

**A STUDY ON THE STATUS OF CHILD-WORKERS IN
BALASAN RIVER BASIN, MATIGARA BLOCK,
DARJEELING DISTRICT**

**A Thesis submitted to the University of North Bengal
for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy (Science) in Anthropology**



Submitted by
BISWANATH GAN

Supervisor

Dr. Samar Kumar Biswas
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of North Bengal
Darjeeling, West Bengal, India

&

Co-supervisor

Dr. Pinak Tarafdar
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of North Bengal
Darjeeling, West Bengal, India

Department of Studies in Anthropology
University of North Bengal
November, 2014

Th

331.31095414

G195 S

279014

27 MAY 2016

Declaration

*I declare that the thesis entitled “**A Study On the Status of Child-Workers in Balasan River Basin, Matigara Block, Darjeeling District**” has been prepared by me under the **Supervision of Dr. Samar Kumar Biswas**, Assistance Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal and under the **Co-supervision of Dr. Pinak Tarafdar**, Assistance Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal. This is an original work and no part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.*

Date: 17.11.2014

Place: NBU



(Biswanath Gan)

Department of Anthropology

University of North Bengal

Siliguri- 734013



Dr. Samar Kumar Biswas
Assistant Professor

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

P.O. North Bengal University,
Raja Rammohunpur, Dist. Darjeeling,
West Bengal, India, Pin: 734013
Phone: (91-0353) 2776322(O),
09733431383 (M)
E-mail: smrkbis@yahoo.co.in

Date: 25.9.2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Sri. Biswanath Gan, a registered Ph.D. candidate of the Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal has completed writing his Ph.D. thesis on "*A Study on the Status of Child-Workers in Balasan River Basin, Matigara Block, Darjeeling District*".

The work has been done under my supervision. In doing the work the candidate has fulfilled all the requirements of doing Ph.D. as stipulated in the relevant provision of the Ph.D. regulations (Old).

This is also to certify that he has carried out the work at the Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal; and his thesis is based on the results of primary data which he has collected through empirical field work. This is his original work and he has incorporated all the suggestions made or given by me in it. I am forwarding his thesis for the award of the Ph.D. degree in Anthropology of the University of North Bengal.

(DR. SAMAR KUMAR BISWAS)

Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of North Bengal

Dr. Pinak Tarafdar
Assistant Professor



DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

P.O. North Bengal University
Raja Rammohunpur, Dist. Darjeeling
West Bengal, India, Pin: 734013
M: 9733160858

E-mail: pinaknbu@gmail.com / pinak_tarafdar@rediffmail.com

Date: 25.10.2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Sri. Biswanath Gan, a registered (Ref. No.: Ph.D./Anth.(533)/1658/R-2011) Ph.D. candidate of the Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal has prepared his Ph.D. thesis on “**A Study on the Status of Child-Workers in Balasan River Basin, Matigara Block, Darjeeling District**”.

The work has been done under my co-supervision. While pursuing the work the candidate has fulfilled all the requirements as stipulated in the relevant provision of the Ph.D. regulations (Old). Mr. Gan has carried out the work at the Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal and as per my knowledge the thesis is based on the results of primary data collected by the candidate through empirical field work. As per my knowledge and belief the work is original and he has incorporated all the suggestions carried out in due course. I am forwarding his thesis for the award of the Ph.D. degree in Anthropology of the University of North Bengal.

Dr. Pinak Tarafdar

Assistant Professor

Department of Anthropology

University of North Bengal

Dr. Pinak Tarafdar

Assistant Professor

Department of Anthropology

University of North Bengal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Completion of my Ph.D. work was possible with the support of several people. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of them. First and foremost, I would like to express my special appreciation and thanks to my PhD. supervisor Dr. Samar Kumar Biswas, who has been a tremendous mentor for me. I am incredibly thankful for his patience, motivation, eagerness, and immense knowledge in the subject that, taken together, make him a great mentor. He has always made himself available to clarify my doubts despite his busy schedules and I considered myself extremely lucky to have done my Ph.D. work under his guidance. I offer my humble gratitude from the bottom of my heart for his caring, love, affection, inspiring guidance, thought provoking discussions, meticulous suggestions, keen interest and unmitigated encouragement throughout the course of my study. He has shown inexhaustible patience during the time of correction of the write-ups. No words are adequate to express my gratitude to him. This achievement was possible owing to his unconditional support. Therefore, I will remain highly grateful to him forever. I would also like to thank my co-supervisor Dr. Pinak Tarafdar, whose support and guidance made my Ph.D. work possible. He is a person with an amicable and positive disposition, who has always been available for providing valuable advice as well as in regard to clarifying some of my doubts. It has been a great opportunity to learn from his research expertise.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Joydip Sen, Head of the Department, Department of Anthropology, University of North Bengal for encouraging my research and providing all kinds of support. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Buddhadeb Chaudhuri, Ex Dr. Ambedkar Chair Professor in Anthropology, University of Calcutta for his kind cooperation and continuous encouragement in my research work. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Prasenjit Debbarman, Director, Cultural Research Institute for his inspiration, whole-hearted cooperation, valuable suggestion and every possible support in successful completion of my Ph.D. work. I shall ever remain grateful throughout my life to my sister Lovely Sarkar for her generous assistance and co-

operation in my research work. I am really grateful to Abhradip Banerjee, Lakpa Tamang and Bikram Saha for their kind assistance and continuous co-operation during the course of my research work.

I will forever be thankful to all the inhabitants of my studied village who had been helpful in providing all the necessary information during my field work. They had always made themselves available to extend their kind help despite their busy working schedules, whenever I approached them. I would like to express my heartfelt love and affection to all the children of my studied village for the necessary help which they rendered to me during the course of my Ph.D. field work. All the villagers are genuinely nice and I am pleased to have interacted with them. I will never forget their love, affection and great hospitality.

I am really grateful to many faculty members and staffs of North Bengal University who have been very kind in extending their help during the course of this research work. I would like to express my special gratitude and sincere thanks to the wonderful staffs of various offices and organizations for the necessary support rendered to me during the course of my Ph.D. work. The thesis would not have come to a successful completion, without the help that I received from the staffs of Central Library, University of North Bengal and National Library, Kolkata. Therefore, I do hereby acknowledge the support from all of them. My thanks and appreciations also go to my friends and colleagues (too many to list here but you know who you are!) for their co-operation in the successful completion of my Ph.D. work. However, it would not have been possible without the kind support and help of my well wishers. I acknowledge and appreciate them for all their efforts.

Finally, I would like to express a deep sense of gratitude to my parents, who have always stood by me like a pillar in times of need and to whom I owe my life for their constant love, encouragement, moral support and blessings.

If I have forgotten anyone, I apologize.


BISWANATH GAN

CONTENTS

Topic	Page No
Acknowledgement	i
Contents	iii
List of Maps	iv
List of Pictures	v
List of Tables	vii
Chapter I: Introduction	1
Chapter II: Child and the Child Worker	28
Chapter III: Area and the People	67
Chapter IV: Demographic Profile of the Studied People	103
Chapter V: Occupational Profile	116
Chapter VI: Responsible Factors for Working Involvement of the Children	139
Chapter VII: Economic and Educational Profile of the Working Children	160
Chapter VIII: Health Profile of the Working Children	194
Chapter IX: Child Workers and Violation of their Rights	232
Chapter X: Child Workers and their Problems	274
Chapter XI: General Observation	305
Bibliography	325
Glossary	333

LIST OF MAPS

Caption of the Maps	Page No.
Map of West Bengal	69
Map of Darjeeling District	70
Map of Siliguri	79
Map of Matigara Block	82
Map of Atharakhai Gram Panchayat	83
Area Map of Purba Rangia Village	86

LIST OF PICTURES

Picture No.	Caption of the Pictures	Page No.
5.1	1- <i>Knata</i> , 2- <i>Gaini</i> , 3- <i>Matul</i>	125
5.2	<i>Thika</i>	126
5.3	<i>Jharni</i>	126
5.4	<i>Oelty</i>	127
5.5	<i>Belcha</i>	127
5.6	<i>KB box</i>	128
5.7	<i>Tukuri</i>	128
6.1	Dwelling house	146
6.2	A little child observing his mother crushing stone	155
6.3	Little children participating in sport with stones and also observing stone based work	155
7.1	Children participating in stone collection from the river with their parents	168
7.2	A little girl crushing stones with her family	168
7.3	A little boy removing sand from the stones with his parents	169
7.4	Children participating in loading of truck	169
8.1	Practice of defecation in the open field	207
8.2	Practice of defecation in the open field	207
8.3	Taking lunch in the river bed	219
9.1	A little boy working with his parents in the stone field	255
9.2	A little girl bringing the food, water and betel leaf for her parents, working in the stone field	256
9.3	House type	257
9.4	A child crushing stones	259
9.5	A little child observing the gambling practices of adults	265
9.6	Adults trying their luck through lottery and a little boy observing it	265

10.1	Dwelling house	279
10.2	A little girl observing her mother crushing stones	297
10.3	A little girl crushing stones and her very little brother observing it	297
10.4	A child crushing stones and his little sister observing it	297
10.5	Little children participating in their favourite sport with stones	298

LIST OF TABLES

Table Number and Caption of the Tables	Page No
Table 1.1: Growth of Child Labour Across States and UTs in India between 1991 and 2001	6
Table 1.2: NSSO Estimate of the Magnitude of Child Labour in India, 1993-2009/10 in millions	8
Table 1.3: NSSO (66 th round of Survey) on Child Labour in Major Indian States, 2009-10	8
Table 1.4: Growth of Child Labour Across Districts in India between 1991 and 2001	10
Table 1.5: Sex-wise Usual Status WPR (per 1000) for Different Age Groups in Urban West Bengal	11
Table 1.6: Percentage of Sc and ST in total Population and in Main Workers According to some relevant Age Groups in Urban West Bengal, 2001	11
Table 2.1: Percentage of Children in Total Population	30
Table 2.2: Estimated Percentage of Economically Active Children in Different Regions of the World	38
Table 2.3: Changes in the Magnitude of Child Labour and WPR between 1991 and 2001 (Children in the Age Group of 5-14)	40
Table 2.4: Child Workforce Participation Rates in India, 1993-94 to 2004-05 (in %)	41
Table 2.5: Child Workforce Participation Rates in Major Indian States, 2004-05 (in %)	42
Table 2.6: Child Workforce Participation Rates in India by Caste 1993-94 to 2004-05 (in %)	43

Table 2.7: Child Workforce Participation Rates by Religion, 1993-94 to 2004-05 (in %)	44
Table 2.8: Sectoral Distribution of India's Child Labour, 2004-05	46
Table 2.9: Distribution of Number of Districts by Range of Magnitude of Child Labour in India	48
Table 2.10: Magnitude of Child Labour (Main and Marginal) in India 2001 – Top 11 Districts having more than 75,000 Child Labourers	49
Table 2.11: Percentage Distribution of Children (Principal and Subsidiary 'Usual' Status) By Social Categories: 1999-2000.	49
Table 2.12: Activity Distribution of Children – Usual Principal Status – 1999-2000.	51
Table 2.13: Percentage Distribution of Principal and Subsidiary 'Usual Status' of Child Workers: 1987-88 to 1999-2000	51
Table 2.14: A Rural/Urban Dimension of the Issue of Child Labour	53
Table 2.15: The Status of Girl Children at Work	54
Table 2.16: The Status Double-Deprived Rural Girl Children	55
Table 2.17: Wage Paid to Casual Child Labour by Operation 1999-2000	56
Table 2.18: Age Specific Usual Status Work Participation Ratios 1987-88 to 1999-2000 All India (out of 1000)	57
Table 2.19: Magnitude of Child Labour As Estimated by Different Organizations	58
Table 2.20: The Approximate Number of Children Employed in Different Industries	59
Table 2.21: Distribution of Rural Casual Child Labour on the basis of Type of Employment	60
Table 2.22: Distribution of Urban Casual Child Labour on the basis of Type of Employment	61

Table 3.1: Demographic Outline of the Studied Area	84
Table 3.2: Pattern of Migration of the Studied Families	87
Table 3.3: Distribution of Studied Families on the Basis of Causes of Migration	87
Table 3.4: Proportion of Rajbanshi Population to the total SC Population in West Bengal	91
Table 4.1: Distribution of Family on the basis of Caste/ Community/Ethnic Group	104
Table 4.2: Distribution of Population according to Caste/ Community/ Ethnic Group etc.	105
Table 4.3: Distribution of Population according to Age and Sex	105
Table 4.4: Marital Status of the People	107
Table 4.5: Marital Status of the Male and Female	107
Table 4.6: Size of the Family	109
Table 4.7: Educational Status of the People	109
Table 4.8: Age Group Wise Educational Status of the Male and Female	109
Table 4.9: Educational Standard of the Male and Female	111
Table 4.10: Working and Non Working Population	111
Table 4.11: Occupation of Male and Female	112
Table 4.12: Distribution of Studied Families on the basis of Monthly Income (including the income of working children)	112
Table 5.1: Usages of Different types of Stones and Sand	117
Table 5.2: Distribution of Stones and Sand According to its Price per 100 cft	118
Table 5.3: Involvement of Labourers According to Carrying Capacity of the Trucks	119
Table 5.4: Involvement of Labourers and their Wage Rate According to Carrying Capacity of the trucks	120

Table 5.5: The Carrying Capacity of Different Trucks	120
Table 5.6: Average Trip of Different Trucks per day	121
Table 5.7: Distribution of total Amount including Royalty Charge and VAT against the Amount of Stone and Sand	124
Table 5.8: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Religion	129
Table 5.9: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Caste, Community, Ethnic Group	130
Table 5.10: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Age and Sex	130
Table 5.11: Family Size and Employment Status of the Children	131
Table 5.12: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Type of Work	132
Table 5.13: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Nature of Working Involvement	133
Table 5.14: Distribution of Child Workers' Parents on the basis of Working Hours in a Day	134
Table 5.15: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Working Hours in a Day	134
Table 5.16: Distribution of Child Workers on the Basis of Work Experience	135
Table 5.17: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Motivation for Working Involvement	136
Table 5.18: Collection of Payment of Child Workers	137
Table 5.19: Distribution of Child Workers by their Monthly Earnings	137
Table 6.1: Distribution of Child Workers' Family on the basis of Monthly Income	145
Table 6.2: Size of the Child Workers' Family	147
Table 6.3: Family Size and Family Wise Number of Working Children	147
Table 6.4: Educational Status and Level of the Child Workers' Fathers and Mothers	149

Table 6.5: Distribution of Literate Child Workers on the basis of Private Tuition Facility (Past and Present)	150
Table 6.6: Distribution of School Going Working Children According to their School Attendance	150
Table 6.7: Distribution of Families on the basis of Child Workers With and Without Parents	151
Table 6.8: Alcoholism of Child Workers' Fathers	153
Table 7.1: Occupational Status of Fathers and Mothers of Child Worker	163
Table 7.2: Monthly Income of the Child Workers' Family	170
Table 7.3: Distribution of Family on the basis of Number of Child Worker	170
Table 7.4: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Monthly Income of the Family	170
Table 7.5: Child Workers' Contribution to the Family Income	171
Table 7.6: Distribution of Child Workers by their Age of Initiation at Work	171
Table 7.7: Distribution of Child Workers' Family on the basis of Monthly Savings	172
Table 7.8: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Monthly Savings of the Family	172
Table 7.9: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Educational Status and Educational Standard	182
Table 7.10: Distribution of Literate Child Workers According to Status of their Schooling and Type of Attendance of the School Going Child Workers	183
Table 7.11: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Dropout, Stagnation, and Non Enrolment	184
Table 7.12: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Dropout Rates	184
Table 7.13: Child Workers On the basis of Involvement in Household Chores	185

Table 7.14: Distribution of Child Workers' Fathers and Mothers on the basis of Educational Level	186
Table 7.15: Distribution of Child Workers Students on the basis of Accessibility of Tuition	187
Table 8.1: Showing Ailments of Working Children	202
Table 8.2: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Type of Diseases	202
Table 8.3: Showing Ailments of Male Working Children	203
Table 8.4: Showing Ailments of Female Working Children	204
Table 8.5: Distribution of Child Workers' Family on the basis of Facilities Available at their Residence	207
Table 8.6: Distribution of Child Workers' Families the basis of Type of House	208
Table 8.7: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Type of House	208
Table 8.8: Distribution of Child Workers' Families on the basis of No. of Room	209
Table 8.9: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of No. of Persons Living in a Room	209
Table 8.10: Distribution of Child workers' Family on the basis of Use of Water	209
Table 8.11: Distribution of Male Working Children on the basis of Type of Diseases	210
Table 8.12: Distribution of Female Working Children on the basis of Type of Diseases	211
Table 8.13: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Meal Taken in a day	217
Table 8.14: Distribution of Child Workers' Families on the basis of Type of Food Taken	217
Table 8.15: Treatment of Illness of Working Children	222
Table 8.16: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Type of Treatment	223
Table 9.1: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Participation in Recreation	264

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Child is a bundle of joys – a flower incarnate in person. A flickering smile of the child pleases everyone. The brightness and future welfare of the society is clearly interwoven with the brightness of the child and its careful upbringing. Childhood is the important period of life, as it shapes adulthood. The very initiation of life-making starts at adulthood (Sinha, 1991: 1). It is said that “child is father of man and citizen of tomorrow”. In all societies, irrespective of caste, race or area children occupy a very important position. They are considered as an extremely valuable asset for society. The importance of a child in the life of most people can be seen from the fact that the birth of a child is heralded with much fanfare and celebration. The importance of children is stated in *Vedas*¹ also (Lal, 1997: 57). When we look into a child’s eyes expect to see hope, trust and innocence but these signs of childhood are replaced by betrayal, hunger, fear and suspicious, we need to take stock ourselves and the society we have created. For every labour there is a reason and a child for every labour under heaven: a child to hoist and a child to tow, a child to hire out and a child to lock in, a child to reap and a child to sow, a child to push and a child to pull. He is everywhere (Arimpoor, 1994: 59). The phenomenon of child workers is global and is as old as the history of mankind (Lal, 1997: 57). Child workers continue to be a problem of enormous dimension throughout the world. Deprivations are his daily lot. He has lot to narrate about losses than gains and in many cases he is not even aware of the losses. He is a child deprived of physical, intellectual, social, spiritual and psychological growth (Arimpoor, 1994: 60).

There are two perspectives which govern the explanatory frame work on origin and persistence of child labour. The first, and quite dominating one, pertains to economic schools which locates the roots of emergence of child labour into socio-economic structure of society and its production system (including production relations). This school includes both, the classical Marxists with their insights into historical, materialist

¹ *Vedas*: The *Vedas* are considered the earliest literary record of Indo-Aryan civilization, and the most sacred books of India. They are the original scriptures of Hindu teachings, and contain spiritual knowledge encompassing all aspects of our life.

forces shaping the social and institutional milieu (family, peer groups, community); and also non-Marxists with critical perspectives on operations on economic forces and their destabilising potentials for the stability of home and family, and thereby compelling the younger children to work. The second school, which is gaining ground in recent years, is primarily engaged in investigations of 'cultures' without deemphasizing the material forces or realities. Their notion of culture premised on much deeper inquiry into foundations of relations anchored in particularly, religion and the state practices. The scholars subscribing to this school focus on the underlying social and cultural norms governing the division of labour and devaluation of personhood. Child labour is, according to them, is a necessary product or projection of these basic inequalities and distortions in social and cultural system. Hence their emphasis on girl child as a special social and cultural category, necessitating more focused attention. In India, there is an added dimension to their inquiry, mainly relating to caste structure. They argue that the child labour is rampant among the children belonging to sub-ordinate or *dalit*² communities who have been historically denied the opportunities of growth and development. If the culture and political economy are seen in non-hierarchical sense, much can be achieved by way of cognition of gender issue in general and situation of a girl child in particular. May be there are complexities of types and levels of situation; but that should not deter us from holding a mirror on to entire social fabric and investigate together both the material and non-material tendencies constituting the present life of child workers including girl children (Punalekar, 1997: 147-148).

The Marxist theory argues that child labour is the product of capitalism and the technologies it creates. Karl Marx agreed that the new technologies increased the demand for cheap, unskilled labour and that the decrease in the rate of profit led capitalists to increase their exploitation of labour. Children according to Marx, were part of the "industrial reserve army". Lenin, the architect of Russian Revolution is supposed to have told God before the start of revolution, "see to it that the good people do nothing and I will take care of the rest". What happened after that is all history. It is heartening to note that India woken up little late probably. We as good people have chosen to be different,

² *Dalit*: It is a designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchable. *Dalits* are a mixed population, consisting of numerous social groups from all over India.

inactive and hence the problem has grown in magnitude. We have replaced harmony with destruction, peace with war, charity with greed, and love with anger. We have destroyed the environment, built nuclear weapons, used violence and created oppressive social systems like casteism and apartheid. We have exploited the child physically, mentally, economically, socially and even sexually. The child is the most fragile, innocent, confused victim of today's cruel society. If we were to be stripped bare of all our pretensions, we would stand guilty and we hope ashamed (Arimpoor, 1994: 63).

Child labour has been in practice in Indian society from time immemorial. Children gave helping hand to their parent in the household chores and also in family occupations. Various Sanskrit books have described how children in Indian families share the workloads of their parents and of their *gurus*³ (master) during their *brahmacharya*⁴ (study-life) period. The famous story of *Krishna*⁵ and *Sudama*⁶ clearly established that children (students) were used by their *gurus* for carrying out certain household chores. It was never a problem till children were used as helping hands. The need for more production at cheaper cost and the motives to earn more and more resulted in using the helping hands as working hands (Chandra, 1997: 34). Historically, the phenomenon of child labour is not a new thing, neither it is only confined to developing countries. Earlier child labour existed mainly in household industries where they received protection and care from the family while working. The work was non-hazardous in nature and the child worked basically to learn the art and craft of family occupation. This provided an opportunity for learning which would ultimately provide him source of living. This tradition has strong root because in those days formal school and training institutions were not in existence. Family was the only institution for learning. Industrialization and urbanization have brought severe changes in the Indian socio-

³ *Guru*: *Guru* is a Sanskrit term for "teacher" or "master", especially in Indian religions.

⁴ *Brahmacharya*: *Brahmacharya* is one of the four stages of life in an age-based social system as laid out in the *Manu Smṛti* and later Classical Sanskrit texts in Hinduism. It refers to an educational period of 14–20 years which starts before the age of puberty. During this time the traditional vedic sciences are studied, along with the religious texts contained within the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. This stage of life was characterized by the practice of strict celibacy.

⁵ *Krishna*: *Krishna* is the eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu in Hinduism. Lord Krishna is the embodiment of love and divine joy that destroys all pain and sin. He is an instigator of all forms of knowledge and born to establish the religion of love.

⁶ *Sudama*: *Sudama* was a poor Brahmin boy who became a close friend of Hindu deity Krishna in sage Sandipani's hermitage. Krishna learnt to chant from *Sudama*.

economic structure. Family based work was found a low place in the economic ladder. Due to this, the traditional craft started disintegrating and majority of men started migration to urban centres in search for jobs. These circumstances created a situation of higher poverty rate where parents were forced to send their children to undertake some job. The new environment was devoid of the family support and the child faced work hazards, long hours of work and low wages, all of which led to acute exploitation (Lal, 1997: 57-58).

In a civilized society child welfare needs to be given prominence, because the welfare of the entire community, its growth and development depends on the health and well-being of its children. Children are “supremely important national asset” and the future well-being of the nation depends on how its children grow and develop. The study team on social welfare has observed that the physical and mental health of the nation is determined largely by the manner in which it is shaped in the early stages”. According to justice Bhagwati (in AIR 1984 S.C. 46 S.P. 474), the child is a soul with a being, a nature and capacities of its own who must be helped to find them, to grow into their maturity, into fullness of physical and vital energy and the utmost breadth, depth and highest of its emotional, intellectual and spiritual being, otherwise there cannot be a healthy growth of the nation. In India, today, we do not find this consciousness being reflected when we see a child with dirty and tattered shirt, washing heaps of plates or lifting up building materials or serving tea and coffee at a canteen and we realize how a child is compelled to invest his power to earn bread for himself and support his parents, remaining far away from school, play ground, health care and food. These children have to work hard for their own existence or for repayment of loans incurred by their parents. They are the most low paid, careless workers in labour market, not only in India, but also all over the world particularly in developing countries. Unequivocally, child labour is a social evil in which the innocent children are also made to be put into hardship and torture for no fault of theirs.

Child labour is a scourge of many developing and nearly industrializing countries. It also exists in almost, all of the advanced economics of the world. Posing huge physical, psychological and moral risk for the children themselves, the child labour system also

darkens the whole outlook for the world's worst-off countries. It robs them off their next generation of schooling and health. The phenomenon of child labour is so complex and deeply rooted in the socio-economic fabric of the society that it may not be wise to play on the single approach to deal with it. Child labour remains to be a widespread phenomenon throughout the world. For a large number of children work is an ordeal, a source of suffering and exploitation; and a fundamental abuse of human rights. Child in every type of human society has always taken part in economic activity (Dak, 2002: 70-157). Shandilya (2006) says child labour is burning issue of global concern. Child labour is a universal phenomenon and it is a by-product of socio-economic structure of the society, children are an asset for any society as well as to nation. They are the blooming flowers of the society, it is therefore a duty of the society to protect these flowers so as to have a meaningful contribution through them in the future. It is a well known fact that the future of a society or a nation or world depends upon the sound growth of the children. Due to certain forces and circumstances children are compelled to work in the early stages of their childhood, which does harm to the child and society. Hence child labour is considered as an economic and social problem (Shandilya et al., 2006).

