to the child as an individual, its family and the society at large. Unhappy and disturbed childhood experiences do not offer sound foundation to their future growth and development. Poor children are generally malnourished, but their work increases their energy requirements and leads to calorie deficit. If they suffer from anaemia, fatigue and inadequate rest and sleep, they become more susceptible to infectious diseases. Children working in hazardous occupations exposed to toxic gases, vapours fumes dusts, smoke casting impairment of lungs, respiratory system, throat, ear, eyes and skin. By the time working children reach

adulthood, they suffer from chronic diseases like tuberculosis, asthma, anaemia and diseases of nerves. Exposure to loud noise at tender age impair children's hearings affect blood vessels, cause fatigue stress, nervousness and psychiatric illness in adulthood. Child labourers are exposed to work involving chemical reactions inhale poisonous gases, fumes, dusts and smoke which impair the functioning of lungs, livers, kidney, eyes and skin. Since children undergo a process of growth and development they are more susceptible to occupational hazards casting impairment and disorders in the biological system. During our fieldwork it has been found that 180 (56.60 per cent) of the child labourers have been suffering from various diseases while 138 (43.40 per cent) have no health problems at the moment.

Table no. 50  
Types of diseases suffered by the child labourers

Types of diseases	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Mal nutrition	43	42.58	37	46.83	80	44.45
Skin disease	17	16.83	12	15.19	29	16.11
Liver and respiratory problems	19	18.81	17	21.52	36	20.00
Any other weakness	22	21.78	13	16.46	35	19.34
TOTAL	101	100.00	79	100.00	180	100.00

Table 50 explains, types of diseases suffered by the child labourers. In this study, 80 (44.45 per cent) child labourers have been suffering from malnutrition of whom 42.58 per cent are male and 46.83 per cent are female; 36 (20.00 per cent) suffering from liver and respiratory problems; 35 (19.34 per cent) suffer from various diseases such as reproductive tract infections, tuberculosis, leprosy, respiratory problems etc. and only 29 (16.11 per cent) of child labourers suffer from skin diseases.

#### *Causes of child labour :*

Ahuja (1997) has stated that in a country like India where over 40.00 per cent of the population is living in condition of extreme poverty, child labour is a complex issue. Children work out of necessity and without their earnings the standard of living of their families would decline further. A large number of them do not even have families or

cannot count on them for support. In these circumstances, the alternative to work may be idleness, destitution or worse, crime.

Employers give certain justifications for employing children to suppress their guilt feelings. They say that the work keeps children away from starvation. They are prevented from committing crimes, which they would have indulged in if they had no jobs. The bureaucrats have told that the total eradication of child labour is not feasible because the government cannot provide substantial alternative employment to them. The social scientists believe that the main cause of child labour is poverty. The children either supplement their parents' income or are the only wage earners in the family. It is said that 29.9 per cent of the total population of India or about 25 crore 23 lakh people live below poverty line. Of these, 20.6 crore are living in rural areas and 5.17 crore in urban areas. The highest number of persons living below the poverty line is found in Uttar Pradesh (4.48 crore), followed by Bihar (3.36 crore), Madhya Pradesh (2.24 crore) and Maharashtra (2.14 crore). These persons are forced to send their children to work in factories etc. Another reason is that child labour is deliberately created by vested interests to get cheap labour. The third reason forwarded for the existence of child labour is that it benefits industries. For example, the carpet industry of Uttar Pradesh, which employs 75,000 children, earns about Rs. 150 crore a year in foreign exchange. In 1993, the export earnings were estimated to be about Rs. 350 crore.

A great majority of children have reported that their parents have sent them to work in order to supplement their earnings, which are invariably too meagre to support their large family. Most of the child workers are found to be drawn into the work places as no adult wage earners exists in their families. By taking jobs at the tender age children play the role of a family supporter. Another reason for the prevalence of the child labour was found to be the illiteracy and ignorance of the parents. Some of the child labour, forming a small minority, attributes child labour to their desire to satisfy their personal needs in so far as their parents, on account of inadequate income, could not provide them anything beyond the bare subsistence. Some of the literate child labour have stated that bleak employment opportunities for educated youth is the important reasons that have deterred their parents from sending them to schools.