Distribution of Working Children

The world population of child labour was 250 million in 1996 as per I.L.O., out of which nearly 153 million found in Asia, 80 million in Africa and 17 million in Latin America. In most of the developing countries parents depend upon their children. The incident of child labour in India is one of the highest in the world (Lal, 1997: 57-65). In 2000, the ILO estimated, "246 million child workers were involved in child labour, of which 171 million were involved in work that by its nature is hazardous to their safety, physical or mental health, and moral development. Moreover, some 8.4 million children were engaged in so-called 'unconditional' or worst forms of child labour, such as forced and bonded labour, conscription by military forces in armed conflict, trafficking, commercial, sexual and other forms of exploitation (What is Wrong with Child Labour?; <http://civilserviceindia.blogspot.in/2010/11/what-is-wrong-with-child-labour.html>).

According to estimates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) published in 2006, there were 218 million child labourers worldwide. The number in hazardous work,

which accounts for the bulk of the worst forms of child labour, was said to be 126 million in 2004 (ITUC- International Trade Union Confederation, June 2008: Child Labour; <http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/guideCLENFinal.pdf>). According to National Census data there were 13.39 million child workers in 1951, 14.47 million in 1961, 10.66 million in 1971, 11.20 million in 1981, 12.67 million in 1991 and 12.50 million in 2001 (Unit Level Records of NSS;

<http://labour.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Divisions/childlabour/NSSOEstimateofChildLabourinMajorIndianStates.pdf>). According to 2001, Census of India, there were 1.26 crore working children in the 5-14 age groups as compared to 1.13 crore in 1991. The states wise distribution shows that the largest number of working children were found in Uttar Pradesh (19,27,997), followed by Andhra Pradesh (13,63,339), Rajasthan (12,62,570), Bihar (11,17,500), Madhya Pradesh (10,65,259) and West Bengal (8,57,087), (Census of India, 2001). According to NSSO (66th round of Survey, 2009-2010) on child labour, the total number of child labour in India is 49,83,871 and among the major Indian states, the highest number of child labour i.e.1775333 found in Uttarakhand followed by 551584 in West Bengal, 405936 in Rajasthan, 390687 in Gujrat and 276522 in Bihar (Unit Level Records of NSS;

<http://labour.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Divisions/childlabour/NSSOEstimateofChildLabourinMajorIndianStates.pdf>).

Table 1.1: Growth of Child Labour Across States and UTs in India between 1991 and 2001

State/UTs showing % decline in the incidence of child labour during 2001 as compared to 1991	State/UTs showing % increase in the incidence of child labour during 2001 as compared to 1991
Dadra & Nagar Haveli (-3.22), Gujarat (-7.27), Goa (-11.3), Karnataka (-15.74), Orissa (-6.53), Andhra Pradesh (-17.97), Lakshadweep (20.59), Daman	Madhya Pradesh (5.71), Assam (7.27), West Bengal (20.43), Punjab (24.08), Tripura (32.03), Uttar Pradesh (41.71), Arunachal Pradesh (49.11), Delhi (53.19), Andaman and Nicobar Islands

& Diu (-22.53), Kerala (-24.84), Tamil Nadu (-27.65), Maharashtra (-28.49), and Pondicherry (26.96).	(54.94), Meghalaya (55.75), Mizoram (60.05), Bihar (61.82), Rajasthan (63.08), Manipur (74.84), Himachal Pradesh (90.96), Chandigarh (102.09), Haryana (131.10), Nagaland (178.43) and Sikkim (193.98)
--	--

Note: Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh have been merged to Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh respectively for comparison.

Source: (INDUS, Child Labour Project, 2007, 'Child Labour Facts and Figures: An analysis of Census 2001, ILO and Government of India; http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf)

NSSO Data Analysis on the Magnitude of Child Labour: Compared to 2001 census data, the 61st round of NSSO data, 2004-05 reported that there were 9.07 million working persons of age group 5-14 years. While the Census is conducted during the beginning of every decade the NSSO is conducted twice in each decade. Thus NSSO data also provides the mid-decade trends of various aspects of the economy. The 61st round of NSSO (2004-05) shows a declining trend compared to two earlier rounds in the magnitude of child labour. The children who are not in school and not in work are enormous even by the NSSO estimates. This issue is discussed below-

Table 1.2: NSSO Estimate of the Magnitude of Child Labour in India, 1993-2009/10 in millions

Year (Round)	Boys	Girls	All
1993-1994(50 th Round)	7.35	6.51	13.86
1999-2000(55 th Round)	5.37	4.76	10.13
2004-2005(61 st Round)	4.76	4.31	9.07
2009-2010 (66 th Round)	3.06	1.93	4.99

Source: Unit Level Records of NSS; <http://labour.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Divisions/childlabour/NSSOEstimateofChildLabourinMajorIndianStates.pdf>.

Table 1.3: NSSO (66th round of Survey) on Child Labour in Major Indian States, 2009-10

States	Male	Female	All	% share of Child Labour
Andhra Pradesh	108923	125739	234662	4.71
Assam	156488	32666	189154	3.8
Bihar	235309	41213	276522	5.55
Chhatisgarh	4305	7321	11626	0.23
Delhi	18576	0	18576	0.37
Gujrat	166432	224255	390687	7.84
Haryana	50737	21459	72196	1.45
Himachal Pradesh	4456	2942	7398	0.15
Jammu & Kashmir	12413	16872	29285	0.59
Jharkhand	67807	14661	82468	1.65
Karnataka	110589	115908	226497	4.54
Kerala	1182	1583	2765	0.06
Madhya Pradesh	149142	41875	191017	3.83
Maharastra	120600	140073	260673	5.23
Orissa	90912	43651	134563	2.7
Punjab	32466	16370	48836	0.98
Rajasthan	136239	269697	405936	8.14

States	Male	Female	All	% share of Child Labour
Tamil Nadu	3471	13880	17351	0.35
Uttar Pradesh	18029	9342	27371	0.55
Uttarakhand	1160114	615219	1775333	35.62
West Bengal	389211	162373	551584	11.07
All India	3057998	1925873	49,83,871	100.00

Source: Unit Level Records of NSS; <http://labour.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Divisions/childlabour/NSSOEstimateofChildLabourinMajorIndianStates.pdf>

NSSO data also shows that, Uttarakhand account for a larger share of close to one-third of all child workforces in India followed by West Bengal, with 11.07 per cent. Uttarakhand and West Bengal states have captured the first and second place in terms of magnitude of child labour as revealed by NSSO (2009-10) data. Rajasthan and Gujrat respectively garnered 8.14 per cent and 7.84 per cent of India's child employment.

Growth of Child Labour Across Districts and States in India: Among major states in India, Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh show an all round increase in the magnitude of child labour between 1991 and 2001 in all the districts in both the states. West Bengal, Haryana, Punjab, Bihar and Rajasthan there have been an increasing trend of magnitude of child labour in over 90 per cent of the districts. Andhra Pradesh is the state where the increasing trend is observed only in 17 per cent of the districts. Surprisingly Kerala also show increasing trend in 50 per cent of the districts, though the increase is only marginal. Growth of child labour in major states by number of districts is presented in a table which is mentioned below. District wise increase or decline in the magnitude of child labour between 1991 and 2001 is shown below- .

Table1.4: Growth of Child Labour Across Districts in India between 1991 and 2001

States	Districts where the magnitude has increased		Districts where the magnitude has declined		Total number of districts
	Number of districts	% to total districts in the state	Number of districts	% to total districts in the state	
Uttarakhand	8	61.5	5	38.5	13
UP	61	88.4	8	11.6	69
WB	17	94.4	1	5.6	18
Orissa	20	66.7	10	33.3	30
MP	37	82.2	8	17.8	45
Chattisgarh	10	62.5	6	37.5	16
Gujarat	17	68	8	32	25
Maharashtra	18	51.4	17	48.6	35
AP	4	17.4	19	82.6	23
Karnataka	12	44.4	15	55.6	27
Kerala	7	50	7	50	14
T.N.	11	36.7	19	63.3	30
Jharkhand	18	100	0	0	18
Assam	17	73.9	6	26.1	23
Haryana	18	94.7	1	5.3	19
HP	12	100	0	0	12
Punjab	15	88.2	2	11.8	17
Rajasthan	30	93.8	2	6.3	32
Bihar	35	94.6	2	5.4	37
India	367	72.96	136	27.04	503

The data presented above indicate that the magnitude of child labour has been increasing in over 70 per cent of the districts in India. It would be useful to do a regional mapping of high incidence districts to focus policy interventions (Magnitude of Child Labour in

India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf).

Distribution of Working Children in West Bengal

Table 1.5: Sex-wise Usual Status WPR (per 1000) for Different Age Groups in Urban West Bengal

Age group	1987-88		1993-94		2004-05	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
5-9	6	3	11	2	20	5
10-14	78	76	88	48	67	91

Source: NSS Report No 409, 515(61/10/1) Part I & Sarvekshana, Spl. No., September 1990; cited in Chakravarty and Chakravarty, 2011, No.1.

Table 1.6: Percentage of Sc and ST in total Population and in Main Workers According to some relevant Age Groups in Urban West Bengal, 2001

Age Group	Population		Main workers	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
All	14.56	13.99	17.94	12.75
5-9	17.04	16.87	15.12	12.55
10-14	16.99	16.79	20.65	15.67

Source: Census of India, Economic Tables, 2001.

Review of Literature

To conduct any research, review of literature is necessary. A literature review is a description of the literature relevant to a particular area of research field or topic. This work may be in any format, including online sources. It may be a separate assignment, or one of the introductory sections of a report, dissertation or thesis. A good review is not simply a description of what others have published in the form of a set of summaries, but

one that promotes the critical discussion, offers meaningful insights and highlights differing arguments, theories and approaches on the same topic. It is a synthesis and analysis of the relevant work published, at all times in order to validate the author's own findings, conclusions, arguments and rationale. By reviewing literature we aim to harness information documented by other scholars, the process which helps us to identify and comprehend the intricacies of research problem we plan to work on i.e. what others have studied and in what way our work is different to others work already published elsewhere. Therefore, the purpose of the literature review are four fold: first to define and confine the scope of research problem we are working on, second to analyze our findings from historical perspective, third to avoid duplication of the research work and ideas, fourth to validate our hypothesis and conclusion based on previous knowledge.

The studies which have been done by several researchers related to this subject matter are mentioned below:

Khandekar and Nayak (1970) studied on the issue of child labour in Greater Bombay and mainly highlighted their physical as well as psychological situation and socio-economic condition. In pursuance of their view child labour is a premature expenditure rather than savings. Jain (1979) studied the various important issues related to child labour such as environment and working conditions, physical conditions and responsible factors of child labour in two different states, West Bengal and Rajasthan. Sastry (1980) conducted the study on child labour in Varansi and focused their various important issues such as working condition and wages and environment as well as the existing machineries for implementation of labour laws. Kothari's (1983) study mainly confined to the match factory of Shivkasi in Tamil Nadu. Around 45,000 children got involved in this economy. They had to work for prolong hours a day that was 11-13 hours on an average and usually they used to come in the factory at 6 a.m. when it was opened. Generally they used to be paid as piece rate while collective bargaining was completely unknown. Kanbergi and Kulkarni's (1985) study on child labour and highlighted some important issues like age and gender constraint and the quantum and nature of child labour. The gender discrimination for work has been shown clearly in the present study where the male child labourer had to work on the family farm or enterprise whereas the female working

children used to perform different activities for prolonged hours rather than boys. The study tried to explain the responsible factors for increasing of child work participation. Therefore, pursuant to their opinion, the child work participation was increasing with the increases of livestock owned or size of land. Saxena's (1986) study on child workers mainly involved in either agricultural or farm related work or in the unorganized sector such as servants in home, wayside shop, canteen and worked as scavengers, porters, shoe shiners and vendors. Besides these there were so many children got engaged in the harvesting of tea and coffee in the plantation areas and generally they had to be involved at the age of 6 or 7 years only. The similar study has been done by Jain (1996), Bhatta (1996) and Dasgupta (1997) too. Prasad's (1988) study on the issue of the tribal *rejas* (daily wage labour) of Ranchi district, of Bihar mainly highlighted the socio-economic aspects of the *rejas* involving in different occupations in the area of Dhurwa, Namkom, Barjatu, Kanke and Ratu road such as brick-kilns, construction work, transportation of new materials, industrial complexes etc. The necessary information was mainly collected from 300 respondents among the tribal *rejas* through interview method. Out of 300 respondents, 7.7 per cent were under the age group of 5 to 10 years and 11 to 15 years involved in different construction works, brick fields and transportation of new materials and for which they used to be paid weekly Rs. 10/- to 15/- in comparison to an adult *reja* who used to be paid Rs. 20/- to Rs. 25/- in a week. Bhir's (1989) study on the issue of child labour mainly confined to hotels or restaurants, garages, shoe shining and household activities. Due to utter financial constraints they had to enter into the work at an early age that was very much hazardous. Most of the working children were migrants and a large number of them came to Bombay for searching a job. The study reveals that the average number of earning members in their family was three of which 50 per cent were children. On an average Rs. 529/- was the family income per month of which 30 per cent contribution were of child workers where their average income was Rs. 102/- per month. The monthly family income would be come down to Rs. 350/- approximately if their income would not be granted. The household contributions were so much deplorable in condition. There was no proper sanitation facility in slum areas where majority of the working children were living. On the contrary, only 32 per cent were living in non slum areas and majority of them were staying with their employers especially in case of

involvement into household activities. Even some of them got involved into the shoe shining activities mainly lived on railway platforms. The study reveals that only 14 per cent of total working children were going to schools but owing to utter economic constraints they were forced to drop out their schooling to get involved in money making job. Bhangoo's (1990) study on child labour of urban Surat mainly highlighted the magnitude and problems from various angles. In this context, total 100 child labourers were selected from industrial and non-industrial sectors of urban Surat. This study reveals that the financial constraint of the family is the main reason for the involvement of children into work. Ultimately child employment on a large scale has been taken place on account of poor and uneven development of capitalism and consequent rapid inflow of ruralities and also for weakening of the democratic institutions in the country. Finally this study has tried to find out the solution for uprooting the child labour from the society and in this regard the movements by trade unions or action groups, united challenges must be needed from the working people themselves and should be given a support by progressive and other democratic forces. Sinha (1991) studied on child labour in Calcutta, which was mainly based on some important issues relevant to child worker such as migration, employment and its impact on working children, caste affiliation and legal protection for child labour. The study tried to examine how the economic and social factors related to the demographic aspects of child migration. The social and economic pull factors of the city were the responsible factors for such migration that was shown in this study. The working children were being exploited in various ways due to ill effect of social and economic factors that was studied deeply and the causes and process of migration from the village had also been discussed in the present study. Mowli's (1992) study was on the '*Jogin*' system in Andhra Pradesh. The term '*Jogin*' has been derived from the word '*Yogin*' meaning a 'girl saint' which came under the category of bonded labour. The total of 30,000 *Jogins* were found elsewhere. This system is prevalent more in Nizamabad district where total 5,000 *Jogins* were found. The study tried to show the plight condition of this system where the very young girl belonging to the scheduled castes were exploited 'brutally' and euphemistically labelled as *Jogin* which is still continuing. Later on, this system was also studied by Krishna (1977) and Sinha (1996).

Ghosh's (1992) study on street children of Calcutta mainly highlighted their growth and developmental issues such as the problem, social, physical and psychological needs of street children. Sinha's (1992) study on the issue of child labour of unorganised sector in Kashmir mainly confined to the hotels, dhabas⁷, carpet weaving and household activities. The study mainly tried to find out the factors and causes responsible for the engagement of children into work to a great extent and ill effects of working engagement at an early stage of life were also studied. Finally, this study was able to reach at a conclusion that child labour was a social problem that can be eradicated by the improvement of socio-economic condition, educational development and also through the changing attitudes of the society towards child labour. Singha's (1992) study on child labour in different localities of Ahmedabad mainly confined to the hotels, restaurants, garages and domestic services. The severe financial constraints was highlighted precisely in this study where major percentage of working children belonged to the family of monthly income group that was below Rs. 701/-. Most of the working children had to work for 11 to 12 hours a day. So, due to prolong working hours they did not use to get enough time to continue study, play games and go to school those were required for their overall development. Jain's (1993) study on the issue of child labour from ten villages of the Sivkashi Panchayat Union and Sivkashi town of Tamil Nadu mainly confined to the child labour in the match factories. The study reveals that majority of them were from the families having irregular income and owing to this fact they got involved into work to provide financial support. The study also stated that the gender biasness was more prevalent in their society as the larger section of parents preferred to send their male children to school and the girl children were provoked to involve into work. Generally they used to work for 12 hours and the normal working days was between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Usually they were paid a very little remuneration from the factory and for that they had to perform hard work without any adequate rest. Besides these, the working atmosphere was very much unhygienic and hazardous in condition that was congested with devoid of proper ventilation, non availability of drinking water and also illuminated improperly. Sumangala and Nagarajan (1993) studied on economics of child labour and fertility. This study mainly highlighted the major socio-economic aspects as well as the

⁷ *Dhaba*: A roadside restaurant.

determinants of child labour and interdependence of child labour on their parental fertility in some selected areas. Pursuant to them child labour is a serious problem in several states of the country. Mittal's (1994) study was on the child labour in '*Chikan*'⁸ industry' and allied works in Daliganj of Lucknow. Total 50 working children were interviewed mainly to know their socio-economic, occupation and educational profile in details through the application of random sampling method. Through this study it was found that the highest number of working children was found in 10-12 years age group involved in *chikan* work and majority of the cases they were motivated by their parents to involve into the said work. Due to prolong working hours the working children often did not use to get adequate time for household activities. Kewalramon's (1996) study on the issue of child abuse and the problems of its victims in a small town of Rajasthan based on an empirical study of 167 cases which manifested an overall scenario of the victims of physical and emotional abuse of children. Though the boys were victimised more than girls but in case of sexually abused children, the major percentage was girls which was 70 per cent. This study mainly highlighted a number of important issues such as the patterns of child abuse/applicability of existing theoretical explanations of child abuse and the relations between selected socio-demographic variables and child abuse. The more cases of abuse were noticed among the children living with both parents in comparison to broken families. Vora's (1996) study on child labour mainly highlighted the various important issues such as demographic profile of child labour, Child Labour (prohibition and regulation) Act, different prominent sectors of working children, works and its impact on health and the responsible factors for child labour. He stated that the working children of rural areas were mainly involved in primary sector of the economy and major percentage of them were involved in agriculture and allied activities. Illiteracy, lack of social awareness, unemployment and poverty were the main responsible factors for the involvement of children into work that had been shown here precisely. Tripathy (1997) studied on migrant child labourers from the draught prone regions of Orissa. The study mainly highlighted their socio-economic and living conditions where most of them hailed from the tribal societies who were basically unskilled and landless agriculture labourers.

⁸ *Chikan*: *Chikan* is a traditional embroidery style from Lucknow, India. Literally translated, the word means embroidery. It is one of Lucknow's most famous textile decoration styles.

They migrated to different states of the country like Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur etc. to involve with various occupations such as road construction, soil cutting, textile works and so forth. Ahuja and Jain's (1998) study on the issue of child labour in a village in the district of North 24 Parganas confined to 32 different types of works including smuggling and begging. Sometimes they were found in manufacturing units which was very much hazardous. The study also highlighted the problems of child maidservants who were often physically and mentally assaulted by the employer. Besides these, the demographic and socio-economic profile of working children was also highlighted. This study mainly emphasized upon the socio-economic profile, health and the livelihood pattern of the studied children. Sooryamoorthy's (1998) study on the issues of child labourers in Thiruvanthapuram, Kozhikode and Kochi, the three megacities of Kerala mainly confined to the various workshops and vendors. In this context, mainly 1905 child workers were interviewed, out of them nearly one-third child labourers involved themselves as helpers in various workshops and 26.15 per cent worked as street vendors. In Kochi, a major percentage of working children engaged as vendors. Besides these, a number of working children were found in shops and hotels. Prabha and Baligar (1999) studied on girl child especially those belonging to the lower socio-economic class. This study mainly highlighted their pathetic condition and also examined the attitudes towards the education, nutrition, health care and socialization of the girl child. Mishra's (2000) study on child labour in India has critically examined the constitutional and legal provisions, the national policy and programme of action, international instruments and recent international initiatives and the role of NGO's, trade unions, central employers, organizations and the media. This study also highlighted the statutory role of public interest litigation. Kabeer, Nambissan and Subrahmanian (2003) together published a report on child labour and right to education in South Asia. The particular issue was examined include child labour and education in the context of the apparent conflict that is poised between the economic needs of families and the rights of their children. Pandey (2004) conducted a study on child counseling and education. He published his books in two volumes mainly emphasized on the issue of child counseling and education deals with several aspects of child's problems and psychology.



279014

27 MAY 2016

In India, there are many studies made by different scholars from different perspectives on working children in various sectors. But in this context, the present study holds an important position for its wider perspectives and especially for their working involvement in such type of sector which is almost unknown to most of the people. The village namely Purba Rangia located in Balasan river basin has been selected for the present research study where all the families were migrants and majority of them came from Bangladesh and few of them from adjoining districts and states of the country. Basically they were undocumented migrants and resourceless as having left their own house, land, properties and so on. They had to come here due to various reasons. Finding no other alternatives they settled down in Balasan River Basin in order to involve with stone based work. Though they were paid very little remuneration but besides this they had no other way to earn. Considering the fact, anyone could do this job without any investment but manual labour. Indeed, it was simply beyond their capacity to invest money in any other suitable business or occupation. Their poor educational background kept them away from getting better occupational opportunity but only they could apply the physical labour and due to this fact the stone based occupation was supposed to be suitable for them despite getting little remuneration. Their earnings could not provide them a minimum necessary support to run a family, thus, they forced to involve their children into stone based work to get a fiscal aid a bit at least. Even though there are some studies on child labour in other spheres of activities but there was no earlier study on child labour on this type of activity. They had no adequate fiscal capacity to run a family, hence it has to be studied whether it is responsible for the involvement of children in work for livelihood. The children had to perform such type of hard manual works for the whole day without any adequate rest so it has to be seen whether it has told upon their health, education, and psychology. Moreover, it has also to be observed that whether the lack of proper shelter and unhygienic living and working environment has any impact on their health. Besides, whether their early onset to work is responsible for deprivation of all their basic needs and rights that has also to be seen. Further, most of them had no birth certificates so it has to be seen whether it has any impact on their school admission or in other cases. As there was hardly any study on child labour in such a typical situation, the present empirical

study is expected to provide the nature of struggle for survival, deprivation and suffering of a group of people under such limiting situation.

Research Scope

The people of Balasan River basin were migrants and came from different places, mostly from Bangladesh. They lost their land, house and properties and could bring nothing. They had very limited purchasing capacity of anything for livelihood and thus, finding no other ways they settled down here and accepted the stone based work as prime source of income. The River Balasan could provide them shelter and employment opportunity. The River Balasan comes down from Himalayas and the natural resources like, sand, stones and boulders also come down with its flow. These items were supplied either after crushing with requisite size or directly; and sand and boulders were supplied to the outside markets as there was always a huge demand of such items in building and road construction. These natural raw materials were available in the river free of cost which was used by migrant people who did not have much resource. Stone based work was of various types such as stone collection and crushing, sand gathering and truck loading and so on and needed only the manual labour. There was a great employment opportunity but the remuneration was too little for livelihood. To maintain the livelihood most of the family members had to do this work together to enhance their earnings and the children also had to attach with this work to contribute their family income.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered yet (Kothari, 1985, reprinted 1995: 2). Therefore, to conduct any research work objectives are necessary and to examine the situation of the child workers of the concerned society the following objectives are mentioned:

1. To know the socio-economic conditions of child workers.
2. To study the educational status of child workers.
3. To study the factors responsible for child work.

4. To study the health condition of child workers.
5. To examine the problems of child workers if any.
6. To study the violation of rights of working children if any.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is an assumption about relations between variables. It is a tentative explanation of the research problem or a guess about the research outcome (Ahuja, 2001: 70). To realize the objectives stated for the study, the following hypothesis have been formulated for testing:

1. Extreme poverty is responsible for the involvement of children into work.
2. Due to lack of time and proper infrastructure the working children are not in a position to get the formal schooling.
3. The working children have poor health condition because due to lack of health consciousness, environment, infrastructure and poverty.
4. The child rights are being violated due to poverty and working involvement.

Methodology

Methodology is the procedure of research techniques. It is the logic of scientific investigation. Literally 'methodology' means the science of methods (Ahuja, 2001: 353). The scope of research methodology is wider than that of research methods. Thus, when we talk of research methodology we not only talk of the research methods but also consider the logic behind the methods we use in the context of our research study and explain why we are using a particular method or technique and why we are not using others so that research result are capable of being evaluated either by the researcher himself or by others (Kothari, 1985, reprinted 1995: 11). However, method is a tool or an instrument employed to gather empirical evidence and to analyse data (Ahuja, 200: 354). Research methods may be understood as all those methods/techniques that are used for conduction of research. Research methods or techniques, thus, refer to the methods the researchers use in performing research operations. In other words, all those methods

which are used by the researcher during the course of studying his research problem are termed as research methods (Kothari, 1985, reprinted 1995: 9-10). However, to conduct this particular research work several methods and techniques have been used which are discussed below-

Sources of Data Collection: Two types of data, primary data and secondary data were collected to complete the research work. The primary data were collected through intensive field work. On the other hand, secondary data were gathered from different books, journals, periodicals, published papers, unpublished thesis, District Gazetteers, District Census Handbook, Primary Census Abstract, Block office, Panchayat office, BDO office, internet, news papers and so on.

To conduct the research work the studied area was selected on the basis of both pilot survey and observation. In this way, the village namely 'Purba Rangia' was selected located in Balasan river basin where most of the people got involved in stone based occupation for maintaining their livelihood.