Table no. 51  
Showing the reasons for taking jobs among the child labourers

Reasons for taking jobs	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Inadequate income and large family size	82	45.30	70	51.09	152	47.80
Absence of adult wage earner	2	1.10	3	2.19	5	1.57
Illiteracy and ignorance of the parents	72	39.78	54	39.42	126	39.63
Bleak employment opportunities	1	0.55	-	-	1	0.31
Desire to satisfy personal needs	7	3.87	2	1.46	9	2.83
Large family size and ignorance of the parents	17	9.40	8	5.84	25	7.86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 51 explains the different causes behind taking up jobs of the working children. In this study 152 (47.80 per cent) child labourers take up jobs to supplement the inadequate income of their large family (where 45.30 per cent male and 51.09 per cent female), 126 (39.63 per cent) take up for illiteracy and ignorance of their parents, 25 (7.86 per cent) take up jobs for their large family size and ignorance of parents, 9 (2.83 per cent) want to satisfy personal needs, 5 (1.57 per cent) take up work for absence of adult wage earner, and only 1 (0.31 per cent) child labourer take up job due to bleak employment opportunities.

#### *Working conditions of child labourers :*

Ahuja (1997) has pointed out that children work in dangerously polluted factories whose brick walls are scarred with soot. (black powder in smoke) and there is an oppressive smell in the air. They work near furnace, which burn at a temperature of 1400° centigrade. They handle dangerous chemicals like arsenic and potassium. They work in glass blowing units where the work exerts their lungs and creates diseases like tuberculosis. Among the working children, many are the main or major wage earners in the family who always remain worried about feeding their dependents. The migrant child workers whose parents live in some far off city or village are generally in despair. Some work for 9 to 10

hours including night shifts. When the factories are fully functional, they are paid not more than Rs. 500 per month, all of which they hand over to their 'guardians' who do not give them even a rupee a day for tea during the night shift. There are times when their bodies ache, minds fog, hearts cry, spirits bleed, but on orders of the employer they work for 10 to 11 hours at a stretch. A large number of child workers in Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have sunken to chests and thin bone frames, which give them a fragile look. They look like rag dolls, limp, unwashed and scraggy. They wear coarse and badly tailored clothes. Many of them have scabies on hands, arms and legs. The heads of a few are tonsured probably because the skin on their skull has developed severe infections. A large number of child workers are virtually confined in small rooms under inhuman conditions and in the most unhygienic surroundings. They are either school dropouts or have not seen any school at all. They earn a very meagre wage and work in most unsafe conditions. The hazardous conditions take their toll. They suffer from tuberculosis, asthma, bronchitis and backaches. Some are injured in fire accidents. Many become unemployable even at the age of 20. If injured or incapacitated, they are discarded mercilessly by their employers (Ahuja, 1997).

One of the striking features of child labour in our study is exploitative condition under which children work. Children generally are paid very low wages in almost all occupations. In many occupations children are paid at piece rates. This places an undue strain on them. There are also unjustified deductions or third party payment. Some contractors reject a certain percentage of the workers' output as substandard. Thus, they deprive them of full payment for their output. Numerous studies indicate that children are found working in some works for long and even excessive hours without sufficient break for rest and leisure. Children are found working even upto right especially in eating place, street trades etc. Same is the case with most of the female servants whose services must be available nearly at all times.

Table no. 52  
Working conditions of the child labourers

Working conditions	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Good	9	4.97	4	2.92	13	4.09
Bad	27	14.92	13	9.49	40	12.58
Moderate	145	80.11	120	87.59	265	83.33
TOTAL	181	100.00	137	100.00	318	100.00

Table 52 shows the working conditions of the child labourers. In our study 265 (83.33 per cent) child labourers have reported that the working condition is moderate and they work to their livelihood. It is clear from their opinion that they are trying to adjust their employers and works. On the other hand, 40 (12.58 per cent) child labourers have communicated that they are doing work under bad working conditions. They are trying to give up those works because they have to work in highly hazardous conditions as construction labourers, and in small manufacturing factory, only 13 (4.09 per cent) of child labourers are doing work in good working conditions. They get some facilities from their employers.