The preliminary census schedule (PCS) covered all the 320 families in the studied area but analyzing the data, the working children were found in 250 families. Thus, total 250 families were selected to fulfill the objectives of present research work. The population of 5-14 years age group was taken as child population as estimated by IPEC (International Programme on elimination of Child Labour) and pursuant to the following age group total 377 child workers were found from 250 families of which the males were 186 (49.43%) and females were 191(50.66%).

Selection of the Informants: The data were mainly collected from the adult and working children as per aims and objectives of present research work. The knowledgeable aged persons of the studied area were selected to gather information regarding settlement, migration, socio-economic condition of the studied area, occupational scenario, education, daily livelihood pattern, health profile, health care practices, environmental sanitation and hygiene, working and living environment and condition, familial and social relation and so forth. The key informants were selected on the basis of their capability to give genuine and satisfactory information. So the knowledgeable aged

persons were needed because they were the reliable source to get the precious information exactly that I expected to fulfill the needs pursuant to aims and objectives of the study.

The data regarding every section of working children and their various important aspects were collected from the working children of the studied area and also from their parents or guardians as details as possible. The data about health, diseases, ailments and treatments were collected from the concerned studied people and also from the quacks of local medicinal shops, traditional medicine men and also from the health centre situated around 5 km. away from the studied village. The necessary data regarding area and the people of the studied village, *gram panchayat*⁹, sub-division and also the district were collected from *panchayat* members, block office, BDO office and SDLRO office (Sub-Divisional Land Reform Office). Moreover, the *panchayat* level data regarding studied village was gathered. The data regarding education and child caring and rearing practices were obtained from the family members specially mothers and *anganwadi*¹⁰ workers. The valuable information of stone based occupation was gathered from the *sardars* (leader) of stone crushing field and also from the staffs of Royalty office. As per necessity of research work to collect the data apart from observation, interviews, group discussion (GD), case studies were taken from various persons like child workers, parents or guardians, villagers, *panchayat* members, doctors and so on. In some cases their parents were also called for interview as per the necessity of research work.

Methods Applied in Field to Collect Data: The conventional anthropological methods were applied with which the present research work was possible to complete successfully. In this regard, village mapping, preliminary census schedule, observation, interview, key informant interview, case study, group discussion (GD) etc. primarily were used.

⁹ ***Gram Panchayat:*** A *Gram Panchayat* is a local government bodies at the village or small town level in India.

¹⁰ ***Anganwadi:*** *Anganwadi* is a government sponsored child-care and mother-care centre in India. It creates to children in the 0-6 age group. It was started by the Indian Government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services programme to combat child hunger and malnutrition. A typical *Anganwadi* centre also provides basic health care in Indian villages. It is a part of the Indian public health-care system. These centres provide supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, nutrition and health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services.

Village Mapping: Village lay out was drawn to become familiar with every corner of the studied area for convenience of present research work. In this context helps were taken from village people.

Preliminary Census Schedule: The preliminary census schedule was prepared in order to collect the preliminary and comprehensive data. At the initial stage of field work bulk of quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through preliminary census schedules (PCSs) in the village which includes name, age, sex, relation with head, marital status, religion, name of caste/ community/ ethnic groups to which the sample families belong, generation wise occupation, type of work, seasonal variation of occupation, working involvement, age of initiation at work, process of learning work, duration of work, working hours, collection of payment of working children, monthly income, monthly expenditure, information regarding loan taken, children's right to expense, educational status, school attendance, accessibility of tuition for education, guidance of parents for education of their children, whether economic constraints affecting education, factors affecting school studies, causes of dropout, stagnation or non enrolment, existence of *Sarba Siksha Abhijan*¹¹ in the village, type of house, number of room, number of person living in a room, facilities available at residence like sanitation, electricity, drainage system, smoking and drinking habit, immunization status, diseases and ailments during last five years and its causal factors, nature of treatment, preference of treatment, sources of water, food habit and type of food, information regarding migration such as year of migration, name of migrated place, causes of migration, probable factors of migration, participation in recreation, facilities enjoying like ration card, voting card and Below Poverty Line (BPL) card.

Observation: In my studied area, where the observation method always applied during field work abreast the other necessary methods for data collection. During the period of my field work I observed the daily life and actual condition of working children. Bulk of data regarding area and the people, economic activities, working and living environment and condition, health conditions, type of treatment, food habit, drinking water facility,

¹¹ *Sarba Siksha Abhijan:* It is Government of India's flagship programme aimed at the universalisation of elementary education in a time bound manner, as mandated by 86th amendment to the constitution of India making free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 years age group, a fundamental right.

environmental sanitation and hygiene, familial relations as well as social relations, behavioural pattern, family atmosphere, inter-personal relationships, educational environment, food and drinking habit and smoking, upbringing of children, rearing and caring of children, participation in recreation, violation of child rights and so on. Besides these, this method also helped me exceedingly to check and recheck the valuable data collected through primary sources. Through the observation method, so many delicate matters were gathered which were very much sensitive to the informants or difficult to collect through interview.

Interview: This method was applied in the field in order to collect necessary information of present research work. The information regarding area and the people, settlement, migration, socio-economic condition, nature of work, educational scenario, health and hygiene, diseases, ailments and treatments, health care practices and personal hygiene, sources of water, food habit, working and living condition and so forth were gathered through applying of interview method from aged persons of the studied area, other village members, working children and their guardians, *panchayat* members, quacks, traditional medicine men, Block Development Officer, staffs of block office, *anganwadi* workers, staff of Royalty office and *sardars*¹² (leader) of the stone crushing field. In this way especially working children of different families were interviewed and abreast the other working children were also interviewed in several occasions as much as possible to fulfill the needs of research work and in some cases their parents were also interviewed.

Key Informant Interview: This technique was also applied to know the overall general information of the studied area as much as details. Here some aged knowledgeable persons of the village were mainly selected as key informant from them the necessary information were collected such as area and the people, migration, socio-economic condition of the studied area, occupational scenario, working and living environment and condition, daily livelihood pattern, environmental sanitation and hygiene, health, disease and treatment, health care practices, familial relations as well as social relations, behavioural pattern and so on.

¹² *Sardar:* The labourers were controlled by the *Sardar*. He played an important role as a mediator between labourers and truck owners.

Case Study: In case study method, informants were asking to describe and state the facts regarding a specific case in which he or she was involved. In this way a number of child workers, parents of different families in the studied area were selected for case study especially to know as for their socio-economic condition, health and educational profile of working children and abreast also to know regarding the violation of their rights.

Group Discussion (GD): The necessary data were collected applying these methods in the field. People were gathered together from similar background or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest like their way of living, working and living environment, health, sanitation and personal hygiene, working involvement of children and so on.

Field Work, Data Tabulation, Analysis and Report Writing: The present study was planned on the basis of this unique situation. This study was divided into five stages: (i) uses of secondary sources and secondary data collection, (ii) pilot survey (iii) field work i.e. primary data collection, (iv) data tabulation and analysis, and (v) report writing, and these have been done during the period of 2006 to 2014. In this regard, at first during 2006-2007 by using various sources like several books, journals, reports, news papers, internet etc. so many information and data were gathered to get a clear idea related to this present study. The uses of secondary sources were not limited within this period. The secondary information and data were collected and used during the whole period of research work i.e. 2006 to 2014 as and when required. However, the pilot survey which is very essential to conduct the research work was done during 2006. During the period of 2006-2007 on the basis of outcomes of pilot survey and collected secondary information and data etc. a research proposal was made. After that I made a list of probable queries and prepared the format of Preliminary Census Schedule (PCS) and then made a plan to do the work. The household census survey was done during the whole year of 2008. Apart from these, various interviews, case studies and group discussions etc. were done during 2009 and during this period the data were verified and crosschecked. The next phase which coverage around one year i.e. 2010 to observe the situation and variation in different parts of the year. Then all the collected data were processed and analysed during 2011. Further, data were collected during 2012 to fill up the gaps of earlier collected data

and to observe and verify certain situations. But it may be added here that I maintained my regular contact to observe this field situation during the period of 2008 to 2012 and many of my findings are based on my close observation during this long period. After doing this, various research gaps were identified and to fulfill it again I went there for collecting data and further table analysis were done. Finally the report writing was done during the period of 2013 to 2014.

References

Ahuja, R. (2001), *Research Methods*, New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

Arimpoor, J. (1994), 'Profile of the Child Worker', *Social Action*, Volume- 44: 59-63.

Census of India 2001, *Provisional Populations Totals: India*, Office of the Registrar General, India.

Census of India 2001, *Economic Tables, Table B-1 Scheduled Castes and B-1 Scheduled Tribes, States and Union territories*, Volume- I, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India.

Chakravarty, D. and I. Chakravarty (2011), *Girl Children, Family and Dirty Work: Paid Domestic Service in the Indian State of West Bengal*, No.1, Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Hyderabad, Vidya Sagar College, Calcutta University, Kolkata.

Chandra, K. S. (1997), Problems and Issues on Child Labour in India, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 34.

Dak, T.M. (2002), *Child Labour in India*, Delhi: Serials Publications.

INDUS, Child Labour Project, 2007, Child Labour Facts and Figures: An analysis of Census 2001, ILO and Government of India; http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf.

ITUC- International Trade Union Confederation, June 2008: Child Labour;
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/guideCLENFinal.pdf>, retrieved 21.9.12, at 10.50
p.m.

Kothari, C.R. (1985, reprinted 1995), *Research Methodology – Methods and Techniques*,
New Delhi: Wishwa Prakashan.

Lal, G. (1997), Child Labour in India: An overview, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 57-65.

Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft);
http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf,
retrieved 22.06.2010, at 2.35 p.m.

Punalekar, S.P. (1997), Labouring Children: On Social Roots of Child Exploitation,
Social Change, 27 (3-4): 147-148.

Shandilya, T. K., N. Kumar and N. Kumar (2006), *Child Labour Eradication: Problems, Awareness and Measures*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd.

Sinha, S.K. (1991), *Child Labour in Calcutta: A Sociological Study*, Calcutta: Naya Prokash.

Unit Level Records of NSS; <http://labour.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Divisions/childlabour/NSSOEstimateofChildLabourinMajorIndianStates.pdf>, retrieved 22.12.2014, at 2.35 a.m.

What is Wrong with Child Labour?; <http://civilserviceindia.blogspot.in/2010/11/what-is-wrong-with-child-labour.html>, retrieved 13.10.2012, at 2.30 p.m.

CHAPTER II: CHILD AND THE CHILD WORKER

Who is Child?

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 Section 2 (k) defines “juvenile” or “Child” as a person who has not completed eighteenth year of age. According to the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 Section 2 (ii) “Child” means a person who has not completed the age of 14 years. As per Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 Section 2 (a) “Child” means a person who, if a male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if a female, has not completed eighteen years of age. According to Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 Section 2 (a) “Child” means a person who has not completed the age of sixteen years (Who is a Juvenile?; http://dpju.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=11, retrieved 12.09.2013, at 04.20 p.m.). Generally a child is defined using age criterion. However, the socio-cultural meaning of the child is different. In fact, from a little child to aged person everybody is always treated as child by their parents. A ‘child’ as a social being can however not be defined mainly through an age criterion. Childhood has its relevance in terms of persons’ social acceptance as adults; generally by providing a space for participation in social affairs with an autonomous identity. Now the question is whether the ‘participation as an independent identity’ becomes the classifying factor, which in turn, will mean that children cannot participate as independent members?

We know all that determining the basic dividing line between child and adult in terms of characteristics would involve analysis of diverse issues. Some examples are criterions such as puberty, marriage, education, acquiring skills etc. Most of these are very particularistic to culture, and often very difficult to generalize. It is not untrue, that in certain societies, even work is a criterion of deciding adulthood status. Here, it is not argued that our criterion should be education or work or something else to define childhood, but to make a point that a ‘legal’ age-based definition of child exists in a society, where children are viewed from various other perspectives, which all cannot be

ignored. A universalistic way of defining childhood may lead to developing a monolithic concept of childhood, unrelated to social aspects.

Childhood as “a social construct varies over time and space” was never an unacceptable view. But laws have their own strength and limitations. A legal system, with state as an impartial institution, requires a neutral standard to classify all persons into child and adult. This is supported by human obsession with quantification, measurement and precision that there is always a tendency to, in Foucaultian term, ‘mathematize’ social constructs. In the process, any method, other than age criterion, of defining childhood is subjected to a rigorous test of subjectivity and practicability, in which any criterion rooted in social system, will fail.

Therefore, the widely accepted notion of defining children is age criterion, which, however, is also not without problems. As regards to children, especially child labour, the “rigid age criteria are of little help” because the phenomenon of child labour encompasses “(biological) juveniles doing ‘adult’ work and (biological) adults who are still defined in work-relations as minors.... And thus subject to various forms of exploitation and loss of autonomy which social adults do not face”. While, the first case of “biological juveniles doing adult work” requires challenging certain social notions of childhood, the latter of (biological) adults still defined as minors necessitates an analysis because here the biological criterion denies (social) children their identity of ‘child’, and therefore protection.

Another, immediate fallout of classifying persons on the basis of age, or for that matter any classification is the acceptance of a hierarchy between child and adult institutionalised through age-based system. While adults are accepted to be in the state of (human) beings, children are believed to be in the stage of ‘becoming’, with child as an inferior version of the adult “as a lovable, spontaneous, delicate being who is also simultaneously dependent, unreliable and willful and thus, as a being who needs to be guided, protected and educated as a ward”. In other words, the fact that children need protection as well as development was unfortunately based on the premise that childhood

is a perfect transitional stage on the way to adulthood, normality, full socialisation and humanness (Child Rights and You: 2-3).

Child Population in India: As per 2001 Census, children in the age group of 0-14 constituted about 360 million and accounted for 35.3 per cent of total population. Children in the 5-14 age group constituted about 251 million and accounted for 24.6 per cent of the population (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Percentage of Children in Total Population

Age group	1991	2001	2006	2011
0-4	12.0	10.7	10.4	9.3
5-9	13.2	12.5	10.7	10.5
10-14	11.9	12.1	11.0	11.0
5-14	25.1	24.6	21.7	21.4
0-14	37.2	35.3	32.1	30.8

Source: Population Census 1991, 2001 and Population Projections, based on 2001 Census of India (2006) including J & K; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft), and Census of India 2011.

Definition of Child Worker

In this study, child is defined in terms of age. Only the population aged 5-14 is taken as child population. There is no universally accepted definition of child work/labour. There is also no single opinion as to whether a child engaged in family occupations- full time or part time- but contributing to the family income should be considered as a child labour/worker. Similarly, whether a child engaged in jobs like news paper vending in the morning for an hour or so for a monetary consideration be regarded as a child labour/worker. So also the options differ as to whether the children who are self employment for their own survival, like rag pickers and also the street children who do not have any body to depend on could be brought within the ambit of the term child labour/worker. There is also a difference of opinion as to whether the children not doing anything-neither employed within or outside the family nor going to school could be considered as child labour/worker. The lack of common understanding, agreement on the meaning of the term, and acceptance of varying interpretations of the problem not only

make the task of identifying and determining the magnitude of the problem and the ways and means of tackling/eliminating the problem onerous (Patil, 1997: 170).

The definition of child labour is not uniform all over the world. It is by no means the same in all statutes that refer to the employment of children. Whenever the business wage earning, cattle rearing, baby-sitting of younger siblings, helping parents in hazardous jobs or in family vacations conflicts directly or indirectly with the normal growth, educations, playing games, enjoying fun of child, the result is 'child labour'. A child worker is a person in the age group of 5-14 years employed for hire or reward on a full time or part time basis or self-employed as assisting his/her parents in their occupations for two or more hours a day (Kaldate, 1997: 68). Regarding the distinction between child work and child labour, G.K. Lienten argues that the concept of child work should be used as the generic term, and would refer to "any type of work being done in an mode of employment relationship and for any purpose; it should serve as a description of the physical (or mental) involvement in a job", while the concept of (child) labour should be "restricted to the production of goods and services, including work in the household, that interfere with the normative development of children as defined in the 1989 the UN Convention on the Rights of the child" (Crawford, 2000).

Child work is accepted as it is considered as a child's contribution to her own survival as well as the survival of the family. Child work is child labour when it threatens the survival, protection and development of children (Child Rights and You: 11).

For Anthropologists child labour and child work are problems of different orders. Child labour as distinguishing from work experience has mostly negative attributes. Child work takes the form of child labour when it involves one or more of the following elements:

1. Longer hours of work on a regular full-time basis,
2. Hazardous in working conditions (physically or mentally),
3. No or insufficient access, attendance or progress in school,
4. Abusive treatment by the employer and,
5. Work in slave-like arrangements (bonded labour).

However, NGO's perception of child labour is different from all of the above perspectives. Their definition of child labour is a broader one and encompasses every non-school going child, irrespective of whether he/she is engaged in wage work, self employed or working for others, employed in hazardous or non-hazardous occupations, employed on daily wage or on a contract basis as bonded labours. Every child who is out of school is a child labour or potential labour (Panigrahi, 2003: 38).

The term child labour is, at times, used as synonym for employed child or working child. But a working child is one who subjects himself or herself to work, unpaid or free, instead of being at the school at a tender and formative stage of his or her life. The Operation Research Group (ORG) in India defines a working child as ".....a child failing within 5-15 age brackets and who is at remunerative work, maybe paid or unpaid and busy at any hour of the day within or outside the family" (Rehman, 1992; cited in Panigrahi, 1997: 50). Any adequate conception of child labour being's with the child himself, his nature and his needs both present and future (Panigrahi, 1997: 50).

Characteristics of Working Children: Considering the wide variation in different definitions of child labour and the absence of a commonly accepted definition, the following characteristics maybe considered as the distinguishing marks of child labour whether it is within the family or outside the family, paid or unpaid:

1. Employing children of tender age children who have not completed the age of 14 years.
2. Exploitation of children adversely affecting their physical, emotional and social development.
3. Deprivation of the right of the children to health, education and a happy childhood.

Work by children in the family would be considered 'child labour' if family labour interferes with the child's education, recreation and has physical, mental or moral health. "When the business of wage earning or if participation in self or family support conflicts directly or indirectly with the business of growth and education, the result is child labour" (Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, cited in Dak, 2002: 5-6).

Categorization of Working Children: The International Labour Conference held in 1983 used this categorization to explain all the activities performed by children. The report adopted the first five categories of activities as 'economic activities in which children participate'. In official Statistics (NSSO), tied or bonded labour and major part of marginal activities are generally characterized as 'labour' or 'work', but domestic work is characterized as 'domestic activities'.

The five categories of child activities are stated briefly-

(i) *Domestic Work:* Children undertake domestic chores in almost all societies. This may take the form of simple cleaning tasks and washing clothes to sibling-care and fetching water or collecting fire wood, depending on the nature of household needs. Many of these domestic works are not imposed upon children; nonetheless often they are 'actively' promoted in the name of child-rearing process. Although apparently non-exploitative, there are certain aspects of domestic work that requires investigation and analyses. The first aspect is the unfortunate status of 'domestic chores' itself being viewed as odd jobs or errands. These tasks most often do not come under the definition of 'economic activities', and are rarely reflected in the official statistics. Therefore the children performing domestic tasks are not even categorized as child workers, although they may be spending a long time on performing these tasks every day. Related to this is the second aspect of gender stereotyping of these domestic chores. Firstly, the inferior status of domestic work within the larger category of 'work' matches in inferior status of woman and children within society, and therefore there is a view that entire 'domestic work' comes within the responsibility of women and children. Secondly, within domestic chores, there is a gender stereotyping of domestic work between boys and girls, in such a way that girls get to learn all those tasks that women are 'supposed' to do in the society. The 'domestic work' becomes a tool in the hands of the society to perpetuate the intra household division of labour between men and women, which has a wider ramification in the adult society in terms of perpetuating the inferior status of women as dependents. Thirdly, related to the first two, the domestic work may also lead to deprivation of child rights, especially for girls. Children are not sent to school or are often withdrawn from schools to act as domestic adult substitutes for performing domestic chores, especially

sibling care. The child's right to development and protection is generally overlooked because of the assumption that exploitative relations do not exist within the family (Goddard and White, 1982)

(ii) *Non-Domestic, Non-Monetary Work*: According to the report of ILC, 1983, this forms a major part of child activity in subsistence communities, encompassing from work, and collection of goods, tailoring, weaving etc. Although these activities are non-domestic, they are non-remunerative as well, and therefore do not qualify for being part of the conventional definition of 'labour' or 'work'. NSSO captures these activities of children as well.

(iii) and (iv) *Bonded Labour and Wage Labour*: Bonded labour arises as one of the obligations to landlords/ occupiers whereby children's labour is pledge as part-payment of the debts. The parents in need of money have no other option but to pledge children's services against a paltry sum. Although poverty and absence of livelihood options are cited as the major reasons for bonded labour, it is actually, demand factors, which attribute value to child labour. The process of bonded labour has in fact been interpreted broadly by the Indian Judiciary so as to include those employments that do not provide minimum wage to the workers.

The wage employment covers "children working as part of a family group or individually in agriculture, manufacturing and services, either on a piece rate or time rate basis, as regular or casual workers". Children as part of a family group are very common in agriculture production. In the last two decades, with greater informalization of manufacturing sector, such a system can widely be seen in manufacturing sector as well, such as in carpet-making, *bidi*¹ industry etc. In both cases, the relations of production actually play a major role in creating exploitative conditions of child labour, as children do not work within the 'protective' realm of the family, and even if they do, the external relations of production overshadows the other relations.

¹ *Bidi*: It is a type of cheap cigarette made of unprocessed tobacco wrapped in leaves.

(v) Marginal Economic Activities: These activities are “typically characterized by their irregularly and short-time nature, through some of those individuals practicing the activities may do so on a regular, long term basis”. This type of work includes the selling of news papers, sweets and other small items; running errands; shining shoes and sorting rubbish. Most of the activities undertaken by street children as part of their livelihood needs come under this category. In most of the cases, street children are ‘self employed’, in the sense that children are not under one employer. However, that does not discount the incidence of exploitative elements, as children work and live under difficult circumstances. This category also includes theft, prostitution and other activities, but due to their being illegal, the activities are positioned as a different category altogether. Especially significant in the case of prostitution, sex workers (Child Rights and You: 8-9).

UNICEF Classification of Child Work

A more systematic classification of the specific types of work in which concentrations of urban children in India are found is given as under by the UNICEF-

Within the Family (unpaid): (a) Domestic/house-hold tasks (cooking, child care, fetching water, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, poultry), these are termed as ‘invisible work’; (b) Handicrafts/cottage industries (weaving, basketry, leather work and household industries in the urban informal sector).

With the Family but Outside the Home: (a) Domestic services; (b) Construction work (e.g. building, roads); (c) Mining (e.g. quarry, mines); (d) ‘Informal economy’ (e.g. laundry, recycling rubbish): Employed by others; and self employed.

Outside the Family: (a) Employed by others: tied/bonded/slave; apprentices; skilled trades (e.g. carpets, embroidery, brassware works, gem polishing); industries/ unskilled occupations, mines etc.; domestics (e.g. maids of all work); commercial (e.g. shops, restaurants); begging, and prostitution and pornography; and (b) Self-employed, informal sector work (e.g. shoe-shining, car washing, recycling rubbish, running errands, selling news paper).

The Committee on Child Labour (1979) has observed concentration of child workers in seventeen main occupations: 1. Agriculture; 2. Plantations; 3. Mining and quarrying; 4. *Bidis*; 5. Glass and bangles; 6. Handloom and carpet weaving; 7. *Zari*² and embroidery; 8. Gem cutting and polishing; 9. Match and fireworks; 10. Machine tools; 11. Cashew processing and manufacturing of coir products; 12. Domestic workers; 13. Helpers in hotels, restaurants, canteens, tea stalls, shops and way-side establishment; 14. Rag-picking; 15. Construction; 16. Hawkers; vendors; newspaper sellers; and 17. Coolies etc.

Location-Specific Occupations Employing Children

This list covers only some of the known employments employing the child labour. Child labour is widespread and found in many other employments besides the ones listed above. In the home based cottage industries as well as other specialized industries, female children are preferred. Girls are found in large numbers of readymade garments fabrics in Lucknow, fire-works in Sivakasi, lock industry in Aligarh, carpet weaving in Jammu and Kashmir, *bidi* industry all over India, gem-polishing industry in Jaipur, coir industry in Kerala and in embroidery, block making, book binding, plastic etc. According to a report on the Delhi-based garment industry, it employs approximately 10,000 women, among them are a large number of young girls of eight or nine years who have never attended schools. The location-specific occupations where child labour is employed are given below:

1. Domestic workers – everywhere – male and female.
2. Agriculture – everywhere – male and female.
3. Plantation – Assam tea gardens.
4. Mining and stone quarrying – Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya (Mining).
5. *Bidis* – Tamil Nadu, Kerala.
6. Glass and bangles – Firozabad (Uttar Pradesh).

² **Zari:** *Zari* is a type of gold thread used decoratively on Indian clothing.

7. Handloom – Tamil Nadu.
8. Power loom – Bhiwandi in Maharashtra.
9. Carpet weaving – Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.
10. *Zari* and embroidery – Lucknow.
11. Gem cutting and polishing – Jaipur (Rajasthan).
12. Diamond cutting and polishing – Surat (Gujrat).
13. Match and fireworks – Sivakasi (Tamil Nadu).
14. Machine tools, repair shops, garages and petrol pumps – Delhi, Wazipur, Calcutta and Madras.
15. Cashew processing and manufacture of coir products – Kerala.
16. Helpers in hotels, restaurants, canteens, tea stalls, shops and way-side establishments – everywhere.
17. Rag-picking – Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.
18. Construction – everywhere.
19. Hawkers, Vendors, Newspaper Sellers – Everywhere.
20. Coolies – everywhere.
21. Fishing – Kerala, Tamilnadu.
22. Pottery units – Khurja (Uttar Pradesh).
23. Lock industry – Aligarh.
24. Bonded labour – Medak District (Andhra Pradesh).
25. State industry – Mandsaur (Madhya Pradesh).
26. Brick-kiln industry – Delhi and Bihar.
27. Small scale industry – New Delhi.
28. Street children – all metropolitan cities (Dak, 2002: 12-15)

Table 2.2: Estimated Percentage of Economically Active Children in Different Regions of the World

Asia	Per cent	Africa	Per cent	Latin America	Per cent	Europe, Oceania, Middle East	Per cent
Bhutan	55.10	Mali	54.53	Haiti	25.30	Portugal	1.76
East Timor	45.39	Burkina Faso	51.05	Guatemala	16.22	Albania	1.11
Nepal	45.18	Burundi	48.97	Brazil	16.09	Italy	0.38
Bangladesh	30.12	Uganda	45.31	Dominican rep.	16.06	Hungary	0.17
Pakistan	17.67	Niger	45.17	Bolivia	14.36	Romania	0.17
Thailand	16.22	Ethiopia	42.30	Nicaragua	14.05	Solomon Island	28.89
India	14.37	Kenya	41.27	Paraguay	7.87	Papua New Guinea	19.31
China	11.55	Senegal	31.36	Mexico	6.73	Polynesia	3.67
Indonesia	9.55	Zimbabwe	29.44	Colombia	6.62	Turkey	24.00
Viet Nam	9.12	Nigeria	25.75	Costa Rica	5.48	Yemen	20.15
Philippines	8.04	Cameroon	25.25	Argentina	4.53	Syrian Arab rep.	5.78
Malaysia	3.16	Cot deivoir	20.46	Peru	2.48	Iran	4.71
Hong Kong	0.00	Zambia	16.27	Uruguay	2.08	Iraq	2.95
Japan	0.0	Ghana	13.27	Venezuela	0.95	Jordan	0.68
		Egypt	11.23	Chile	0.00	Saudi Arabia	0.00
		Morocco	5.61	Cuba	0.00		
		Algeria	1.63				
		South Africa	0.00				
		Tunisia	0.00				

Source: Economically active population, Estimates and projections, 1950-2010. Fourth edition (unpublished-data available from the ILO Bureau of Statistics), International Labour Office, Geneva, as reported in ILO, World of Work, No. 16, 1996: 13; cited in Chaudhuri, 1997: 20.

Magnitude of Child Labour Across Major States in India (Census Data)

As per the census data, the trend on the magnitude of child labour is not uniform across the country. There is across the board decline in the incidence of child labour in the Southern and Western Indian States and UTs between 1991 and 2001. However, there has been an increasing trend in the Eastern and North Indian States and UTs. There is an

increase in the absolute magnitude of child labour between 1991 and 2001 in the states of UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. If we combine the bifurcated states from MP, UP and Bihar the increase in magnitude is much more than what is seen in the divided states. While the Kerala and Tamil Nadu stories are well known, it is heartening to see that the state of Andhra Pradesh, that had a dubious distinction of having the largest child labour force in the country, shows reduction in magnitude of child labour and work participation rates along with a dramatic increase in the enrolment of children in school. However, Andhra Pradesh is the second largest state in terms of magnitude by 2001 Census. As for as the percentage share of child labour across the states, Uttar Pradesh account for a larger share of about 15 per cent all child workforces in India followed by Andhra Pradesh, with 10.8 per cent. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar respectively garnered 10, 8.8 and eight per cent of India's child employment. The share of Uttar Pradesh has shot up from less than 13 per cent during 1991 to 15.2 per cent in 2001, which is a cause for serious concern. Over 53 per cent of the child labour in India was accounted for by the five states namely UP, AP, Rajasthan, MP and Bihar during 2001. Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal together had about 20 per cent of the child labourers in India during 2001. It is also to be noted here that there is a general increasing trend in the magnitude of child labour in the north east region of the country. Surprising is the case of Himachal Pradesh, which has shown significant increases in school attendance and in literacy levels. However, there is a dramatic increase in the percentage of children in the age-group 5-14 years who are classified as workers, both main and marginal. In Himachal Pradesh, the percentage of child workers has gone up from 5.5 per cent in 1991 to 8.6 per cent in 2001. This is a reflection of the emerging crisis of poorer segments of the population like in many other states (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf)

Table 2.3: Changes in the Magnitude of Child Labour and WPR between 1991 and 2001 (Children in the Age Group of 5-14)

States	Child work	Child workers	Work participation rates		Percentage share of child labour in the state	
			1991	2001	1991	2001
Andhra Pradesh	1661940	1363339	9.98	7.7	14.7	10.8
Arunachal Pradesh	12395	18482	5.65	6.06	0.1	0.1
Assam	327598	351416	5.46	5.07	2.9	2.8
Bihar	942245	1117500	3.99	4.68	8.3	8.8
Chattisgarh (New)		364572		6.96	0.0	2.9
Delhi	27351	41899	1.27	1.35	0.2	0.3
Goa	4656	4138	1.95	1.82	0.0	0.0
Gujarat	523585	485530	5.26	4.28	4.6	3.8
Haryana	109691	253491 ¹⁴	2.55	4.78	1.0	2.0
Himachal Pradesh	56438	107774	4.55	8.14	0.5	0.9
Jammu & Kashmir		175630		6.62	0.0	1.4
Jharkhand(New)		407200		5.47	0.0	3.2
Karnataka	976247	822665	8.81	6.91	8.7	6.5
Kerala	34800	26156	0.58	0.47	0.3	0.2
Madhya Pradesh	1352563	1065259	8.08	6.71	12.0	8.4
Maharashtra	1068418	764075	5.73	3.54	9.5	6.0
Orissa	452394	377594	5.87	4.37	4.0	3.0
Punjab	142868	177268	3.04	3.23	1.3	1.4
Rajasthan	774199	1262570	6.46	8.25	6.9	10.0
Sikkim	5598	16457	5.18	12.04	0.0	0.1
Tamil Nadu	578889	418801	4.83	3.61	5.1	3.3
Tripura	16478	21756	2.29	2.79	0.1	0.2
Uttar Pradesh	1410086	1927997	3.81	4.04	12.5	15.2
Uttaranchal(New)	-	70183	-	3.24	0.0	0.6
West Bengal	711691	857087	4.16	4.5	6.3	6.8
India	11285349	12666377	5.37	5.0	100.0	100.0

Source: compiled from census of India 1991 and 2001; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft).

Work Participation Rate of Children (5-14): While Sikkim had the highest WPR in the country with 12.04 per cent (child labourers among total children in the age group of 5-14), among major states Rajasthan had the highest WPR with 8.25 per cent during 2001. Himachal Pradesh closely followed Rajasthan with 8.14 per cent. The other states having higher than the national average of 5 per cent WPR for children are Andhra Pradesh (7.7%), Chattisgarh (6.96%), Karnataka (6.91%), Madhya Pradesh (6.71%), J&K,

Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Assam (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf).

NSSO Data on Work Participation Rates of Children: NSSO data reveals that the work participation rates of children have been declining as shown by the census data. While the WPR is insignificant for the children in the age group of 5-9 during 2004-05, it is higher for the children in the age group of 10-14. This shows that enrolment of children in primary schools has improved all over the country since the launching of *Sarva Shiksha Abiyan*³ (SSA) since 2000. However, the dropout rates from schools seems to be higher at the middle school level showing higher WPR for children in the age group of 10- 14. Secondly the WPR is higher in the rural areas than urban areas. The WPR for girl children is higher than boys in general and in rural areas (Table 2.4). While this is the picture that emerges at the all India level, there are states having much higher work participation rates for children (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf).

Table 2.4: Child Workforce Participation Rates in India, 1993-94 to 2004-05 (in %)

Year	Male			Female			All children		
	5-9	10-14	5-14	5-9	10-14	5-14	5-9	10-14	5-14
Combined									
1993-94	0.99	12.08	6.35	1.21	11.64	6.12	1.09	11.88	6.24
1999-00	0.52	7.9	4.14	0.55	7.67	4.01	0.54	7.79	4.08
2004-05	0.25	6.35	3.33	0.28	6.42	3.32	0.26	6.38	3.33
Rural									
1993-94	1.16	13.85	7.20	1.43	14.10	7.26	1.29	13.96	7.23
1999-00	0.59	8.85	4.58	0.65	9.05	4.66	0.62	8.94	4.61
2004-05	0.26	6.80	3.54	0.27	7.42	3.73	0.27	7.09	3.63
Urban									
1993-94	0.47	6.63	3.58	0.48	4.51	2.52	0.48	5.63	3.08
1999-00	0.28	4.88	2.65	0.21	3.40	1.85	0.25	4.18	2.27

³ *Sarva Shiksha Abiyan*: Government of India's flagship programme aimed at the universalisation of elementary education in a time bound manner.

Year	Male			Female			All children		
	5-9	10-14	5-14	5-9	10-14	5-14	5-9	10-14	5-14
2004-05	0.21	4.78	2.59	0.30	3.28	1.89	0.25	4.05	2.25

Source: Derived from Respective Unit Level Records of NSS; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft).

NSSO data 2004-05 reveals that work participation rates for children in the age group of 5-9 is less than one per cent in all the state. However, the WPR for children in the age group of 10-14 remains higher ranging from less than one per cent in Kerala to 12.38 per cent in Andhra Pradesh. WPR of children in the age group of 10-14 is significant in the states of A.P., Chattisgarh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, UP and West Bengal. In these states WPR for children (10-14) is higher than the National average of 6.38 per cent (Table 2.5). These figures are presented below –

Table 2.5: Child Workforce Participation Rates in Major Indian States, 2004-05(in %)

States	5-9	10-14	5-14	All population
A.P	0.56	12.38	6.61	50.48
Assam	0.19	3.44	1.82	38.55
Bihar	0.08	2.90	1.36	31.15
Chhattisgarh	0.35	8.70	4.58	48.65
Delhi	0.00	0.49	0.26	33.21
Goa	0.00	5.35	2.70	35.03
Gujrat	0.14	4.83	2.53	46.79
H.P	0.16	4.97	2.73	52.35
Haryana	0.00	3.28	1.71	40.11
Jharkhand	0.41	4.78	2.48	40.71
Karnataka	0.20	8.49	4.66	49.32
Kerala	0.00	0.39	0.20	39.33
M.P	0.14	5.74	2.82	43.30
Maharashtra	0.22	6.27	3.42	46.63
Orissa	0.50	9.18	4.87	43.64
Punjab	0.05	3.16	1.73	41.65
Rajasthan	0.41	9.42	4.86	43.32
T.N.	0.00	2.83	1.51	48.58
U.P.	0.40	7.73	3.92	36.29
Uttaranchal	0.00	5.07	2.61	43.90
W.B.	0.32	6.45	3.47	38.04
Total	0.26	6.38	3.33	42.02

Source: Derived from Unit Level Records of NSS, 2004-05; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft).

Social Character of Child Labour in India

NSSO data on caste-wise break-up of workforce participation rates indicates that the children among lower castes are more vulnerable to labour related exploitation in India. It is clear that the higher the caste hierarchy, the lower the participation rates of children and vice versa. The NSSO data 2004-05 shows that the children among scheduled tribes are twice likely to be engaged in gainful economic activities than the 'others' essentially drawn from upper castes. Almost close to three per cent of children belonging to scheduled castes are engaged in some form of employment as against two per cent of 'others' castes. When we take the children in the age group of 10-14, the WPR is highest for STs followed by SCs and other castes reflecting the caste hierarchy in the society. The data essentially shows that the children belonging to ST, SC and OBC are more vulnerable to child labour than the other castes (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6: Child Workforce Participation Rates in India by Caste 1993-94 to 2004-05 (in %)

Age Group	STs	SCs	OBCs	Others	All
1993-1994					
5-9	2.85	1.13	N.A.	0.86	1.09
10-14	24.02	13.90	N.A.	10.06	11.88
5-14	12.32	6.97	N.A.	5.33	6.24
1999-2000					
5-9	1.43	0.50	0.56	0.27	0.54
10-14	14.87	8.87	7.96	5.17	7.79
5-14	7.71	4.50	4.14	2.74	4.08
2004-2005					
5-9	0.45	0.22	0.19	0.10	0.20
10-14	7.31	5.26	5.21	3.93	5.12
5-14	3.79	2.80	2.87	2.03	2.74

Source: Derived from Respective Unit Level Records of NSSO; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft).

If we look at the religious categories among working children, the WPR is higher among minority religious communities than that of the children hailing from Hindu groups and others during 2004-05. During the same period, 6.5 per cent of children in the age group 10-14 among Muslim children were engaged in gainful employment as against over 4.5

per cent of Hindu children. The data presented in the below (Table 2.7) also indicates that the decline in WPR among Muslim children is slower than other groups over a period of time. This is reflective of long-term neglect and discrimination of minority religious groups in job market and educational opportunities (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft)).

Table 2.7: Child Workforce Participation Rates by Religion, 1993-94 to 2004-05 (in %)

Age Group	Hindus	Muslims	Others	All
1993-94				
5-9	1.20	0.74	0.28	0.26
10-14	27.12	20.35	18.21	4.90
5-14	8.88	6.36	6.03	2.58
1999-00				
5-9	0.56	0.54	0.20	0.54
10-14	7.91	7.81	5.89	7.79
5-14	4.15	4.00	3.15	4.08
2004-05				
5-9	0.25	0.40	0.04	0.26
10-14	4.71	6.58	3.12	4.90
5-14	2.48	3.47	1.63	2.58

Source: Derived from Respective Unit Level Records of NSSO; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft).

Sectoral Distribution of Child Labour in India

Whatever trend in the magnitude of child labour is shown in the official data, it is a common sight in India to see children engaged in various forms of work, whether paid or unpaid. Despite having legislation against child labour particularly in hazardous industries, children are continued to be engaged in significant numbers in hazardous and non-hazardous sectors (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf).

Reflecting the overall trend in the workforce participation, most of the child employment is concentrated in agriculture and allied activities in India. As revealed by the NSSO data

2004-05, this sector alone account for over two thirds of the child employment. This sector is followed by manufacturing sector which account for 16.55 per cent of child employment. Trade, hotels and restaurant accounts for a significant share of child workers with 8.45 per cent of the total child labour force. Most of these children are employed in the informal sectors of the economy on a casual basis with low wages and long hours of work as revealed by many empirical studies on child labour in India (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf).

Table 2.8: Sectoral Distribution of India's Child Labour, 2004-05

State	Agriculture	Mining & Quar	Mfg.	Elec. Water	Construction	Trade, Hotel	Transport	Finance	Com., Soc	Total
A.P.	68.96	0.96	9.70	0.00	3.20	9.02	1.05	0.00	7.11	100.00
Assam	69.26	1.78	8.42	0.00	1.78	7.76	0.05	0.00	10.96	100.00
Bihar	71.84	0.00	11.16	0.00	0.00	15.49	0.07	0.38	1.05	100.00
Chhattisgarh	87.9	0.00	2.37	0.00	0.86	7.17	0.00	0.00	1.70	100.00
Delhi	0.00	0.00	11.08	0.00	0.00	57.83	0.00	0.00	31.09	100.00
Goa	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.60	0.00	72.46	0.00	22.94	100.00
Gujrat	76.69	1.04	2.58	0.00	0.28	17.77	0.16	0.00	1.48	100.00
H.P.	87.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.71	1.21	0.00	4.66	100.00
Haryana	65.57	0.00	3.81	0.00	7.03	8.08	0.00	0.00	15.51	100.00
Jharkhand	65.28	0.00	14.63	0.00	4.25	12.08	0.66	0.26	2.84	100.00
Karnataka	82.60	0.22	9.27	0.00	1.19	5.73	0.70	0.00	0.30	100.00
Kerala	19.22	0.00	32.78	0.00	0.00	31.95	0.00	0.00	16.05	100.00
M.P.	82.89	0.00	9.93	0.00	1.50	4.33	0.00	0.00	1.34	100.00
Maharastra	82.62	0.00	5.34	0.00	1.92	5.75	0.13	0.14	4.09	100.00
Orissa	73.18	0.88	17.36	0.00	3.25	3.34	0.91	0.00	1.08	100.00
Punjab	67.91	0.00	12.71	0.00	1.16	7.21	2.59	0.00	8.43	100.00
Rajasthan	75.78	0.00	9.60	0.19	2.94	7.26	0.05	3.74	0.44	100.00
T.N.	39.49	0.00	44.55	0.00	5.91	5.68	1.54	0.16	2.68	100.00
U.P.	61.24	0.00	25.34	0.00	0.40	9.73	0.68	0.50	2.11	100.00
Uttaranchal	80.73	0.00	4.72	0.00	5.24	9.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
W.B.	34.57	0.00	43.93	0.00	3.27	9.66	1.19	0.80	6.59	100.00
Total	68.14	0.25	16.55	0.02	1.95	8.45	0.66	0.57	3.41	100.00

Source: Estimated from Unit Level Records of NSSO, 2004-05; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft).

Across states, the general pattern of sectoral distribution of workforce in the economy is observed in the case of child labour also, except in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal where agricultural and allied sectors account for less than 40 per cent of the total child labour force. In fact it is the lowest in Kerala. Tamil Nadu is the highly urbanized state according to 2001 census data and several non-farm occupations in the informal sector is developing and most of the rural population has been involved in more than one activity. Thus, children are also employed in different non-farm occupations in the state. Among manufacturing sector, Tamil Nadu seems to have employed a higher share of its child workers (44.55 %) closely followed by West Bengal (43.93%), (Table 2.8) (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf).

District Level Census Data Analysis on Magnitude of Child Labour

District level data on the magnitude of child labour is available only from the Census data. The other source from where the magnitude of child labour can be derived is the district level SSA. SSA conducts a survey on out of school children every year. But this data is not reliable as this is challenged by many civil society organizations. MV Foundation did an alternative survey in some of the districts in Andhra Pradesh and proved SSA data on out of school children to be grossly underestimated figures. In the absence of any other source of information Census data is useful in looking at the trends in the magnitude of child labour at a district level desegregation. State level data on the magnitude of child labour shows declining trends in certain states and increasing trends in certain other states. This does not give us the trends within the state. Within the state there are regional variations in the trends on magnitude of child labour. For example Andhra Pradesh state as a whole shows declining trend in the magnitude of child labour between 1991 and 2001. However if we look at the district level data three of the top twelve districts having more than 80,000 child labourers are in Andhra Pradesh during 2001. In fact second and third rank goes to Mahbubnagar and Kurnool district with over 130000 child labourers in each of these districts during 2001. The top most district

accounting for highest number of child labourers is Alwar district in Rajasthan with 140318 child labourers during 2001. These are the three districts having more than one lakh child labourers. There are 46 districts in the country having child labourers in the range of 50000 to 100000. Distribution of number of districts by range of magnitude of child labour is presented in Table 2.9 (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft));

http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf.

Table 2.9: Distribution of Number of Districts by Range of Magnitude of Child Labour in India

Range of magnitude of child labour	Number of districts	Percentage to total number of districts in India
Above 1 lakh	3	0.5
>75000 to 1lakh	8	1.4
>50000 to 75000	38	6.5
>25000 to 50000	142	24.3
>10000 to 25000	206	35.3
Below 10000	187	32.0
Total	584	100.00

Source: compiled from Census of India, 2001; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft).

Among the top eleven districts Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal account for three districts each, Rajasthan two districts, and Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka account for one district each. Most of these districts are having NCLP programme since the 9th five year plan period. Ranking of all the 584 district with regard to magnitude of child labour is presented in Table 2.10 (Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf.)

Table 2.10: Magnitude of Child Labour (Main and Marginal) in India 2001 – Top 11 Districts having more than 75,000 Child Labourers

State	District	No. of child labour
Rajasthan	Alwar	140318
Andhrapradesh	Mahbubnagar	138475
Andhrapradesh	Kurnool	138326
Karnataka	Gulbarga	99914
Rajasthan	Jalor	99109
Madhyapradesh	Jhabua	96643
West Bengal	Medinipur	95739
Andhrapradesh	Guntur	92075
West Bengal	Maldah	88556
West Bengal	Murshidabad	87968
Uttar Pradesh	Bulandshahr	85296

Source: Compiled from 2001 Census data; cited in Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft).

Prevalence of Child Labour among Various Social Categories

Table 2.11: Percentage Distribution of Children (Principal and Subsidiary ‘Usual’ Status) By Social Categories: 1999-2000.

	Rural boys				Urban boys			
	SC	SC	Other	Other	SC	SC	Other	Other
Status	5-9	10-14	5-9	10-14	5-9	10-14	5-9	10-14
self employed	0.2	4.1	0.2	3.7	0.3	2.3	0.0	1.1
regular salary wage	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.4
other casual work	0.1	4.4	0.1	2.3	0.2	2.2	0.1	1.4
available for work, unemployment	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.3
	Rural girls				Urban girls			
	SC	SC	Other	Other	SC	SC	Other	Other
Status	5-9	10-14	5-9	10-14	5-9	10-14	5-9	10-14
self employed	0.2	4.3	0.2	3.7	0.4	2.5	0.0	1.4
regular salary wage	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.6
other casual work	0.3	5.4	0.0	2.3	0.1	1.9	0.0	0.6
available for work, unemployment	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2

Source: NSSO Report- 1999-2000; cited in Kak, 2004: 60-61

The share of children from scheduled caste (SC) families in the labour force in 1999-2000 is higher than the non-SC population. For rural boys in the 10-14 years of age group, the labour force participation rate is 9.7 for SC boys and 6.2 for non-SC boys while for urban SC boys it is 5.9 per cent and for non-SC urban boys it is 4.2 per cent for the same age group. The percentage of boys of 10 to 14 years age who works as casual labour in the agricultural and the non-agricultural sectors is 4.4 per cent for SC boys and for non-SC boys it is 2.3 per cent. For urban boys of the same age group these percentages are 2.2 per cent and 1.4 per cent. The participation of SC girls in the labour force like those of the scheduled caste boys is much higher as compared to the non-SC girls. For rural SC girls in the 9-14 years age group, the labour force participation in 1999-2000 is higher at 10.1 per cent as compared to 6.4 for non-SC rural girls and for urban SC girls it is 5.9 per cent as compared to 2.7 per cent for non-SC girls. Many more scheduled castes work as self-employed workers as compared to non-SC girls. Overall, child workers are prevalent in large number amongst poor 'lower' castes and these children work more often as casual labour. As compared to the non-SC children, the SC children in rural and urban areas are employed in larger numbers in all the categories as self employed, salaried and casual workers. Rural boys and girls from poor households provide a ready supply of cheap labour from a very young age. In urban areas, nearly 2.5 per cent of the SC girls of 10 to 14 years of age are self-employed workers, 1.3 per cent are salaried and 1.9 per cent are casual workers as compared to 1.4 per cent, 0.6 per cent and 0.6 per cent for non-SC urban girls of the same age group. Nearly 4.4 per cent of the rural SC boys of 10-14 years of age work as casual labour as compared to 2.3 per cent of the non-SC boys, in urban areas it is 2.2 per cent and 1.4 per cent respectively (Table 2.11), (Kak, 2004: 60-61).

Table 2.12: Activity Distribution of Children – Usual Principal Status – 1999-2000.

Status	Rural boys	Rural girls	Urban boys	Urban girls	Total
Self employed	21220 52.2	17809 55.6	2410 32.1	1519 39.9	42958 5.11
Regular salary wage	2729 6.7	392 1.2	2268 30.2	889 23.4	6278 7.5
Other casual work	15794 38.9	13455 42.0	2410 32.1	1270 33.4	32929 39.2
Available for work, unemployment	899 2.2	392 1.22	427 5.6	127 3.3	1845 2.2
Total in number	40642 100.0	32048 100.0	7515 100.0	3805 100.0	84010 100.0

Source: NSSO Report- 1999-2000; cited in Kak, 2004:57

Table 2.13: Percentage Distribution of Principal and Subsidiary 'Usual Status' of Child Workers: 1987-88 to 1999-2000

	Rural males						Rural females					
	5-9 years of age			10-14 years of age			5-9 years of age			10-14 years of age		
	87-88	93-94	99-00	87-88	93-94	99-00	87-88	93-94	99-00	87-88	93-94	99-00
Self employed	91.4	65.4	71.4	67.7	65.6	55.4	91.7	77.5	71.4	65.2	63.2	62.1
regular salary wage	4.3	6.5	0.0	8.3	5.8	5.4	0.0	1.4	0.0	2.7	2.1	1.1
Other casual work	4.3	28.0	28.6	22.4	28.5	37.0	8.3	21.1	28.6	31.4	34.4	36.8
Available for work, unemployment	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.1	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.3	0.0
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Urban males						Urban females					
	5-9 years of age			10-14 years of age			5-9 years of age			10-14 years of age		
	87-88	93-94	99-00	87-88	93-94	99-00	87-88	93-94	99-00	87-88	93-94	99-00
Self employed	60.0	34.0	33.3	44.6	43.1	34.3	50.0	26.0	100.0	54.5	66.8	50.0

	Rural males						Rural females					
	5-9 years of age			10-14 years of age			5-9 years of age			10-14 years of age		
regular salary wage	20.0	35.7	33.3	26.1	27.3	29.0	25.0	65.6	0.0	18.2	29.1	22.2
Other casual work	20.0	26.8	33.3	21.7	25.3	30.9	25.0	8.4	0.0	25.8	32.9	25.0
Available for work, unemployment	0.0	3.6	0.0	7.6	4.3	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.24	2.8
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NSSO Report- 1999-2000; cited in Kak, 2004:58

The data for 1987-88, 1993-94 and 1999-2000 on the principal and subsidiary activity status of children shows that the nature of employment of child workers has changed over the years. The proportion of children reported as 'casual' labour has increased significantly for all ages particularly if we take the changes occurring over the three Surveys. For the urban girls of 10-14 age cohort, employment as 'casual' and salaried labour in 1999-2000 is higher or equal to that of 1987-88. The proportion of children reported as 'self employed' workers has declined significantly both for boys and girls in rural and urban areas between 1987-88 and 1999-2000. The nature of activities under 'self employed category varies between rural and urban areas. In rural areas, 'self employed' children – work on the family farms and in family occupations mostly of the artisanal variety. A decline in 'self employed' rural children would imply a decline in family farms and artisanal activities and thus a greater dependence on casual labour. In urban areas, 'self employed' child workers are employed as a part of the work force in family enterprises, piece-wage and home based employment. The 'self employed' child workers, therefore, become an extension of unorganised family based occupations and piece wage work. The work done by children stretches over a long working day carried on in unhygienic and cramped dwelling places. The proportion of children employed as 'salaried' workers has also declined in rural areas except for urban girls of 10-14 years age group. Nearly 22 per cent of the urban girls of 10-14 age cohort are employed in

'salaried' jobs. The changes in the nature of employment of child workers indicate that most of the working children are engaged in the low wage unorganised sector. The decline in child workers in the 'self employed' category could be due to increased enrolment in schools. This changes the status of the child to a 'student' but it does not prevent him/her from working on family farms/enterprises (Table 2.13), (Kak, 2004:58-59).