#### *Future thought :*

Working children always remain under the mental and physical pressure. They spend their whole income to support their family. They do not have mental peace. They have no capital to start a business of their own in future for their family. Most of them are in the dark about their future. So they are helpless. Very few child labourers think superficially about their future. It is clear from their overall opinion that they do not think seriously about their future life. As they remain under constant mental and physical pressure and cannot develop themselves. They remain poverty ridden, exploited, and helpless under the social circumstances. They appear as a cause for backwardness of the whole nation.

In this study it is very painful to notice that most of the child labourers know nothing about their future and also cannot think anything about their own future life. Among 318 child labourers 194 (61.01 per cent) could not give any reply regarding their future thought. At the same time they suffer from frustration. Other 92 (28.93 per cent)

child labourers reply negatively about their future. They have not thought anything about their future. Only 32 (10.06 per cent) child labourers have some positive thinking about their future life. The table no. 54 depicts the various future thinking of 32 child labourers. They want to be garage owners, drivers, hotel owners, rickshaw owners, motor binders, smiths, shopkeepers and also government service holders. It is assumed that they want to improve their condition depending on the works they have been doing so far. Out of 32 child labourers 14 (43.75 per cent) intend to open own shop in future, i.e. shoe shop, lottery shop, stationery shop, fish shop, cycle, jewellery and tea stall; 5 (15.63 per cent) child labourers want to be hotel owners, because they are working in hotels at present; 4 (12.50 per cent) want to be drivers; and 3 (9.38 per cent) want to be masons, painters and carpenters; 3 (9.38 per cent) would like to purchase rickshaw/van; only 1 (3.12 per cent) child labourer each are interested in owning a garage, want to be motor binder and government service holder. It is observed that child sweeper wants to take government service in future, as it is their traditional work.

Table no. 53  
Types of future thought among the child labourers

Future thought	Child labourers		Child labourers		Total child labourers	
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Garage owner	1	3.22	-	-	1	3.12
Driver	4	12.90	-	-	4	12.50
Different stall owners						
Shoe, Tea, Lottery, Stationery, Fish, Cycle, Jewellery	13	41.94	1	100.00	14	43.75
Hotel owner	5	16.14	-	-	5	15.63
Rickshaw/Van owner	3	9.68	-	-	3	9.38
Motor binder	1	3.22	-	-	1	3.12
Smith						
Mason, Painting, Carpenter	3	9.68	-	-	3	9.38
Govt. Service	1	3.22	-	-	1	3.12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### *Employer's opinion :*

The employers generally advance the argument that by employing children they increase the income of the worker's family, which needs to be supplemented and save the children from being lazy, idle and falling into bad habits. The majority of the employers

believe that the children who begin their working life at the early age become industrious. They also train themselves to be skilled workers during childhood. The child can easily pickup various works. The employers had their own reasons to offer in defence of their practice of employing children. A large majority of employers defended child labour employment on the ground that it lowers down the cost of production, as they are cheaper in relation to adult workers. Some employers argued that they employ children to help the poor and downtrodden families just to supplement their family budget deficits. The children are employed because they have low bargaining power and, hence, can be hired at lower wages and made to work for longer hours and under bad working conditions.

It is beyond doubt that children are forced by circumstances to do work in the tender age when they should have been in schools. The harmful effects of child labour can be seen in the form of their improper physical development, varied kinds of illness and physical deformities, damaged nervous system, and inability to express views. No nation should destroy its children's life that is the future possibilities of the country's prosperity and development.

The employers are of the opinion that child labour is not only abused but also exploited by the employers especially in the unorganised sector. Both boys and girls in their early teens or even less than that are cheated and deprived of their due by paying meagre wages. The tendency among the employers who have quick profit at low costs is a clear case of exploitation. Very often in the name of apprenticeship the child acts as a virtual servant to the craftsman on very low pay, running errands and performing menial jobs, which have no relation to the skill.