Activity Wise Distribution

The table below uses the NSS, 2000 data to provide a rural/urban dimension of the issue of child labour.

Table 2.14: A Rural/Urban Dimension of the Issue of Child Labour

Children in age (5-14 years)	Rural	Urban	Total
Activities			
Children engaged in "economic activities"	4.50	2.36	4.02
Attended domestic duties only	1.69	1.57	1.67
Attended domestic duties plus free collection of goods, tailoring, weaving for HH only	1.29	0.25	1.06
Not able to work due to disability	0.14	0.15	0.14
Children who are working or could not work due to disability	7.62	4.32	6.88
Attending schools	63.79	80.14	67.44
Nowhere children	20.98	11.22	18.80
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total in Absolute (in 1000s)	190137.1	54695.85	294833.00

Source: NSS, 2000 data; cited in *Child Rights and You: 16*.

In rural areas a large percentage of children (20.98%) are neither in school nor working; and they are very well form part of the age group who should have access to free and compulsory education. These children are not directly contributing to the household income. In other words our education system in rural areas is not able to attract even those 'non working' children to schools. In the urban areas, the percentage of nowhere children is relatively less (11.22%), (Table 2.14), (*Child Rights and You: 16*).

Table 2.15: The Status of Girl Children at Work

Activities	Children of age group (5-14)					
	Number of children (in percentage)			Number of children (in absolute terms in 100's)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Children engaged in "economic activities"	4.18	3.86	4.02	52967	45618	98392
Attended domestic duties only	0.30	3.15	1.67	3770	37208	40788
Attended domestic duties plus free collection of goods, tailoring, weaving for HH only	0.25	1.92	1.06	3178	22693	25897
Children at work	4.73	8.93	6.75	59915	105519	165077
Not able to work due to disability	0.15	0.13	0.14	1931	1594	3392
Children who are working or could not work due to disability	4.88	9.07	6.88	61846	107113	168469
Attending schools	72.98	61.45	67.44	925350	725964	1651186
Nowhere children	17.26	20.42	18.80	218889	241255	460205
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	1267932	1181444	2448330

Source: NSS, 2000 data; cited in Child Rights and You: 18.

If one defines "child labour", merely as children's engagement in economic activities, boys outnumber girls both in relative terms (boys 54% and girls 46%) and in respect to their own population (boys 4.18% and girls 3.86%). However, the proportion changes, when we define child labour broadly to include domestic work as well. While girls form 64 per cent of children at work, only 36 per cent are boys. Similarly, while 8.93 per cent of girls are at work, only 4.73 per cent of boys are at work (Table 2.15) Child Rights and You: 18).

Table 2.16: The Status of Double-Deprived Rural Girl Children

Children Age (5-14 years)	Rural			Urban			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Activities	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Children engaged in "economic activities"	4.59	4.43	4.50	2.75	1.87	2.36	4.18	3.86	4.02
Attended domestic duties only	0.33	3.18	1.69	0.20	3.03	1.57	0.3	3.15	1.67
Attended domestic duties plus free collection of goods, tailoring, weaving for HH only	0.32	2.32	1.29	0.00	0.53	0.25	0.25	1.92	1.06
Children at work	5.24	9.93	7.48	2.95	5.43	4.18	4.73	8.93	6.75
Not able to work due to disability	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.19	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.14
Children who are working or could not work due to disability	5.38	10.07	7.62	3.14	5.57	4.32	4.88	9.07	6.88
Attending schools	70.09	56.97	63.79	83.01	77.01	80.14	72.98	61.45	67.44
Nowhere children	19.15	22.89	20.98	10.71	11.84	11.22	17.26	20.42	18.80
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: NSS, 2000 data; cited in Child Rights and You: 19.

The table above portrays the status double-deprived rural girl children. Only 56.97 per cent of rural girls attend schools. Nearly 10 per cent of rural girls are at work. In rural areas, even in case of so-called "economic activities" engagement of girls is almost at par with boys. One important feature is whether urban or rural, domestic duties are stereotyped for female gender (Child Rights and You: 19).

Distribution by Wage Paid

Table 2.17: Wage Paid to Casual Child Labour by Operation 1999-2000

Rural							
	Activity	Average wages/Rs. per day					
		Rural boys	All rural males	Dif/Ratio	Rural girls	All Rural females	Dif/Ratio
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
X	Work in public works	32.8	48.14	0.67	33.04	38.06	0.87
Agriculture hunting	Ag. Operations	27.63	39.09	0.71	22.91	27.91	0.82
Forestry	Plantation animal husbandry	22.86	44.84	0.51	23.6	30.65	0.77
	Other than cultivation	18.84	42.8	0.44	19.17	29.30	0.65
	Subtotal	26.07	40.02	0.65	22.99	28.25	0.81
Non-agriculture mfg. trade	Manual work in non agriculture	30.90	59.62	0.52	22.52	36.67	0.61
	Activities other than cultivation	32.02	56.49	0.57	24.07	34.98	0.69
	Subtotal	31.37	58.71	0.53	23.11	36.19	0.64
	Total	27.36	44.84	0.61	23.00	29.01	0.79
Urban Wages							
Industry/Division	Average wages/Rs. per day						
	Rural boys	All rural males	Dif/Ratio	Rural girls	All rural females	Dif/Ratio	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Agriculture and related activities	28.67	49.14	0.58	25.19	32.15	0.78	
Mining and quarrying	60.00	76.65	0.78	12.43	54.67	0.23	
Manufacturing household	31.33	62.88	0.50	24.02	35.64	0.67	
Manufacturing	33.29	69.13	0.48	43.61	50.69	0.85	
Electricity gas steam	-	74.24	-	-	-	-	
Construction	36.33	69.00	0.52	46.43	50.20	0.92	
Hotel restaurant	21.51	53.65	0.40	22.34	45.63	0.49	
Wholesale trade	17.89	63.64	0.28	71.43	49.48	1.44	
Retail trade storage	42.86	64.85	0.66	-	32.83	-	
Communication community service	43.69	55.19	0.79	25.19	28.95	0.87	
Subtotal non agriculture	28.8	64.27	0.45	32.24	40.18	0.80	
Total	28.8	62.26	0.46	30.99	37.71	0.82	

Source: NSSO Report- 1999-2000; cited in Kak, 2004: 62.

Children are paid much less than the wages paid to adult workers. Male child workers get a wage of Rs. 27.36 per day on an average as compare to 'all' male wage of Rs. 44.84 in rural areas. For male child workers in urban areas, the average wage is Rs. 23 as compare to 'all' male wage rate of Rs. 62 per day. For male child workers the wage rate is Rs. 23 in rural areas and Rs 31 in urban areas. The exploitative nature of wages paid to children is clear from the evidence. For various agriculture operation, hunting and forecasting, rural male workers are paid on an average Rs. 40.02 per day and rural female workers are paid Rs. 28.25 while male child workers are paid Rs. 26.07 and female child workers are paid Rs. 22.99; for manufacturing and non manual work in agriculture, adult rural male workers are paid Rs. 58.71, adult women workers Rs. 36.19, rural male child workers Rs. 31.37 and female child workers Rs. 23.11 per day (Kak, 2004: 61-63).

Children working in urban areas also receive lower wages than their adult counterparts. In 'whole sell rate', male child workers received 28 per cent of the wage paid to the adult male workers in urban areas in 1999-2000. In 'hotels and restaurants', male child workers are paid 40 per cent of the wage paid to adult workers in 'household manufacturing' it is 50 per cent, in 'factory manufacturing' 18 per cent and in construction 52 per cent for the same years. For urban female child workers, wages for all operation are lower than the wages for urban male child workers (except for hotels and trade). The gap between the wages of female child labour and adult female labour is narrower than that of male child workers and adult male workers, as the wages for adult female labour are much lower than the wages paid to adult male workers. In fact, the wages of adult female workers at times equal to or less than the wages paid to male child workers (Kak, 2004: 63).

Distribution Based on Age Specific Work Participation

Table 2.18: Age Specific Usual Status Work Participation Ratios 1987-88 to 1999-2000 All India (out of 1000)

Age group	Rural males			Urban males			Rural females			Urban females		
	1987-1988	1993-1994	1999-2000	1987-1988	1993-1994	1999-2000	1987-1988	1993-1994	1999-2000	1987-1988	1993-1994	1999-2000
5-9	23	11	6	5	8	3	24	14	7	3	5	2
10-14	140	138	91	85	66	49	182	141	96	65	45	36

Source: Amitabh Kundu, 2001; cited in Kak, 2004: 52

In rural areas the work participation rate for male child workers decline nearly 4.7 percentage points for 10-14 age cohort during this period and in urban areas the decline was 1.7 percentage for the same age cohort. The decline in the number of child workers has to be seen in the context of declaration in economic activity, decline in the work participation ratio across all age group particularly between 1993-94 and 1999-2000, under-reporting of child workers in view of the international campaign against the use of child labour, midday meal schemes being operated in some states and pressure brought upon parents not to report their children as workers.

It is argued in some studies that the decline in child labour is result of increasing number of children attending schools. However, it is to be noted that the access to school education varies on class, caste, gender and urban/rural factors. The majority of the child workers come from rural areas where the quality and availability of school education is extremely poor. The evidence indicates that the momentum gained in terms of school attendance between 1987-88 and 1993-94 got dissipated between 1993-94 and 1999-2000 (Kak, 2004: 52-53).

Distribution As Estimated By Different Organizations

Table 2.19: Magnitude of Child Labour As Estimated by Different Organizations

Year	Extent of child labour	Agency/Source
1971	10.74 Million	Census
1972-73	16.33 Million	27 th Round of NSS
1975	15.10 Million	ILO
1981	13.60 Million	Census
1983	17.36 Million	38 th Round of NSS
1983	44.00 Million	ORG Baroda
1985	111.00 Million	Balai Manila
1987-88	17.02 Million	43 rd Round of NSS
1991	23.02 Million	D.P. Chaudhri
1994	20.00 Million	Labour Ministry
1995	74.80 Million	CACL
1996	140.00 Million	Rashmi Sehgal
1996	35.00 Million	UNICEF
1997	73.00 Million	UNICEF

Source: Patil, 1997: 174.

Industries Wise Distribution

Table 2.20: The Approximate Number of Children Employed in Different Industries

Industry	Location	Estimated number of children employed
Match & Fireworks	Sivkasi (Tamil Nadu)	50,000
Stone Quarries	Kerala	20,000
Lead Mines	Meghalaya	28,000
Fishing freezing and Processing	Quilon (Kerala)	20,000
Handloom Industry	Trivandrum (Kerala)	10,000
	Tiruppur	8,000
	Bhiwandi (Maharastra)	15,000
<i>Bidi</i> Industry	Tiruchirapalli (Tamil Nadu)	7,000
	Trichur (Kerala)	7,000
Lock Industry	Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh)	10,000
Handicraft Ind.	Jammu & Kashmir	27,000
Carpet Weaving	Kashmir	50,000
	Varansi-Bhadohi	1,50,000
	Mirzapur	1,40,000
	Rajasthan	30,000
Glass Industry	Firozabad (Uttar Pradesh)	50,000
Gem Polishing	Jaipur (Rajasthan)	13,000
Coir Industry	Kerala	80,000
Pottery	Khurja (Uttar Pradesh)	5,000
Brassware	Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh)	24,000

Source: Dak, 2002: 15.

Distribution Based on Type of Employment

Table 2.21: Distribution of Rural Casual Child Labour on the basis of Type of Employment

		1999-2000			All India (00)		
		Estd. person days for rural boys	Estd. person days for all rural male population	%	Estd. person days for rural girls	Estd. person days for all rural female population	%
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
X	Casual work in public works	346	29510	1.17	1011	10197	9.91
Agriculture hunting	Agri operations	43402	2064882	2.10	45500	1292153	3.5
	Plantation animal husbandry	17284	375779	4.60	9740	175721	5.54
	Other than cultivation	1732	41842	3.28	627	1492	4.21
	Subtotal	62418	2482507	2.5	55866	1482776	3.77
Non-agriculture mfg. trade	Manual work in non agriculture	11678	612771	1.91	4234	1122295	0.38
	Activities other than cultivation	8420	249878	3.37	2585	44511	5.81
	Subtotal	20098	862649	2.33	6819	156805	4.35
	Total	82516	3345157	2.47	62685	1639581	3.82

Source: NSSO Report- 1999-2000; cited in Kak, 2004: 59.

Table 2.22: Distribution of Urban Casual Child Labour on the basis of Type of Employment

	1999-2000			All India Urban' 00		
	Estd. person days for urban boys	Estd. person days for all urban male population	%	Estd. person days for urban girls	Estd. person days for all urban female population	%
Agriculture and related activities	1195	75520	1.6	1195	48207	2.48
Mining and quarrying	79	8501	0.93	79	1439	5.49
Manufacturing households	1108	73097	1.52	1108	13877	7.98
Manufacturing	845	49750	1.70	845	9268	9.12
Electricity gas steam	-	938	-	-	-	-
Construction	1211	190316	0.64	1211	33072	3.66
Trade, hotel, restaurant	393	80572	0.49	393	9402	4.18
Transport	26	56876	5.05	26	1123	2.32
Retail trade storage, financial service	-	3741	-	-	383	-
Public admn, community service	1874	29420	6.35	1874	39638	4.73
Subtotal non agriculture	5536	493283	1.12	5536	108203	5.12
Total	6731	568803	1.18	6731	156410	4.30

Source: NSSO Report- 1999-2000; cited in Kak, 2004: 60.

The proportion of male and female 'casual' child labour in the total 'casual' labour category is highly significant. In rural areas, male child labour constituted 2.47 per cent of the total casual percentage employed in 1999-2000; for rural female child labour, it is 3.82 per cent for the same years. Children are employed as 'casual' workers in a range of activities. The percentage share of days of wage work by young rural boys varies from 4.60 for plantation work, animal husbandry, forestry, fisheries and other agriculture work,

3.37 for activities other than cultivation and 3.28 per cent for non manual working cultivation. Among rural girls, the share of days for wage work was 9.91 per cent for casual work in civil works and 5.81 for activities other than the cultivation. At the all India level, urban female child labour constituted 4.3 per cent of the total casual person days employed. The share of urban girls is 9.12 per cent in manufacturing, 7.98 per cent in the household industry and 5.49 in mining and quarrying. For urban boys of 5-14 years of age, the share of 'casual' work days is 6.35 per cent in public administration and community services. Overall child workers contribute very significantly to various economic activities as casual labour. Many of these activities are in the unorganised sector where labour laws are not implemented and check is maintained on the quality of facilities available at work place (Kak, 2004: 56-90).

A child is generally defined through an age criterion. A person who has not completed the age of 14 years is treated as child. However, the social meaning of child is different where all the persons are treated as child by their parents. The basic criterions between child and adult are puberty, marriage and education, acquiring skills etc. and many of these criterions are very particularistic to culture and even sometimes very hard to generalize. But the literal meaning of child is different and depends on age criterion. Presently 1/3rd of the total population belong to children (0-14 years age group) and around 1/4th of the total population of India are in the age group of 5-14 years. Children are the future of a nation and therefore, they need a right kind of development. But all the children are not treated equally and due to various reasons the well and equal development of these children is not being possible. For survival many of them have to work in several organized and unorganized sectors. A child worker is defined in the age group of 5-14 years involved in work either on full time or part time basis. Child labour as distinguishing from work experience has mostly negative attributes. Child work is child labour when it threatens the survival, protection and development of children. A child would be considered child labour if the work interferes with the child's education, recreation and has physical, mental or moral health. The child work is not a problem in India only but all over the world. The number of working children is higher especially in the third world countries including India. Nearly 1/6th children aged 5-14 years in the world are employed in different occupations. The worldwide distribution of child labour

shows that, a major percentage of children in Bhutan are economically active followed by Mali, Haiti and Portugal. Within Asia, majority of children in Bhutan are involved in work followed by East Timor, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Thailand and India. In India around 14 per cent of total children are economically active. In this regard, among the major Indian States the work participation rate (WPR) is higher in Andhra Pradesh than that of the children in Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujrat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal during 2004-05. The work participation rate (WPR) is lower in West Bengal than that of the children in other major Indian States. It is the fact that the work participation rate (WPR) is higher among male children than that of the female children during 2004-05. If we look at the caste categories among the working children, the work participation rate (WPR) is higher among scheduled tribes than that of the children hailing from other backward classes, scheduled castes and others during 2004-05. But in case of religious categories, the work participation rate (WPR) is higher among minority religious communities than that of the children hailing from Hindu groups and others during 2004-05. In India, the location-specific occupations where child labour is employed are domestic workers: everywhere; agriculture: everywhere; plantation: Assam tea gardens; mining and stone quarrying: Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya (Mining); *bidis*: Tamil Nadu, Kerala; glass and bangles: Firozabad (Uttar Pradesh); handloom: Tamil Nadu, power loom: Bhiwandi in Maharashtra; carpet weaving: Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan; *zari* and embroidery: Lucknow; gem cutting and polishing: Jaipur (Rajasthan); diamond cutting and polishing: Surat (Gujrat); match and fireworks: Sivakasi (Tamil Nadu); machine tools, repair shops, garages and petrol pumps: Delhi, Wazipur, Calcutta and Madras; cashew processing and manufacture of coir products: Kerala; helpers in hotels, restaurants, canteens, tea stalls, shops and way-side establishments: everywhere; rag-picking: Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras; construction: everywhere; hawkers, vendors, newspaper sellers: everywhere; coolies: everywhere; fishing: Kerala, Tamilnadu, pottery units: Khurja (Uttar Pradesh); lock industry: Aligarh; bonded labour: Medak District (Andhra Pradesh); state industry: Mandsaur (Madhya Pradesh); rick-kiln industry: Delhi and Bihar; small scale industry: New Delhi; and street children: all

metropolitan cities. However, the sectoral distribution of India's child labours during 2004-05 shows that most of the child employment is concentrated in agricultural and allied activities followed by manufacturing and trade and hotel sectors. In this regard, the involvement of children in agricultural sector is higher in Chhattisgarh followed by Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttaranchal, Gujrat, Rajasthan, Orissa, Bihar, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kerala. Among the manufacturing sector, Tamil Nadu have employed a higher share of its child workers closely followed by West Bengal and among the trade and hotel sectors Delhi have employed a higher share of its child workers followed by Kerala. The data on the employment of children in different industries shows that the employment of children is higher in carpet weaving industry than that of the children involved in coir industry, match and fireworks and glass industry, handloom industry, lead mines, handicraft industry, brassware, stone quarries, fishing freezing and processing, *bidi* industry, gem polishing, lock industry, and pottery. Magnitude of child labour in India 2001 shows that top 11 districts in Indian States having more than 75,000 child labourers and among them the number of child labour is higher in Alwar district of Rajasthan followed by Mahbubnagar and Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh, Gulbarga of Karnataka, Jalor of Rajasthan, Jhabua of Madhya Pradesh, Medinipur of West Bengal, Guntur of Andhra Pradesh, Maldah and Murshidabad of West Bengal and Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh. If we look at the wage rate among the working children, they paid much less than the wages paid to adult workers. Children working in both rural and urban areas receive lower wages than their adult counterparts. However, the data on the principal and subsidiary activity status of children during 1987-88, 1993-94 and 1999-2000 shows that the nature of employment of child workers has changed over the years. The changes in the nature of employment of working children indicate that majority of the child workers are involved in the low wage unorganized sector and decline in child workers in the 'self employed' category could be owing to increased enrolment in schools. Most of the child employment is concentrated in agriculture and allied activities in India. The child work is not a problem in India only but all over the world. The number of working children is found high especially in the third world countries including India. They are found in different economic sectors stated in

earlier discussion. Nearly one in six children aged 5-14 in the world are engaged in child labour and a major section of them are found to work in hazardous situations. Besides these, there are so many working children everywhere but invisible, working as domestic servants in homes and millions of girl children get involved in this sector, toiling behind the walls of workshops and also in such hidden sectors.

References

Census of India 2001, Provisional Populations Totals: India, Office of the Registrar General, India.

Census of India 2011, New Delhi: Government of India.

Chaudhuri, D.P. (1997), 'Child labour in India in the Asian perspective – 1951-1956', *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 20.

Child Rights and You; www.cry.org, Pg. 2-19, retrieved 7.11.2009, at 11.25 a.m.

Crawford, 2000; www.cry.org, Pg. 7, retrieved 7.11.2009, at 11.25 a.m.

Dak, T.M. (2002), *Child Labour in India*, Delhi: Serials Publications.

Goddard and White, 1982; www.cry.org, Pg. 8; retrieved 7.11.2009, at 11.25 a.m.

Kak, S. (2004), 'Magnitude and Profile of Child Labour in the 1990s– Evidence from the NSSO data', *Social Scientist*, 32 (1-2): 52-63.

Kaldate, S. (1997), Restoring childhood rights to child labour, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 68.

Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf, retrieved 22.06. 2010, at 2.35 p.m.

Panigrahi, D.K. (1997), 'Child labour in India: A point of view', *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 50-56.

Panigrahi, M. (2003), 'Plight of Child Labour', *Indian Anthropologists*, 33 (2): 38.

Patil, B.R. (1997), 'Eliminating Child Labour: Some national and international initiatives', *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 170-174.

Who is a Juvenile?; http://dpjju.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=11; retrieved 12.09.2013, at 04.20 p.m.

CHAPTER III: AREA AND THE PEOPLE

For the purpose of this study the village Purba Rangia has been selected which falls under Atharakhai Gram Panchayat, Siliguri Sub-division in Darjeeling district, West Bengal. It is a newly established village and the people of this village mostly depend on stone based occupation. However, various institutions, important places are adjacent to the village and particularly the district Darjeeling, it has an importance from various points of view. Its location, climate, scenic beauty, forests, hills and so on are famous in all over the world. In this regard the details of this district are mentioned first and later about the studied village and locality.

District- Darjeeling

Geographical and Administrative location: The district of Darjeeling located at the extreme north of the state, West Bengal which touched the boundary line of Sikkim. The district of Darjeeling lies between $26^{\circ} 31'$ and $27^{\circ} 13'$ north latitude, and between $87^{\circ} 59'$ and $88^{\circ} 53'$ east longitude. The principal town, which is also the administrative headquarters of the district, is Darjeeling, situated in the lower Himalayas in $27^{\circ} 3'$ north latitude and $88^{\circ} 16'$ east longitude. (L.S.S. O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 1).

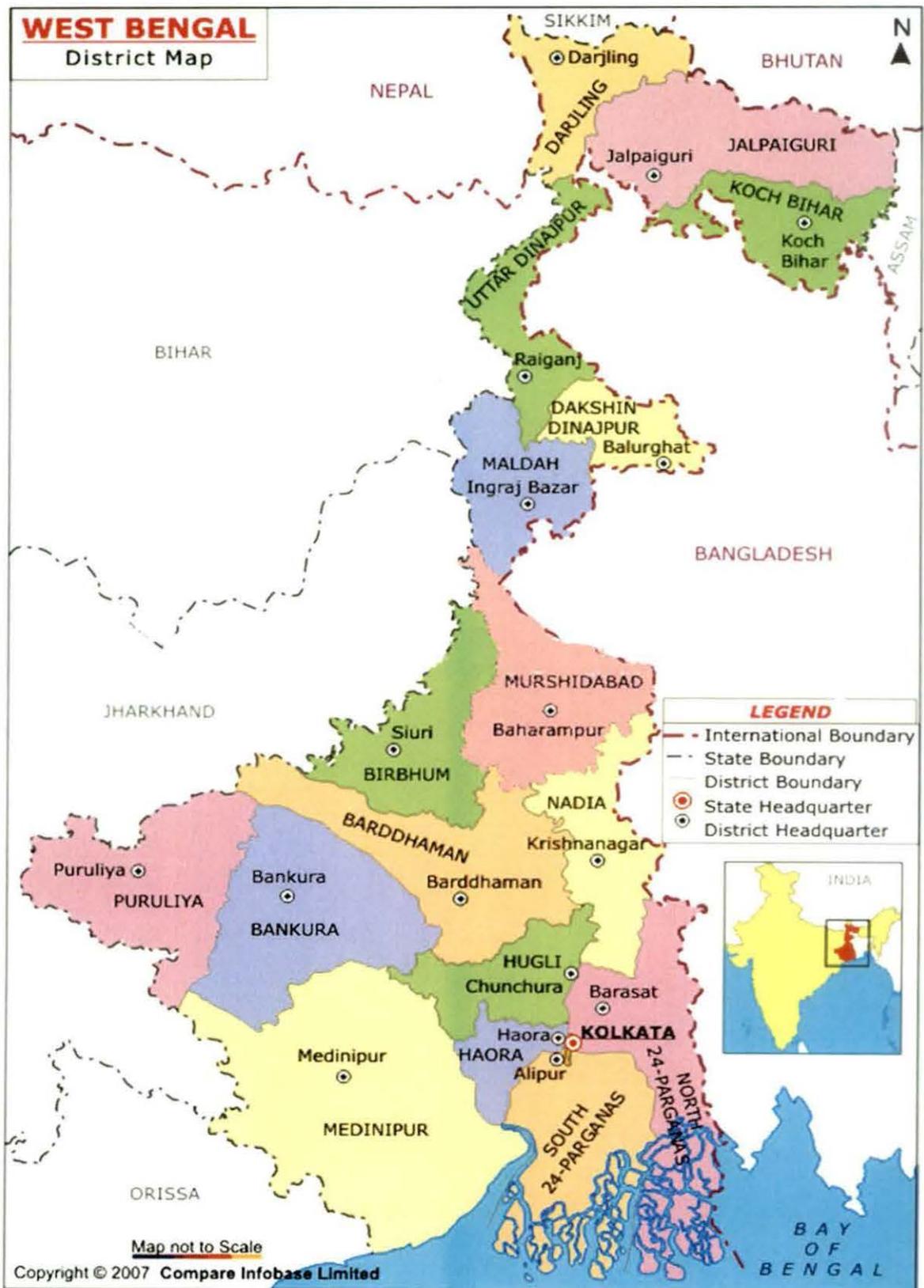
Historical background: The name Darjeeling is a corruption of *dorje*, the precious stone or ecclesiastical sceptre, which is emblematic of the thunderbolt of Sakhra (Indra) and of ling, a place. It means therefore the place of the *dorje*, the mystic thunderbolt of the Lamaist religion, this being the name by which the Buddhist monastery which once stood on Observatory Hill was formerly known.

The history of Darjeeling presents a late chapter in the extension of British rule, for it was not until the beginning of the 19th century that the East India Company was brought into direct relations with the tract of country which now bears the name. The intervention of the British was successful in preventing the Gurkhas from turning the whole of Sikkim and the hills west and south of the Tista into an outlying province of Nepal; and Sikkim,

including the present district of Darjeeling, was retained as a buffer between Nepal and Bhutan. The year 1866 may be taken as marking an epoch in the history of Darjeeling. Peace was established within its borders; and thenceforward began the march of progress and civilization. Rapid progress was now at last made in the development of the communications of the district, which the Sikkim expedition of 1860 and the Bhutanese war the year before had shown to be vitally essential.

The hill territory of Darjeeling having thus been ceded, General Lloyd and Dr. Chapman were sent in 1836 to explore the country, to ascertain the nature of the climate, and to investigate the capabilities of the place. And on receipt of their reports, it was finally decided to adopt Darjeeling as a sanitarium. By 1840 a hotel had been started at Kurseong and a second at Darjeeling; and at the latter place some 30 private houses had been erected, and nearly as many more locations had been taken up at Lebong. According to Captain Herbert, two-thirds of the population of Sikkim, had been forced by the oppression of the Rāja to fly from Darjeeling and its neighbourhood, and to take refuge in Nepal. The Sikkim Raja had prohibited his subjects from going to Darjeeling and helping in establishing the new settlement; and various expedients were proposed to repopulate the country, e.g., to invite the Lepcha refugees to return, to import labourers from the indigo concerns in Rangpur and Ramgarh (i.e. Gaya and Hazaribagh), or to procure settlers from Nepal and Bhutan. For the tea plantations needed labour, more immigrants were consequently attracted to the district, these immigrants had to be fed, clothed and housed, and all this stimulated trade. The Darjeeling is famous for the beauties of the snowy range and colours of snowy mountains. Darjeeling is blessed with the natural beauties of Kanchenjunga. The Swiss Alps, which, though barely possessing half the sublimity, extent, or height of the Himalaya, are yet far more beautiful. The wonderful play of colours on their snowy flanks, from the glowing hues reflected in orange, gold and ruby, from clouds illuminated by the sinking or rising sun, to the ghastly pallor that succeeds with twilight, when the red seems to give place to its complementary colour green. Apart from these, so many eye catching natural beauties are there that make Darjeeling more attractive. However, the two most important factors in the development of the district have been the choice of Darjeeling for a health resort and the subsequent planting of tea in the hills (O'Malley, 1907, reprinted 2001: 1-37, 231).

Map 1: Map of West Bengal



Map 2: Map of Dajeeling District



Geographical setting

Area and Land: It contains a total area of 1,164 sq. miles and consists of four subdivisions namely Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri. In shape the district resembles an irregular triangle, of which the apex projects into British territory, while the base rests on Sikkim. It is a frontier district, running up between Nepal and Bhutan and stretching from the plains of Bengal on the south to the state of Sikkim on the north. The British frontier is demarcated from the latter state by a series of rivers and mountain torrents, from Nepal on the west by the lofty Singalila chain of mountains, and from Bhutan on the north-east by the Jaldhaka river, while its south-eastern and southern boundary marches with the British District of Jalpaiguri and Purnea (O'Malley, 1907, reprinted 2001: 1).

River: The valleys on the south-eastern side of the Singalila ridge are drained by the Mechi, Balasan and Mahananda rivers; and all the remainder of the Darjeeling hills is drained by the Tista and its tributaries, except the extreme eastern end, where the chief effluent is the Jaldhaka. The principal rivers of Darjeeling are Tista, Great Rangit, Ramman, Little Rangit, Rangnu, Mahanadi, Balasan, Mechi, Rilli and Jaldhaka (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 7-11).

Soil: The soil in the Tarai is composed of Alluvium, a light sandy loam being most common. In the hills the greater portion of the underlying rock consists of what is known as Sikkim gneiss. The constituents of the gneiss occur in varying proportions, and the soil varies in the same relation. That most commonly met with is a rather stiff reddish-coloured loam; but its composition varies from almost pure sand to stiff red clay. Part of the area, however, is composed of the rocks of the Daling series consisting of slates, schists and quartzites. These comprise a narrow strip of country extending from west to east along the northern boundary of the district, of another narrow strip to the south along the lower hills, and between these two of a tract about 8 miles wide on either side of the Tista. Further to the south is a narrow belt occupied by the foot-hills, composed of rocks belonging to the Nahun group and consisting of soft sand-stones, frequently micaceous and sometimes calcareous

The hill cultivators themselves recognize only three kinds of soil, white soil, red soil and black soil. Of these three, black soil is the richest, white soil is considered always poor, while red soil occupies an intermediate position, requiring heavy manuring to give as good an outturn as black soil. Land abounding in large rocks is usually composed of the latter soil, and is most suitable for dry crops, such as *maize* and *marua*, owing to the rich vegetable mould it contains (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 78).

Forest: The most remarkable feature of the forests of Darjeeling is the wonderful variety of species that they contain; there are, in fact, probably few places in the world in which so many different types of forest exist within so small an area. At the highest altitudes, from the elevation of 8,000 to 12,000 feet, forests of silver fir (*Abies Webbiana*) are found interspersed with grassy slopes which are dotted here and there with the whitened stems of dead trees. These gradually merge into extensive rhododendron forests, which at present useless from an utilitarian point of view, owing to their remoteness and inaccessibility, but present scenery of a very picturesque character. Lower down are thickest of bamboos, which at 6,000 feet give way to forests of chestnut, maple, oak, magnolia and laurel, the chief source of supply of timber and firewood to the station of Darjeeling. Still lower down the oak disappears, and the chief species are maple, birch, alder and the graceful *pipili* (*Bucklandia populnea*). At the level of 4,000 feet these trees of the temperate zone are replaced by mixed forests, which, with the exception of the *tun* (*Cedrela toona*), are of little value except for fuel. At 3,000 feet the upper limit of the *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) is reached, and this tree is the chief constituent of valuable forests in the lower hills, extending from the extreme west of the district to the Chel river on the east, where it ceases abruptly, probably owing to change in the geological formation. Besides the *sal* forest, the Tarai, as the lower foot hills and adjacent plains are called, contains swamp, river-bed and savannah forests (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 110).

Flora: The vegetation of the Darjeeling district is peculiarly rich in the number species and peculiarly varies in its character, as might be expected from a consideration of its climate and physiography. Broadly speaking, the vegetation of the district shows two well-marked zones- a tropical zone from the plains up to about 6,000 feet. The lowest part of the tropical zone comprising the slopes leading up to the base of the outer hills is characterized, especially in its western half, by forests of *Shorea robusta* (*sal*), with a

mixture of other trees such as *Dillenia pentagyna*, *Butea frondosa*, and species of *Terminalia* and *Eugenia*. Here and there also occur large stretches of Savannah forest of such species as *Dillenia pentagyna*, *Butea frondosa*, *Eugenia obvata*, etc. Along the river banks *Dalbergia Sissoo* is fairly common, accompanied by *Acacia Catechu*, *Bombax malabaricum*, *Nauclea cordifolia*, *Garuga pinnata*, etc. Patches of mixed forest also occur formed by a great number of species, of which the more common are *Schima Wallichii*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Terminalia myriopteron*, *Artocarpus Chaplasha*, *Bombax malabaricum*, *Dillenia indica*, *Eugenia Formosa* and many species of figs. This mixed forest also extends up the valleys and lower spurs to about 3,000 feet, sometimes with sal predominating, although other very common trees are *Cedrela*, *Duabanga*, *Careya*, *Lagerstroemia*, *Mongolia*, *Michelia*, and many *Leguminosae*. At higher elevations still, up to about the limit of the tropical zone, this forest still continues, but its general character is altered by the more frequent appearance of such species as *Engelhardtia spicata*, *Castanopsis indica*, *Cerasus Puddum*, *Alnus nepalensis*, *Bucklindia populnea*, *Juglans regia* (the walnut), oaks and maples. Several species of palms occur in the tropical zone, such as *Areca*, *Wallichia*, *Phoenix rupicola*, *Caryota urens*, *Plectocomia*, and climbing *Calami*. Screw pines, one true pine (*Pinus longifolia*), various species of bamboo of the genera *Dendrocalamus* *Arundingria*, etc., are quite common. The shrubby element in the vegetation is made up by *Acanthacere*, *Melastomacoe*, *Rubiance*, *Urticaceoe*, etc. Of climbers there are many species of *Ampoledeae*, *Cucurbitaceae*, *Conrolculaceae*, *Apocynacae*, *Asciepiadaceae*, *Smilax*, *Dioscorea*, *Rhaphidophora*, the latter being especially conspicuous. The herbaceous vegetation is well represented by *Malvaceae balsams*, *Polygonacae*, orchids, *Scitamincae*, and *Aroidae* with many other widely distributed species. Tree ferns are fairly common, and other ferns such as *Darallia*, *Pteris*, *Asplenium*, *Nephrodium*, *Polypodium*, *Angiopteris*, *Gleichenia*, etc., abound. In swampy places tall grasses of the genera *Saccharum*, *Thysanolaena*, *Erianthus*, *Anthistiria* are very common. In cleared spots, a scrub of *Artemisia* and *Leucosceptrum canum* is very common.

The temperate zone is characterized by forests of gigantic trees, consisting chiefly of oaks, chestnuts, magnolias, *Michelias*, laurels, maples, birches, and on the Singalila ridge conifers. Of the shrubby vegetation, the chief species belong to *Clematis*, *Berberis*, *Ilex*, *Rosa*, *Rulus*, *Contoncaster*, *Spiraea*, *Ancuba*, *Lenicera*, *Osbeckia*, *Vaccinium*,

Pentapterygium, *Ericaccae*, *Polygonum*, etc. A few rhododendrons grow within the altitude of the greater part of the district, but the rhododendron forests are found only on the high points above 8,000 feet along the Singalila ridge. Dwarf bamboos abound. The herbaceous vegetation is composed of such plants as aconites, violets, many balsams, Potentillas, Fragarias, Chrysosplenium, gentians, Campanulus, lilies, etc. (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 13-5).

Fauna: Although the Darjeeling district is small in size, it contains a rich variety of fauna, owing to the great difference between the climatic conditions of its northern and southern parts. Among the larger Carnivora, the leopard (*Felis pardus*) is found in this northern tract, and occasionally the ounce (*Felis unica*), the clouded leopard (*Felis diardi*) and lynx (*Felis isabilina*), but these are only stray visitors from higher altitudes. In the Tarai the tiger (*Felis tigris*) and leopard (*Felis pardus*) are common; while the large tiger-cat (*Felis chaus*) have their habitat in both tracts. Leopards are numerous in the valleys throughout the district. The principal species of Viverra are the large civet-cat (*Viverra zibetha*), the lesser civet-cat (*Viverra malaccensis*), the tiger civet (*Prindon pardicolor*), and several species of the Parad-oxura and mongoose family. The jackal (*Canis aureus*) is the only representative of the genus *Canis*; the wild dog (*Cyon rutilans*) of the genus *Cyon*. The elephant (*Elephas Indicus*) is found in the large forest tracks at the foot of the hills. The wild pig is found throughout the district. The spotted deer (*Axis porcinus*) is only found west of the Balasan river. The barking deer (*Cervulus aureus*) is found over the whole of the district. Among the Ursidae the Himalayan black bear (*Ursus torquatus vel Tibetanus*) and the common Indian sloth bear (*Ursus labiatus*) are common. The Malayan sun-bear (*Ursus malayanus*) has also once been met with. The genus *Lepus* include the common Indian red-tailed hare (*Lepus ruficudatus*) and the hispid hare (*Lepus hispidus*); the latter however is very rare. Other mammalia are monkeys, squirrels (of which the two Himalayan flying squirrels are worthy of note) and several species of porcupines, martens, moles, civets, rats and mice. In the northern portion of the district the moonal pheasant (*Lophophorus impeyanus*), tragopan (*Cerionnis satyra*), blood pheasant (*Ithagenes cruentus*), kalij pheasant (*Euplocamus leucomelanus*), the common wood partridge (*Arboriola torqueola*), wood-cock (*Scolopax rusticola*) and red jungle-fowl (*Gallus ferrugineus*) are met with; and in the southern part, the lesser florican (*Sypheotids bengalensis*), red jungle-fowl, red spur-fowl (*Galloperdix spadiceus*), pea-

fowl (*Pavo cristatus*), kalij and black partridge (*Francolinus vulgaris*), besides several species of quail, snipe, duck and waders. There are about 47 species of snakes in the district, of which 17 are more or less poisonous. The following species are most frequently found: the hamadryad or king cobra (*Naia bungarus*), the common cobra (*Naia tripudians*), the karait (*Bungarus caeruleus*), the banded karait (*Burgarus fasciatus*), one viper (*Vipera russelli*), and several of the genus *Trimeresurus*. The python is found in the Tarai and the lower valleys. The longnosed fish-eating crocodile has been seen in the Mahanadi river, but it is rare. The fish found in the district include the mahseer, the *katli*, the fresh-water shark and many others (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 15-19).

Climate: Owing to the tropical situation of the town of Darjeeling, the seasons largely follow the course of those in the plains, the cold weather, hot weather and rains, but there are two short periods-and those the most delightful in the year-which correspond in some ways to an English autumn and spring. The cold weather is divided into two portions. The first at the end of the rains is mild and pleasant, the atmosphere being tolerably clear, and generally free from mist and cloud. This is the autumn, if autumn there be in Darjeeling. Towards the beginning of December, the first touch of winter comes with hoar-frost; and at the end of that month and in January, the ground is sometimes frozen almost the whole day. The air is cloudless, dry and bracing; in the early morning it is very cold, but later in the day there is bright sunshine, and it becomes pleasantly warm, though it remains bitterly cold in the shade. As the evening comes on, it is cold and chilly, and the nights are clear and starry. Occasionally snow falls in January and February, but such an occurrence is comparatively rare, and heavy falls of snow are very uncommon. In March a brief Himalayan spring is ushered in with high blustering winds; it is very short, lasting only till the end of the month. During April and May there is a short-lived summer accompanied by showers of rain, which becomes heavier and more frequent till the setting in of the rains in the beginning of June. For three months after this, Darjeeling is exposed to the full force of the monsoon, drenched with rain, and shrouded in mist.

The mean temperature is about 42° in the cold-weather months from December to February. A rapid increase of temperature takes place during March and April owing to the warmer air which penetrates through the valleys from the plains; and thereafter, from

May to December, when more or less heavy cloudy prevails, mean temperature is steady at or slightly above 60°. In October northerly winds begin, cloud is much less than previous months, and rainfall occurs mainly owing to cyclonic storms which generally recurve towards North Bengal at the end of the season. The lowest average minimum temperature is 35° in January and the highest 58° in July.

During the cold-weather months very little rain falls in the Darjeeling hills. November and December are almost rainless, and the light showers which fall in January and February occur. Rainfall is somewhat more heavy in March, and there is a considerable increase in April, owing to thunderstorms. Very heavy rainfall is generally from June to September, specially on the lower slopes (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 19-23).

The People: The population of Darjeeling is exceedingly heterogeneous. The majority of the people in the hills are Mongolian origin, belonging chiefly to various Nepalese castes, but also including a large number of Lepchas, Bhotias and Tibetans. Together with hill men are found the denizens of the plains, who have been attracted to the hills by the prospect of easily acquired wealth, the Madhesias held in great contempt by the stalwart Nepalese. Among them are Marwari merchants, the Jews of the Himalayas, Bengali clerks, Hindustani mechanics, Punjabi traders and even Chinese carpenters. In the Tarai the mixture of races is equally great. Here the aboriginal Koches, or Rajbansis as they prefer to call themselves, are most numerous and not less than 52 per cent followed by the Mundas and Oraons from Chota Nagpur and the Santals from the uplands of the Santal Parganas. Darjeeling owes a large proportion of its population to the advent of immigrants. Barely half of the inhabitants have, in fact, been born in the district. In the Tarai it receives numerous settlers from the adjoining districts of Purnea and Jalpaiguri, who engage in cultivation, and a large number of coolies from Chota Nagpur and the Santal Parganas, who are attracted by the wages given in the tea gardens. But the great bulk of the immigrants come from Nepal, chiefly as labourers in the tea gardens; and in the hills the population is mainly Nepalese. The early immigrants are, however, dying out, their place being taken by their children born in Darjeeling, while the flow of fresh immigrants is growing less. Most of the latter settle in the district, but some only come for a short time, and then return to Nepal with their savings. In Darjeeling more than three quarters of the population are Hindus followed by Buddhists and among the

Buddhists, Lepchas, Bhotias and Murmis are numerically high. The Muhammadans form less than 4 per cent of the total population followed by Animists and Christians (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 48-60). In 2001, the total population was 1609172 and the density of population was 511. Among them the male was 51.62 per cent and the female was 48.38 per cent and the sex ratio is 937; and the rural was 67.66 per cent and urban was 32.34 per cent. The total literate male was 80.10 per cent and the female was 62.90 per cent (Census of India, 2001).

Economy: The backbone of economy of Darjeeling is tea, timber and tourism. However, the great majority of the population are dependent on agriculture, either as cultivators tilling their own fields or as labourers employed on the tea gardens. The industrial classes are relatively unimportant, few per cent of the total population being engaged in manual industries. Of these the major percentage are workers, who are distributed over various occupations, such as tailors, carpenters, masons, wood-cutters etc. The commercial and professional classes are still smaller (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 152).

The physical configuration of the district makes the conditions of agriculture in different parts exceedingly varied. The strip of country at the foot of the hills contains level stretches of alluvial soil admirably suited for rice cultivation. The cultivation of tea, is however, so predominant in the whole tract that two-thirds of the rural population are resident on the tea plantations. Tea, which occupies nearly one-third of the cropped area, is the all-important crop of the district. The principles crops are maize, paddy and cardamom. Among the other crops may be mentioned potatoes, tobacco, *kodo (Paspalum scrobiculatum)*, various millets and pulses, and sugarcane, which grown in small plots near the cultivators' homesteads. The principal cold-weather crops are wheat, barley, mustard and buck-wheat. Apart from these, a large variety of fruits is grown in the valleys and on the slopes where the rainfall is not excessive, such as plums, peaches apples, pears, mangoes, plantains and oranges. The vegetables are those of tropical as well as of a temperate zone, the commonest being the potato. Among other vegetables the commonest are brinjals, sweet potato, chillies, garlic, onions, pumpkins and yams. A large number of English vegetables have been introduced and are grown successfully, such as rhubarb, tomatoes, turnips, cauliflowers, beans, peas, beet-root, carrots, parsnip, leeks and celery, while mint, parsley and thyme are common garden herbs. In the Tarai

the common domestic animals do not differ from those found elsewhere in Bengal, oxen being used for agriculture, buffaloes reared for their milk and for sale, and goats and pigs reared for food (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 77-87).

The main trade of the district is with Calcutta, the chief exports being tea, jute, gunny-bags, wool, cardamom and maize, and the imports being composed of European piece-goods, cotton yarn, rice, kerosene-oil and salt. Rice is also imported from Dinajpur, and coal and coke from Raniganj coalfields. From Nepal food-grains, cotton piec-goods, manufactured wool and hides, potatoes sheep, goats, cattle and poultry are imported in return for European piece-goods and cotton twists, salt, kerosene-oil, tobacco and food grains. The trade with Sikkim is of much the same character, but smaller in volume. Most of the Bhutan trade passes through the district of Jalpaiguri but a fair quantity of the silk fabrics manufactured by the Bhutanese is imported into this district. The exports to Tibet consist chiefly of cotton piece-goods of European manufacture, and the imports of wool. Besides these articles, cotton yarn, silver, copper, brass and iron sheets, rice, maize and tobacco are exported, and yaks' tails, musk, horses, mules, sheep, and blankets are imported (O'Malley 1907, reprinted 2001: 162).

Subdivision- Siliguri

Siliguri is situated in the foothills of the Himalayas in the plains of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts of northern part of West Bengal. It is bounded by Kurseong on the north, Bangladesh on the south, Jalpaiguri on the east and Nepal on the west. Siliguri is a very important town and known as the gateway to the North-East India. It is the transit point for air, road and rail traffic to the neighboring countries of Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and China and also to the North East Indian states. It is an important trade hub for the whole West Bengal. The town Siliguri is famous for Tea, Transport, Tourism and Timber and these are the blood vein of the region. Siliguri is a paradise of scenic beauty and famous for its great weather and bio-diversities. It is a charming place to enjoy the beauty and splendor of the region as it is blessed with various eye catching beauty of nature, forests, rivers, wild animals etc. and various natural resources. There is a wonderful balance between industrial state and ecology.

Map 3: Map of Siliguri



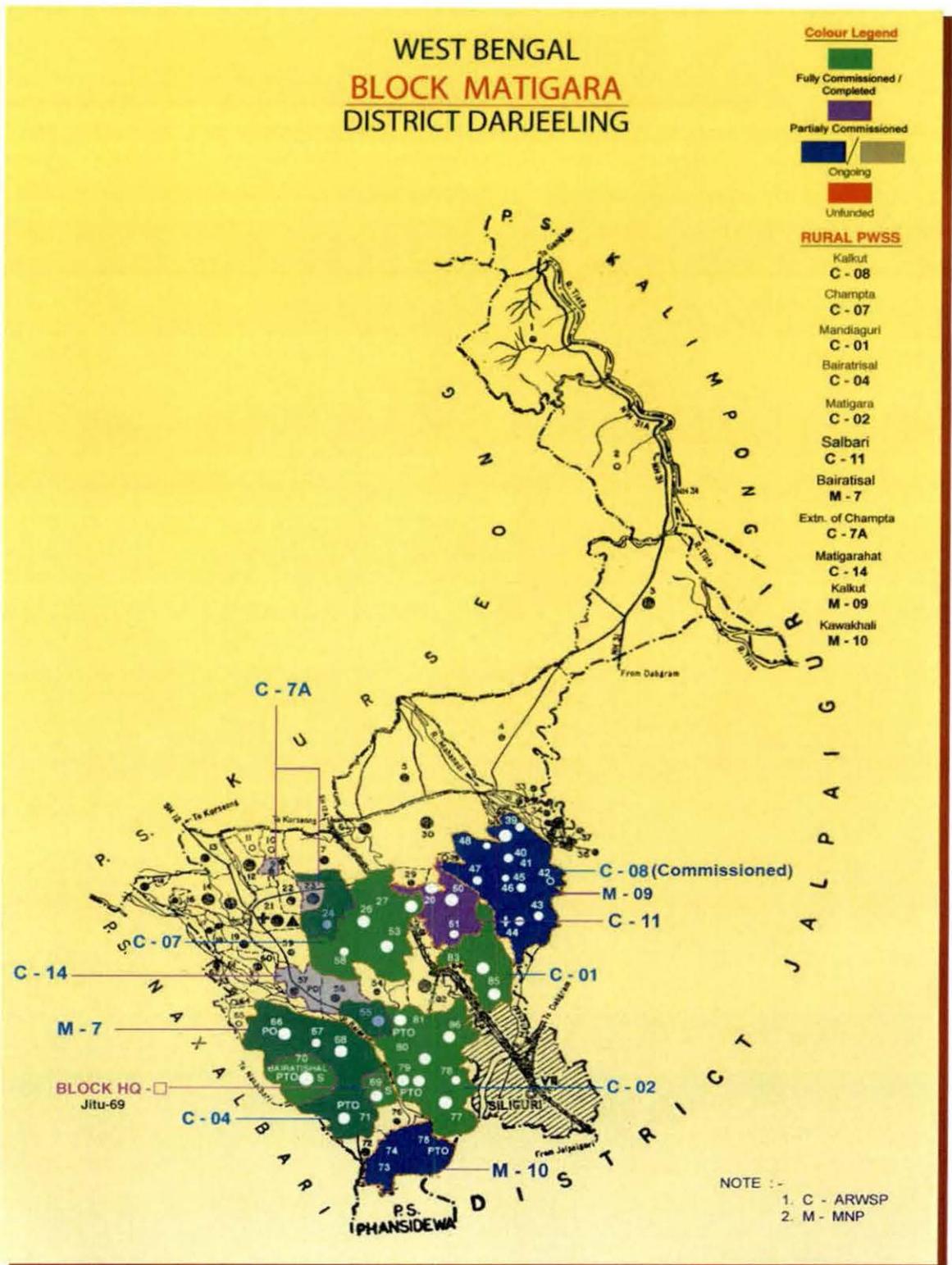
The immense natural scenic beauties really charm the visitors of far and away to have a look on it. Siliguri was a village in the district of Jalpaiguri which was transferred to Darjeeling district in 1907 by forming the sub-division and in the same year it was declared a sub-division (Mahakuma) by the British administration. Siliguri was recognized as a non-municipal town in 1931; and in 1949, it was conferred as Municipality. Now it is a Municipal Corporation with 47 wards. The only source of earning of this little village was agriculture, but presently the economical growth of Siliguri is dependent on four 'T's - Tea, Transport, Tourism and Timber and these are the main industries flourishing in Siliguri. Today in case of agriculture or trade and commerce or service, at every sector Siliguri is making its strong base. After partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 and the formation of Bangladesh in 1971, the Siliguri became a crowded refugee center. With the increase of its area (in 1950 it had an area of 15.54 sq. km and presently it has an area of 117.54 sq. km out of which 68.90 sq. km and 48.64 sq. km fall under the district of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling respectively), rapid population growth is continuously being occurred as in 1901 the population of Siliguri was 738 only which reached 6067 in 1931, 97484 in 1971, 472374 in 2001 (Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority, 2012; and Siliguri Municipal Corporation Report, 2001) and 701,489 in 2011; and based on Census data of 2011 the city agglomeration had a population of 1,901,489 and still growing at a fast rate (Bangla immigrants to be pushed back; cited in The Times of India, 5 November 2011). The rapid urbanization is taking place in Siliguri and with it a number of new economic sectors and sources of earning are getting emerged. The present importance of Siliguri as a city started to gain ground since the Indo-Chinese border tussle in 1962, which was a turning point from where the present city ushered. The strategic importance of the city unleashed a plethora of changes to the tune of economic, social and demographic changes and gradually, the city turned out to be the 'Gateway' to entire North East, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh even some extent China and Myanmar too. Such development witnessed on influence of outsiders from different parts of the country and outside who have settled here mainly due to political, economic and social causes. The population of the town continuously increased leading to its expansion because of many immigrants from Nepal, Southern Bhutan apart from Eastern Bengal. Plenty of migrations have occurred into Siliguri in search of work for

living and the highest was when people came from the erstwhile East Bengal during the partition of India. In addition, people from adjacent Indian states like Bihar, Jharkhand states of Eastern India and other parts of India have also come to the city in search of livelihood ([http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Siliguri# History](http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Siliguri#History)). However, migration from various places and migration for various reasons like economy, socio-political etc. are leading towards an abnormal growth of population. Siliguri is a rapidly developing as a metropolis in West Bengal. The town, Siliguri has been provided with various urban amenities like markets, shopping malls, luxury hotels, restaurants, medical college, hospitals, nursing homes, several educational institutions from school to university level, recreation centers etc. and around 189 factories of medium to small scale based also got emerged in and around the Siliguri. Apart from these, several industrial projects and townships have grown up in Siliguri town. Today the present Siliguri has become the second largest city in West Bengal. Siliguri is the Bengali majority city, with a notable presence of the Rajbanshi, Nepali, Bhutia, Behari, Marwaris, Gorkhas, Assamese, Gujrati, and others (Indya Tour, 2014). The mentionable matter is that among the Bengali people, the Rajbanshi is the largest and important group of people of North Bengal who are agriculturist by profession mainly. The spot of this research work, village Purba Rangia is located very nearer to the Siliguri town where the Rajbanshi is the largest group of people.

Atharakhai Gram Panchayat where the Studied Village is situated

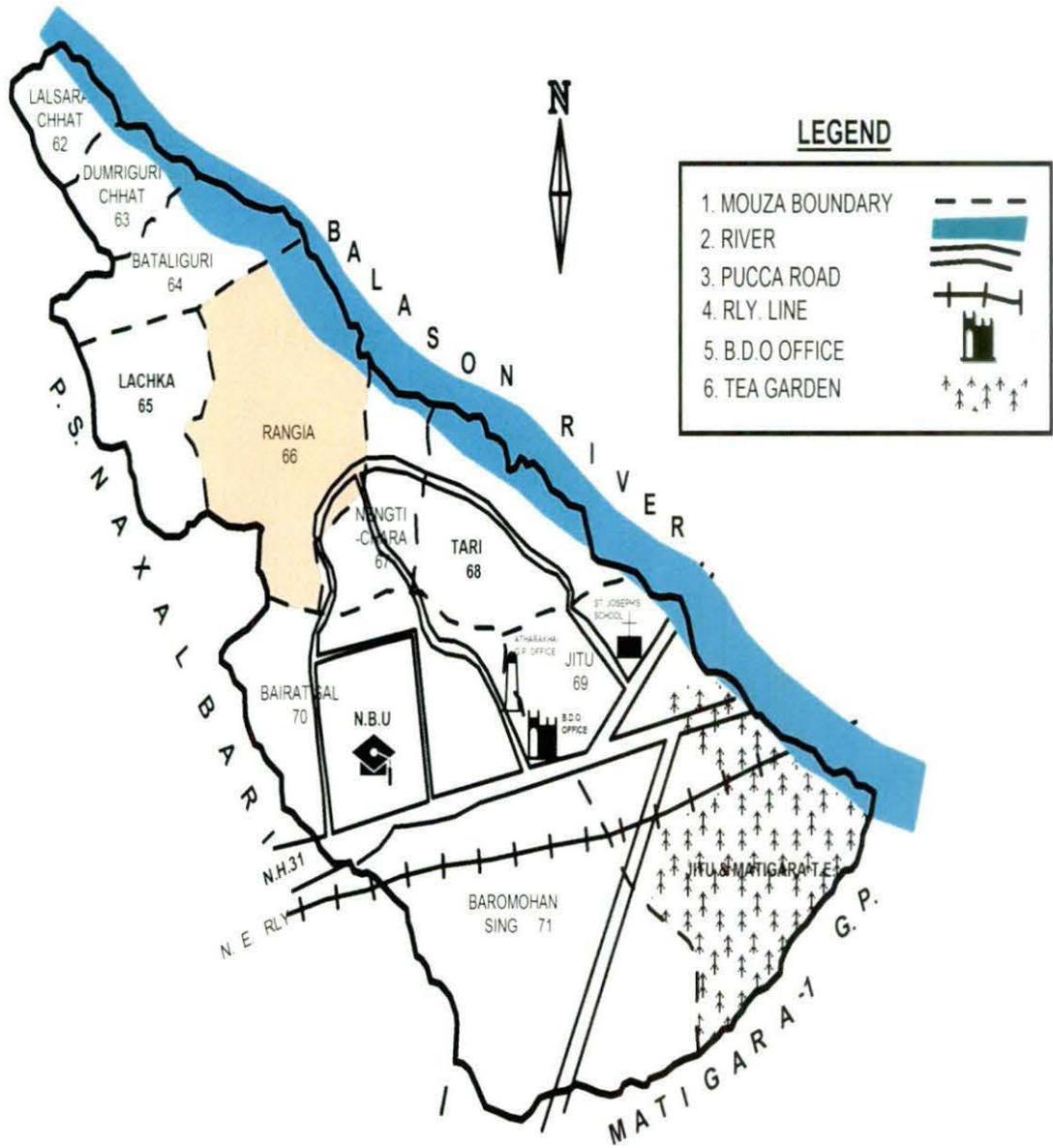
Administratively the studies village, Purba Rangia is situated under Matigara block of Atharakhai Gram Panchayat and the said GP office is around 3 km away from the studied village, Purba Rangia. This G.P. is located to the west of the Matigara police station and 2 km away from it. The gram panchayat, Atharakhai covers an area of 1283.59 hector and consisted of 10 mouzas viz. Lalsara, Dumgurir Chhat, Lochka, Bataliguri, Rangia, Nengtichhara, Bairatishal, Tarijote, Jitu, Baromohon Singh. The panchayat is bounded on the east by Pramodnagar, on the west by Checkpost, on the north by Lalsara and on the south by Diglijote.

Map 5: Map of Matigara Block



Map 5: Map of Atharakhai Gram Panchayat

MAP OF ATHARAKHAI GRAM PANCHAYAT UNDER MATIGARA BLOCK,
P.S. MATIGARA, DIST. DARJEELING



SCALE: 2" = 1 MILE

Table 3.1: Demographic Outline of the Studied Area

Demographic standards	West Bengal	Darjeeling District	Matigara Block	Rangia Mouza
Population	91,347,197	1,842,034	129326	3682
Male	46,927,389	93,47,96	68004	1848
Female	44,420,347	9,07,328	61322	1834
Sex Ratio	947	971	901	992
Literate population	62,614,556	13,28,218	71,006	2029
Literacy rate	77.08	79.92	64.23	64.21
Total worker	36,53,8878	6,99,972	47,063	1582

Source: Census of India 2011.

The total population of Atharakhai Gram Panchayat was 50849 out of which males were 28984 (57.00%) and females were 21865 (43.00%). The overall population of scheduled castes was 21865 and scheduled tribes was 9153 and the total OBC (Other Backward Classes) population was 1526. The sex ratio at Atharakhai Gram Panchayat was 754.38 (National Panchayat Portal, Gram Panchayat Schedule, Sponsored by Department of Panchayati Raj, 2011).

Educational Institution and Other Offices: There were twelve primary schools of which two were government primary schools and rests were government sishu siksha kendra¹; four high schools of which one was english medium girls high school. The facility of higher education was available here because of the presence of University, B. Ed. college and library. There were other offices also like – West Bengal Board of Secondary Education- regional office, West Bengal Council for Higher Secondary education- regional office, and three post offices. Besides these, Gram panchayat office, Irrigation office, BDO office, BLRO office and Backward Classes Welfare Department office were there.

Health Centre and Other Necessary Facilities: In Atharakhai gram panchayat there were three primary health centres, 18 polio booths, and 68 anganwadi centres setup in different villages under this gram panchayat. Besides these, 450 wells, 35 taps and 48 tube-wells

¹ *Sishu siksha kendra:* A mission of the Government of India and its objective is to bring all the children between 5-9 years under primary education.

were found to be setup through panchayat level in different villages. Considering the facilities, the schemes like Old Aged Pension, Antaday Anna Yojna (A.A.Y), Annapurna Yojna and Indira Awas Yojna were implemented through panchayat office. In this context, total 142 persons were given the old aged pension. Total 465 families were taken under the scheme of Antaday Anna Yojna (A.A.Y). The scheme like Annapurna Yojna covered 26 families only and at the same time only 81 families were benefited under the scheme of Indira Awas Yojna.

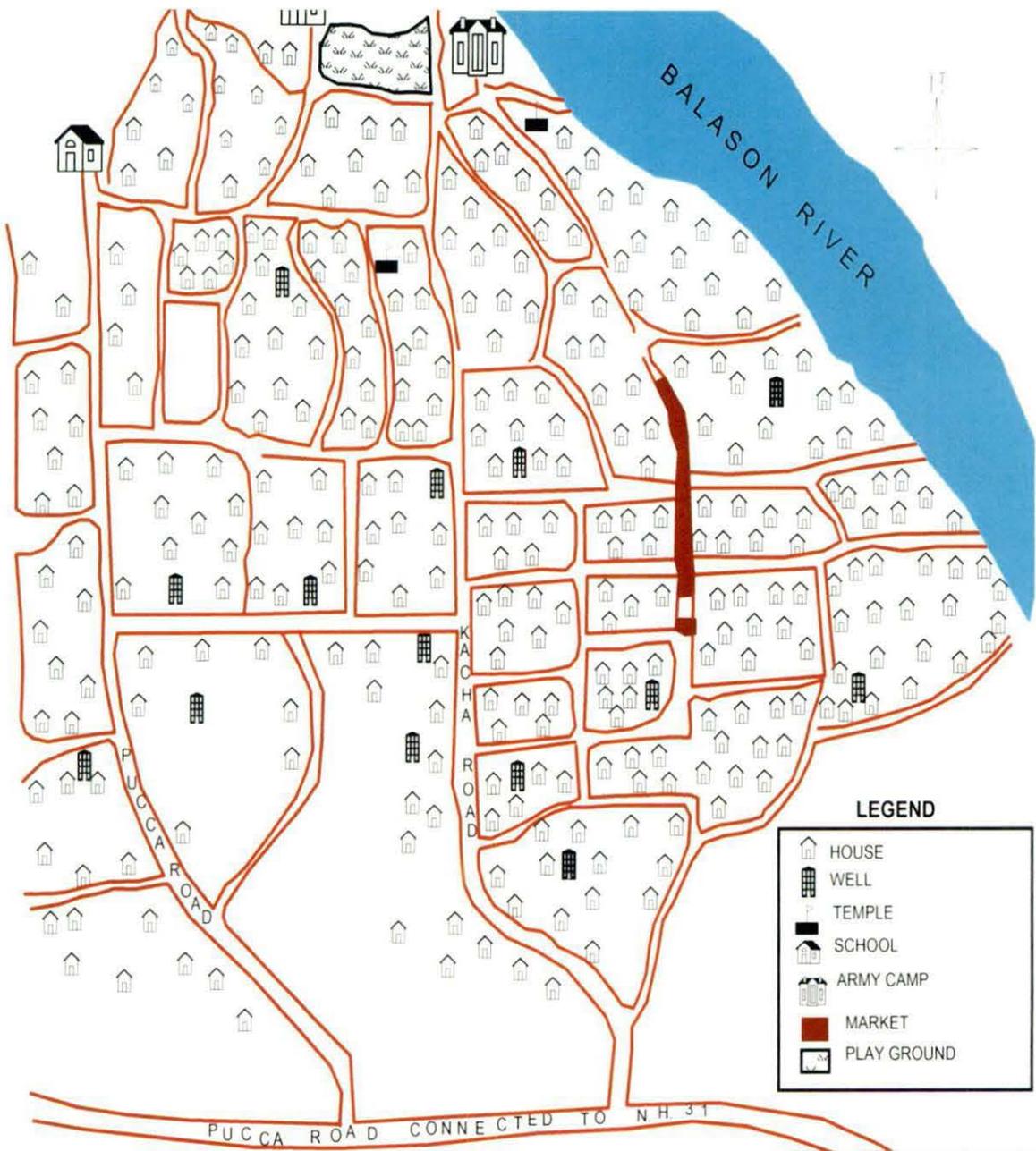
Studied Village- Purba Rangia

The studied village, Purba Rangia is situated on the Balasan River basin which is very nearer to the Siliguri town, and it was established by some present migrated people. However, before going to the detail discussion of the studied village, we may go through the definition of village. In this concern, M.N. Srinivas (1969) has tried to define a village in this way “A body of people living in a restricted area, at some distance from other similar groups, with extremely poor roads between them, the majority of the people being engaged in agricultural activity, all closely dependent upon each other economically and otherwise, having a vast body of common experience, must have some sense of unity”. But in this context, the studied village, Purba Rangia is something different because the agro based economy was totally absent and instead of agriculture, the stone based occupation became the backbone of their economy and still it is going on.

Location of the Village: The village which is adjacent to Siliguri town laid at the foothill of the Himalayas in the district of Darjeeling. The full address for communication was- Village – Purba Rangia, Post office – New Rangia, Police Station – Matigara, District – Darjeeling, State – West Bengal, Pin – 7734013. The village, Purba Rangia was bounded on the east by Blasan River, on the west by Army camp, on the north by the village Tarabari and on the south by the village Chaitanyapur.

House type and settlement pattern: The houses were mostly *kachha* type and few were semi-*pucca*. The houses were made of wattle walls, corrugated tin roof and *kachha* platform. Most of the houses were composed of 1 to 2 little rooms. The settlement pattern of the village was mostly bi linear type.

Map 6: Area Map of Purba Rangia Village



People: The total population of the village was 1434, out of which males were 729(50.84%) and females were 705(49.16%); and the sex ratio was 967. Among the villagers 1331(92.82%) belonged to Rajbanshi community, where the males were 675 and the females were 656; and their sex ratio was 972. However, the rest of the population belonged to Brahmin, Kshatriya, Teli, Kapali, Jugi, Namashudra, Biswakarma; Santal and Muslims.

Migration: All the studied families in the village were migrants who came from the adjoining districts, states and country also. It is surprising that a large number of studied families migrated from Bangladesh while the rest from various districts and states of the country like Assam, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The pattern of migration was of various types such as inter-district, inter-state and inter-country migration.

Table 3.2: Pattern of Migration of the Studied Families

Pattern of Migration	Inter-district	Inter-state	Inter-country	Total
No. of family	42	6	202	250
	16.80	2.40	80.80	100.00

Table 3.1 reveals that major percentage (80.80%) of the studied families was under the category of inter-country migration. It was known that most in cases they had to leave their early residence, land and properties and so on, and as a result they had to come here with homeless, landless as well as resourceless in condition.

Table 3.3: Distribution of Studied Families on the Basis of Causes of Migration

Child Workers' Family	Causes of Migration				Total
	Economic problem	Familial problem	For getting job	Political unrest	
No. of Family	45	30	53	122	250
	18.00	12.00	21.20	48.80	100.00

The studied families migrated here mainly for political unrest followed by other factors like for getting job, poverty and familial problem. Finally they settled down at Purba Rangia village and engaged themselves in stone based work.

Education: In the context of education 50.44 per cent village people were literate, and among the male and female it was 58.25 per cent and 42.10 per cent respectively. In the studied village there was only one Sishu Siksha Kendra (SSK) and four Anganwadi centre. However, there was no other government educational institutions within the village. But under Atharakhai Gram Panchayat there were four high schools, B. Ed. College, University and library. Besides these, there were several government offices like West Bengal Board of Secondary Education- regional office, West Bengal Council for Higher Secondary education- regional office, three post offices, Irrigation office, BDO office, BLRO office, Backward Welfare Class office were under Atharakhai Gram Panchayat. These were about 1-3 km from the studied village and the people of the studied village had to visit these places to meet their needs.

Transport and communication: The village roads were mostly *kachha*² type. Both for inter-village and intra-village communication the villagers used the *kachha* roads. Within the village there was only one pucca road which was made of stone and it was connected to the main road. They had to cover a distance of around 2-3 Km to reach the National Highway. There was no transportation as such within the village. Though, the villagers mostly used the bicycle to go for long distance but many of them were found to go on foot.

Economy: Stone based work was a single decisive factor in the formation of the studied village in Balasan River basin. Almost all the families in the studied area were primarily or secondarily involved in stone based work for maintaining their livelihood. Their involvement in other works was a seldom happening factor.

² *Kachha:* A *kachha* is a building made of natural materials like mud, bamboo, grass, thatch or sticks.

Market and other important places: The village has one little market known as 'Purba Rangia Sishabari Bazar'. But all the daily necessary things were not available there. Therefore, all the villagers had to depend on weekly market, 'Matigara Hat' which was held on Tuesday in every week at Matigara and it was about 5 km from this village. Besides these, often they went to Shivmandir Market and brought what they needs. The Shivmandir Market was about 2 Km from the village. Siliguri was the nearest town of this village and the villagers had to cover a distance of around 10 Km to visit this place. Besides these, the great recreation centre, Science City and City Centre were not so far from the village and these were about 6-7 Km from this village. The nearest big Railway Station was NJP Station and the villagers had to cover a distance of around 18 Km to go there. Besides these, there was also a famous market known Bagdogra Airport market which was about 7 Km from this village. The Gram Panchayat Office was about 2 Km from the village and the villagers were mostly found to go there on foot.

Health Centre and other necessary facilities: There was no health centre within this village. The village has three medical shops of them one was allopathy and two were homoeopathy but many of the required medicines are not available there. Therefore, many of them went to Shivmandir market for purchasing required medicines and they had to cover a distance of around 2 Km to go there. For better treatment many of them had to go to Matigara Primary Health Centre and North Bengal Medical College which were around 6-12 from this village.

Total five government wells were setup through panchayat level but all of these wells were uncovered throughout the year. Besides this, the villagers also used the river as another source of water. There was a club known as 'Naba Yuba Sangha' which was the only recreational centre within this village.

The schemes like Old Aged Pension and Indira Awas Yojna (IAY) were implemented through Panchyat level. But only one person could able to enjoy the scheme like Old Aged Pension and at the same time only one family was benefited under the scheme of Indira Awas Yojna (IAY).

Religious place: A temple locally known as ‘Sarbojanin Hari Mandir’ hold an important position in the heart of the village as well as villagers because almost all of the villagers were very much virtuous and according to them the God ‘Hari’ was their protector who always took care of them. The great religious festival of the village known as *Astam Prahar*³ was celebrated by the villagers in the month of *Chaitra* or *Baishak* (according to Bengali calendar) at the ‘Hari Mandir’(Hari temple). The another temple known as ‘Rath Mandir’ was also an important religious place in the studied village where all of the villagers celebrated another great festival known as ‘*Rath Yatra*’⁴ in the month of *Ashar* (according to Bengali calendar) in every year and recently the ‘*Durga puja*’⁵ was also celebrated at the village ground.

Burial ground: The open river bed was generally used for funeral obsequies by the villagers.

River: The Balasan River comes down from Himalayas and passes beside this village. Apart from some domestic courses, various natural resources like stone, sand etc. of the River were the important economy of the studied people.

Studied People- The Rajbanshi

In my studied village several castes, communities and ethnic groups like Rajbanshi, Namsudra, Jugi, Kapali, Brahmin, Teli, Biswakarma, Muslim, Santal were lived in the studied village but the present research work primarily conducted on Rajbanshis. They were 1162 in number of which males were 594 and females were 568 and the sex ratio was 956. According to Census 2001, the total number of Rajbanshi population in Darjeeling district was 129,904.

³ *Astam Prahar:* Devine meditation for day and night.

⁴ *Rath Yatra:* A ceremonial procession centred around a chariot carrying a holy image, specifically the procession of the Hindu God *Jagannatha*.

⁵ *Durga Puja:* The worship of Goddesses *Durga*.

Table 3.4: Proportion of Rajbanshi Population to the total SC Population in West Bengal

SL. No.	Name of the scheduled caste	Total population	Proportion to the total SC population (%)
1	All scheduled castes	18,452,555	100.00
2	Rajbanshi	3,386,617	18.40

Source: Census of India 2001, West Bengal.

Note: The data according to Census of India 2011 has not been published yet.

They are the major group of people in North Bengal. They have their cultural heritage and so on. In the context of present study, various aspects of the traditional life of the Rajbanshis have been discussed one after another-

Historical Background of the Rajbanshi

The history of the origin of Rajbanshi is a mystery. It is said that they belong to the great 'Bodo' family that entered India in the 10th century B.C., from the east and settled on the banks of the Brahmaputra and gradually spread over Assam and the whole of North and East Bengal (Sanyal, 1965: 10).

The first introduction in the modern history of the people living in the furthest north of Bengal is found in the accounts of invasion of Baktyar Khilji when he entered Tibet in 1206 A.D. (J.A. Vas in Rangpur Gazeteer, 1911: 8 places the date as 1203 A.D.). It is reported that time between the century Lakhnnavati and Tibet lay the hill or rather the jungle tract which was inhabited by three non-Indian Mongoloid tribes, the Koch, the Mech and the Tharu. Hodgson reports in 1849 A.D. that Hajo founded the Koch kingdom. The Koch belong to Tamulian extraction and lived before the Aryan come. Hajo's grandson Visva Sinha became Hindu, renounced the name Koch and adopted Rajbanshi. In his opinion Kuvach was identical with Koch. In Assam the Koch were divided into three sects (a) Kamthali and (b) Madai (c) Kolita. In Rangpur they had two sects (a) Rajbanshi and (b) Koch. Dalton describes that the very appearance of the Kochs shows that they are non-Aryans. He considers them as belonging to the dravidian stock

and probably a branch of the great Bhuiya (belong to Bodo, Mech tribes) family. Hunter observed that about the close of the fifteenth century are Koch king Hajo founded a kingdom at Kamrupa. His grandson Visva Sinha, together with his officers and all people of the condition apostatised to Hinduism. A divine ancestry for the chief was manufactured by the Brahmins. The converts abandoned the name Koch and took that of Rajbanshi. Hunter also notes that in Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch-Bihar, the name Rajbanshi, which literally means 'Royal Race', is adopted by the cultivators and respectable men, that of Koch being restricted to labourers and specially to the palanquin bearers. Hunter places the Rajbanshi under 'semi-hinduised aboriginals'. Rowley describes the inter marriage with Koch tribes with Hindu has considerably changed their old habits. They resemble the Bengalees more than any other people. One class of this tribe, the Rajbanshis worship Hindu deities and have adopted Hindu manners. H.F.J.T. Maguire, in his comments on the census report of Rangpur of 1891, states, in his memorandum NO. 706-X- 1-3 dated 16th March, 1892, that, 'among the Rajbanshi there is a distinction between those who have adopted the *Vaishnav*⁶ faith and the followers of god *Siva*. The latter appear to be Koches proper being of mongoloid origin and having come from the north. They are closely allied to Kuris and form a small minority of the tribe of Rajbanshis. The former are of dravidian stock and are more numerous and respectable, forming the main body of the agriculturists. The Rajbanshis have become to all intents and purposes Hindus and their claim to rank as sudras (kshatriyas) was admitted by the pandits of Rangpur Dharma Sabha'. O' Donnell writes- 'Another interesting tribe is the Rajbanshi or Koch of North Eastern Bengal, the localisation of whose racial position was long been a subject of dispute. They are however, only the third wave of mongols who have advanced through the eastern passes the first being the chandal, the second the koch and the last the Assam'. Risley describes that Koch, Koch-Mandi, Rajbanshi, Palliya and Desi belong to a large dravidian tribe of North Eastern and Eastern Bengal amongst whom three are grounds for suspecting some admixture of mongoloid blood. The transformation of Koch into Rajbanshi, the name by which they are now known in Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Koch-Bihar, is a singular illustration of the

⁶ *Vaishnav*: According to Hindu mythology the *Vaisnavs* are the worshipper of Lord Krishna.

influence exercised by fiction in the making of caste. 'Now the great majority of Koch inhabitants of Northern Bengal invariably describe themselves as Rajbanshis or Banga Kshatriyas'. 'They keep Brahmans, initiate brahmanical ritual in their marriage ceremony and have begun to adopt brahmonical system of *gotras*'. In respect of the last point they are now in a curious state of transition as they have all hit upon the same *gotra* (Kasyapa) and they habitually transgress the primary rule of brahmonical system which absolutely prohibits marriage with in a *gotra*'. Grieson comments, 'there can be little doubt that the original Koches were the same as the Bodos. The Koch, Mech and Bara or Bodo all connoted the same tribe or at most different sects of the same tribe. The name Koch in fact connotes a Hinduised Bodo who has abandoned his ancestral religion for Hinduism and ancestral Bodo language for Bengali or Assamese. Rajbanshi are the Hinduised Koch of Rangpur and Goalpara'. 'Those Koch who are now Hindus are principally known under the name Rajbanshi. The Rjbanshi dialect bears many close points of resemblance to the dialect of East Bengal'. Gait describes the Rajbanshis of North Bengal, 'as a synonym of Koch, this represents a real caste and in this sense only it may be entered in the schedule. The term is also a little of Tiyars, Kaibarthas, Namasudra and other fishing castes, also of Barua Mugs in Chittaganj and of Bagdis, Mals etc. In Tippra the term is applied to Tippras and to Hindus who have lost caste by eating with hillmen. In Burdwan persons using this little are usually Bagdis if fishermen and Kaibarttas if cultivators'. Thompson states- 'the Rajbanshi are the indigenous people of Northern Bengal and the third largest Hindu caste in the province. Their total number has been exaggerated by the fact that a number of fishermen caste in Mymensingh, Nadia and Murshidabad returned themselves as Rajbanshi. In 1901 many Koches in North Bengal were returned as Rajbanshis. Many of the Rajbanshis have now taken sacred thread and were prepared to use force in support of their claim to be returned as Kshatriyas'. Peter then comments, "the Rajbanshi have now to some extent regularised the anomalous position in which they formed themselves until recently owing to the fact that upon assumption of the Kshatriya status they all adopted themselves into the same *gotra* (Kasyapa) with the result that all marriages amongst Rajbanshis as Kshatriyas would, upon a strict interpretation of Hindu law, have been invalid owing to their being with the same *gotra*". Porter also states- 'Koch, Palia, Rajbanshi were originally the same. The

Kaivarttas of Assam and North Bengal have more affinity with Rajbanshis. They all claimed to be recorded as Rajbanshis and all Rajbanshis claimed to be a recorded as Kshatriyas at the beginning of the 19th century. The more backward and illiterate members of the Rajbanshi caste still maintain practices inconsistent with orthodox Hindu belief'. S.K. Chatterjee writes, 'the masses of North Bengal areas are very largely of Bodo origin or mixed Austric-Dravidian-Mongoloid. They can now mainly describes as Koch i.e., Hinduised or semi-Hinduised Bodo who have abandoned their original Tibeto-Burman speech and have adopted the northern district of Bengali'. 'They are proud to call themselves as Rajbanshis and to claim to be called Kshatriyas'. 'Nothing much is definitely known about the Kochs of North Bengal prior to 16th century; they may be described as western Bodos, an extension of the great Bodo race of Assam and East Bengal which at one time peopled the entire Assam valley from Sadia right up to North Bengal'. 'With the full Hinduisation of the Kochs, and the rise in power of their chiefs, Kshatriya origin was, as was natural, found out or suggested for them'. 'Bisu or Bisa was the real founder of Koch power. He ruled from 1496-1553 A.D. Bisu embraced Hinduism and took the name of Biswa - Sinha'. 'He himself was a worshipper of *Shiva*⁷ and *Durga*⁸, revived the *Shakta*⁹ Shrine at Kamakshya. This is an old shrine of hoary antiquity and of mongoloid or possibly even earlier Austric origin'. 'It witnessed the final Brahmanisation of a pre-Aryan cult. It is a symbol of the final Aryanisation or Hinduisation of the Indo-Mongoloids of North Eastern India' (Sanyal, 1965: 10-13). Many scholars and historians have started and it has been observed that the sanskritized Rajbanshis and the unsanskritized Kochs are very much the same kind of tribe, and that initially they were of one single tribe known as the Koch. These Koches had a very powerful kingdom, established by a man called Hajo. Later, Hajo's grandson, Bisu annexed the surrounding kingdoms and consolidated his kingdom, establishing a city called Koch-Bihar, which is still existent in India even today. The Brahmins were awed by this powerful Koch king so they elevated him to the Kestri (warrior) rank and

⁷*Shiva*: The most powerful god of the Hindu pantheon and one of the god heads in the Hindu Trinity. He is perhaps the most complex of Hindu deities. He is recognized by putting his shrine in the temple separate from those of other deities.

⁸ *Durga*: According to Hindu mythology *Durga* is the most powerful Goddess who is the remover of all obstacles.

⁹ *Shakta*: Worshipper of mother Goddess.

conferred upon him the title of Rajbansi. It is after this that the Koch metamorphosed into the present day Rajbanshi, as has been stated. It is stated that after the Koch king was conferred the title of Rajbansi, many Koches became Muslims and many did not desire to be called Rajbansi, thus this remained as Koch, retaining their traditions, religion, culture and tribal identity to a degree of purity. There are scholars who identify these Kochs as people of mongoloid stock and the Rajbanshis as of dravidian descent. There is a story that these Rajbanshis and descendants of the progeny of a Bengali man and an Arkani woman. Regarding the migration of these people into the kingdom, the facts are hazy, however, it can be estimated the time was approximately 250 years to 230 years ago (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1334-1335).

Physical features: They are Mongoloid in feature. Their skin colours are pigmented darkly, they are tough and of medium stature. They have short wide noses with round prominent nostrils and depressed nasal roots giving the noses a flattish appearance. Their eyes are narrow or slanted (almost almond shaped), large ears, thick and full lips and thick, black hair (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1334).

Language: They use the language of the Koch, who have still today retained their culture and traditions as Kochs. However, these who call themselves true Rajbanshis do not use the Koch language, but instead speak a language of their own calling it Rajbansi *Boli* or *bhasa*. It is found that this language they speak is similar to the language spoken by Bengalis of West Bengal in India, since many inflexions, intonations, words, verb usages, etc. are the same. While these people speak their own language within their own community, when communicating with other tribes they use Nepali (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1334-1335). The details of the Rajbanshi language is given below -

Language Name:	Rajbanshi
Alternative Name (s):	Koch, Koch, Rajbongshi, Rajbansi, Rajbangsi, Tajpuri, Tajpuria, Kamptapuri.
Dialect Name (s):	Bahe, Central Rajbanshi, Western Rajbanshi, Eastern Rajbanshi.
Spoken in:	Nepal, India, Bangladesh.
Language Code:	rjb (Former code: RJB).

Status: Living
Family: Indo-European
Sub group: Bengali-Assamese
Sub grouping Code: IEIACA

(MultiTree: A Digital Library of Language Relationships; <http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/LLDescription.cfm?code=rjb>).

Social Structure and Social Organisation

Social life is the essence of human life. It is a composite whole of the wave of diverse social organizations and phenomena, the background to social organization and social structure, therefore, needs mention. For Firth (1961: 35-40) social organization is the way things get done over a time in the community. It is the arrangement of elements for getting things done (in particular action). The social structure is that important system of elements which lasts and which everybody takes account of. The social structure offers a number of courses of action. The social structure is a definable morphological element, the social anatomy; it is maintained and given its ultimate form by organizational decisions (cited in Vidyarthi and Rai, 1976: 147). However, it exists in every society. Now the social life of the studied Rajbanshi people is being mentioned.

Family: Rajbansi families are of three types- joint or composite unilineal, nuclear or conjugal-natal, and composite-conjugal-natal or a mixture of both joint and nuclear under a single roof. Among these three types, the nuclear family pattern is most prevalent. In a Rajbansi family, even after the marriage of the eldest son, he and his spouse remain in the same house, eating in the same kitchen, with no change except for the daughter-in-law or *buhari* being an addition to the household. This situation remains unaltered until the marriage of the next son. Up till this time, the head of the household (the father) is the sole authority and everyone is supposed to work and act according to his (father's) directions. It is after the second son marries that the nuclear families begin to emerge. Rajbansi society is a patriarchal one and can be seen from the fact that after the death of the family head, the responsibility and authority are both transferred naturally to the

eldest son. In spite of this, any rites or rituals that involved in the family must be attended by all the sons, whether they are living within the same roof or in separate nuclear families. This is so, because the role of sons in Rajbansi society is of paramount importance. In the light of such glaring evidence a scholar stated blandly that these people are of a matriarchal society. It can be thus stated that, the Rajbansi society is purely matriarchal and no evidence is available regarding their tendency towards matriarchy today (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1335-1336).

Marriage: While marrying, Rajbanshi people are very careful and avoid the marriages between agnates *had nata jogaune* (*had* meaning bone or agnatic kin, *nata* meaning relationship, *jogaune* meaning avoidance). According to their tradition, they must keep an interval of seven generations in the agnatic lineage and five generations in the matrilineal lineage. Seven generations must also be kept as an interval in their *guru kul* (the abode or the family of one's guru) lineage and three generations in their meet lineage (somewhat like the blood brother relationship in other tribes throughout the world). It is only after this that they are permitted to intermarry, however, this rule is not strictly adhered to by the Rajbanshis themselves, as has been observed (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1335).

Kinship: The Rajbanshi people claim descent from the *surya bansi* (solar dynasty) *Kshatriyas* (warriors) and state their *gotra* as *Kashya* (*kashya*- a holy shrine in the Gharwal mountains of Uttar Pradesh, India). Basically they have seven *thars* (clan) namely, Rajbanshi, Lakhat Rajbanshi, Rajpuriya, Koche, Ramaniya, Kahal, Koal Makra, Woang Rajbanshi. Besides these, there are the Muslims too (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1335).

Economy: Traditionally they are agriculturalists and they survive on the produce of their labour. They mainly cultivate paddy, betel, tobacco, mustard, jute etc. and also grow several vegetables in small gardens around their houses. Their income is limited and consequently their economic standard never rises. The reasons for this economic stagnation are: extravagance; possession of very little cultivable lands; great population increase; unwilling to accept modern farming techniques to mention a few, as has been observed. Livestock rearing is also done by the people, as has been observed, but only as

an economic contingency on which they can fall back. Bull and buffaloes (male) are seen to be reared under some sort of compulsion i.e. till the land. They do possess cows, buffaloes (females), goats, chickens, pigeons, etc. for milk and proteins. They are found to carry their farm produce like milk, curds, *ghyu*, etc. to the nearby local markets or *hats* (weekly market) and the money they earn is used to add a slight boost to their sagging economy. Besides, livestock breeding and farming, they are good weavers and some are also employed in government or private sectors. This is another source from which they draw extra money into their community. Now-a-days some of them have also engaged in various jobs- services, business and others. But all these are not enough and the Rajbansi are still in economic doldrums (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1344).

Settlement: The houses of traditional Rajbanshi are made of locally available raw materials like wood, bamboo and mud. They keep their houses clean and tidy and do not consider it necessary to have the doorway facing a particular direction (as is very important in other tribal house construction patterns). But if one direction proves inauspicious, then they rebuild the house facing another direction. Rajbanshi houses are found to have doorways facing any one of the four directions. While one house is utilised as the kitchen, the other may be used as the storeroom, bedroom or such. They also have the tradition of constructing a separate house which is used by beggars or by strangers who need shelter for a night or so. This is also used as a parlour for guests or as a conference room. At the centre of these houses is a clean compound, there is a hearth or pit for burning a fire during the winter season and where household members and other people gather to narrate ancient lore, simultaneously absorbing the warmth. The cowsheds are constructed quite a distance away from the dwellings, but not too far. The *thakur than* (altar) is situated to the south-east of the main house. *Thakur* (deity) is worshipped as *kul devta*, by these people (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1335). But now-a-days an influence of modern house type is observed among them. Presently they are coming out of their traditional house architecture and building modern house.

Food and Drinks: Their food is simple and the staple diet is rice. Ordinarily, they eat the food consisting of rice, pulses and curry (veg. curry and fish curry). Sale roti is cooked only on certain occasions to prefer to eat maize and wheat. In Rajbansi society, they all

seem to like a food called *panta bhat* (stalled rice) meaning cooked rice soaked in water. This is soaked the whole night and eaten the next morning. They throw away the water and then pour some oil and add salt to this dish. Onions are also used to flavour this *panta bhat*. They eat *muri* (puffed rice), *chira* (flattened rice) and also eat *dahi* (curd). They drink milk but they don't prefer *ghee* (clarified butter). Though meat consumption is permitted in their society, they do not like people who eat pork, buff and chicken and also those who drink intoxicants. Thought these folks use earthenware pots and metal utensils, guests are served on banana leaves which they say is the way of showing their greatest respect in their society (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1336).

Dress and Ornaments: The Rajbansi people dress up in a very simple way. The men folk wear knee length *dhotis*, and *langautis* (loincloths), while the women wear *paetains* which consist of a piece of cloth wrapped around to cover their breasts and lower torso till their knees. These are their traditional clothes; however, they have begun to wear modern clothes now-a-days. Rajbansi do not have the custom of their married women wearing *sindur* (vermilion), cutting and combing their hair and wearing *tika* (holy mark). They mostly wear silver ornaments. Married women wear silver chains, wristlets and bangles. While making such ornaments, they use almost one to 1.25 kilograms of silver, meaning their ornaments are extremely heavy (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1336).

Political Organisation: Their society is controlled by the village panchayat. In case of community hunting, community fishing in shallow water, marriage, funeral rites and co-operative tilling of land, the order of the village panchayat is observed by everyone. At the present moment the Government have set up village defence parties mainly to prevent theft and robbery. Some of the young men have enlisted themselves and they work under the direction of a commander selected from amongst them. Creation of Gram Panchayat under West Bengal Panchayat Act of 1957 has given further impetus to the village people (Sanyal, 1965: 124).

Religious Beliefs and Festivals: They are adherents of Hinduism. They worship various *devis* (Goddesses) and *devtas* (Gods), but the *puja* (worship) to the goddess *Kali* (female shakti-energy) is carried out with great fanfare and enthusiasm. Every village has a

separate but dedicated top this goddess and it is here that she is propitiated. While in some huts, mud mounds are coloured and worshipped, other huts contain images of Kali at the centre, flanked by fairs on both sides. On some road sides, banana trees are also planted, where the worship of *Masan Kali*¹⁰ is done. Every village has an individual *gram devta* (village deity) and separate from other villages. In some villages, this deity is housed in a hut while in other villages, it is placed beneath a tree. Among the deities they worship some are *Sarbamangala*¹¹, *Bisahari*¹² and *Dulai Chandī*¹³. *Puja* is also performed to the man's skull or *khappar*, and to clay deities located in their fields. These clay deities are worshipped in the fields to ensure protection of the crops from natural disasters and the *khappar* is worshipped so that *bhuts* (ghost) and *preths* (demons) do not trouble them. The Rajbansi people who worship such deities naturally do dabble in the realm of *jadutona* (white or black magic), *mantra-tantra* (incantations and spells) and the priests of such activities, the *dhamis* and *jhankris* act as mediators. Rajbansi worship *Bisto thakur* (the water god), *Burma thakur* (protector from fire) *Pawan thakur* (protector from storms), *Basumati thakurani*¹⁴ and *Mahakal Thakur* (god of mountains and forests). There are other deities such as: *Shiva*, *Dharam thakur*¹⁵ and *Laxmi thakurani*¹⁶. Rajbansi festivals are called *pawani*¹⁷. Though the Hindu festivals of *dasai*¹⁸ and *tihar*¹⁹ are

¹⁰ *Masan Kali*: Images of Goddesses *Kali* who is worshipped on different occasions for the purpose of purification of the houses. Especially on some occasions like birth, marriage and death this deity is worshipped by these folks. In this connection the pigeon or duck is sacrificed to this deity.

¹¹ *Sarbamangala*: Many ancient literatures and texts have depicted the existence of Mata *Sarbamangala*. This deity is worshipped by these folk people for the wellbeing of family.

¹² *Bisahari*: The blind deity i.e. the deity of the snakes is worshipped by these folk people.

¹³ *Dulai Chandī*: The Goddesses *Chandī* is associated with good fortune as well as disaster. One of her auspicious forms is *Dulai Chandī*.

¹⁴ *Basumati thakurani*: The earth-deity, is regarded as the mother of all living things and the giver of food.

¹⁵ *Dharam thakur*: The Hindu god worshipped by these folk people as one of their special village gods. He is a fertility god and a healer of disease. He is represented by a shapeless stone daubed with vermilion and is normally placed under a tree or placed in the open, but sometimes enshrined in a temple. The worship mainly takes place in the months of Baisakh, Jaistha and Asarh on the day of full moon.

¹⁶ *Laxmi thakurani*: The Hindu Goddess of wealth, prosperity (both material and spiritual), fortune, and the embodiment of beauty. She is said to bring good luck and is believed to protect her devotees from all kinds of misery and money-related sorrows. She is worshipped daily in homes.

¹⁷ *Pawani*: Traditionally, the Rajbanshi people celebrate their own festival such as the *Pawani*.

¹⁸ *Dasai*: *Dasai*, which is celebrated during Sept-Oct. It is known as Durga Puja and this is the greatest festival in Hindu society.

¹⁹ *Tihar*: The name *Tihar* means the festival of lights, where many candles are lit both inside and outside the houses to make it bright at night. People pray to the Goddess Laxmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu during *Tihar*. The Goddess Laxmi is also considered to be the main Goddess of wealth and good fortune.

celebrated by them, they do so in a different way. On the *astami*²⁰ (eighth day) and the *nawami*²¹ (ninth day), of *dasai*, blood sacrifices are offered to the goddess *Durga* as is done by other Hindus, but on the tenth day or *vijaya dashami (tika)*, these people do not wear any *tika* or *jamaro*. Similarly, in *tihar* too. They perform *Laxmi puja* in their own way, but the custom of *bhai tika*²² is not at all prevalent. Besides the above festivals, there are some unique to the Rajbansis and reflect their socio-cultural importance (Bisht and Bankoti, 2004: 1344-1345).

The area under study namely Purba Rangia village located at Balasan River basin adjacent to Siliguri town and lies at the foothill region of the Himalayas. The River Balasan downwards from Himalayas with natural resources to a great extent like sands, stones, boulders etc. which are used as the raw materials for urban constructions and it emerged out as a prime earning source for the people working in the stone field. The Balasan River bed provided them the land to establish a new residence. Several castes, communities and ethnic groups lived in the studied village but most of them belonged to Rajbanshi community, a chief scheduled caste of North Bengal. The present research work mainly conducted on this community. It is said that they belong to the great 'Bodo' family. Those Koch who are now Hindus are mainly known under the name Rajbanshi. The Rajbanshis of North Bengal, as a synonym of Koch. Their dialect holds several close point of similarity to the dialect of East Bengal. However, due to various reasons the traditional life which includes family, marriage, kinship, settlement, economy, food and drinks, dress and ornaments, political organisation, religious belief and festivals etc. as well as socio-cultural life of the studied Rajbanshi people have been affected seriously. Due to several reasons they have been forced to migrate here and for survival they engaged themselves mostly in stone based work. However, it has a great impact on their life and in particular the children of those families as well as their overall development may be affected by it and these issues will be examined in the following chapters primarily.

²⁰ *Astami*: It is the second day of Durga puja.

²¹ *Nawami*: It is the third and final day of Durga puja.

²² *Bhai tika*: On the fifth or last day of *Tihar*, brothers take *tika* (holy mark) from sisters. The sisters also offer sweets and other food items and cloths to their brothers. It is believed that brothers become safe from death and other evils after taking *tika* and garlands from their sisters during *Tihar*.

References

- Bisht, N.S. & T.S. Bankoti (2004), *Encyclopaedic Ethnography of the Himalayan Tribes*, Volume- 4 (R-Z), Pg. 1334-1345. Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House.
- Census of India 2011, New Delhi: Government of India.
- Census of India 2001, *Primary Census Abstract: West Bengal*, Series 20, Volume- I & II, Directorate of Census Operations, Government of India.
- Census of India 2001, *Data Highlights: The Scheduled Caste*, Office of the Registrar General, West Bengal, India.
- Firth, R. (1961, first published 1951, 3rd, ed.), *Elements of Social Organization*, London: Watts and Co.
- <http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Siliguri#History>, retrieved 24.09.2014, at 2.30 p.m.
- Indya Tour, 2014; http://www.indyatour.com/india/west_bengal/darjeeling/siliguri.php, retrieved 24.09.2014, at 11.25 a.m.
- MultiTree: A Digital Library of Language Relationships; <http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/LLDescription.cfm?code=rjb>; retrieved 23.09.2009, at 2.30 p.m.
- National Panchayat Portal, Gram Panchayat Schedule, 2011, Sponsored by Department of Panchayati Raj.
- O'Malley, L.S.S. (1907, reprinted 2001), *Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling*, New Delhi: Logos Press.
- Sanyal, C. C. (1965), *The Rajbanshi of North Bengal*, Calcutta: Asiatic Society.
- Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority, 2012; <http://www.sjda.org/location.php>, retrieved 24.09.2014, at 10.30 a.m.
- Siliguri Municipal Corporation Report, 2001.
- Srinivas, M.N. (1969), *India's villages*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Vidyarthi, L.P. and B. K. Rai, (1976, Reprinted 1985), *The Tribal Culture of India*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

CHAPTER IV: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE STUDIED PEOPLE

Demography

Demography is a term derived from the two Greek words, 'Demos' meaning the people and 'Graphy', to draw or write that is science. Demography is used nowadays to denote the study of human population by statistical methods, and deals with such questions as the numbers of people living, dying or being born in a country or region and the measurement of fertility, mortality and marriage rates. For some purposes, qualitative as well as quantitative factors are included within the scope of the subject. For instance, one may study psychological attributes in men, or social qualities such as wealth and rank. In general, these border line subjects are associated with demography only in so far as they have an important effect upon its principal constituents, fertility, mortality, marriage and migration (Cox, 1950: 1).

The multilingual demographic dictionary defines demography as the "Scientific study of human populations, primarily with respects to their size, their structure and their development". According to Donald, J. Bogue, demography is the mathematical and statistical study of the size, composition and spatial distribution of human population and of changes over time in these aspects through the operations of the five processes of fertility, mortality, marriage, migration and social mobility. Although it maintains a continuous descriptive and comparative analysis of trends, each of these processes and in their net result, its long run goal is to develop theories to explain the events that it charts and compares. According to Stenford, "In its most formal sense demography is a very technical and highly mathematical study of the vital statistics of human population (especially birth, death and migration) as well as of the characteristics of population structure (including age, sex and marital status) as they contribute to an understanding of population change" (Sinha and Zacharia, 1984: 1-3). Births, deaths and migration are the 'big three' of demography, jointly producing population stability or change. A

population's composition may be described in terms of basic demographic features – age, sex, family and household status – and by features of the population's social and economic context – ethnicity, religion, language, education, occupation, income and wealth. Demography is also very useful for understanding social and economic problems and identifying potential solutions (Thomson, Feb 2007). A census helps provide much of this information, in addition to vital statistic records. In some studies, the demography of an area is expanded to include education, income, the structure of the family unit, housing, race or ethnicity and religion (Franco, M. et al. October 27th 2009: 9). However, to understand the demographic composition of the studied people following aspects have been discussed –

Caste, Community, and Ethnic Composition of the Studied People: To conduct the present study total 250 families were selected in the studied area to fulfill the need of present research work. Among them there were Hindu, Muslim, and Santal tribe found to live in the studied village. Among the Bengali Hindus, there were Brahmin belonged to an upper caste; Jugi and Kapali belonged to OBCs and Rajbanshi and Namashudra belonged to SCs. Apart from these, the people by caste Teli belonged to OBC and the Kshatriya belonged to upper caste came from Behar; and the people by caste Biswakarma belonged to SC is the Nepali linguistic group were also lived there. The details of the caste/community/ethnic composition of the studied people are given below -

Table 4.1: Distribution of Family on the basis of Caste/Community/Ethnic Group

Caste/Community/Ethnic group										
Rajbanshi	Namashudra	Jugi	Kapali	Brahmin	Teli (Behari)	Kshatriya (Behari)	Biswakarma (Nepali)	Muslim	Santal	Total
234	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	250
93.60	1.20	1.20	1.20	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.80	0.40	100.00

It is the fact there were total ten castes/communities. Among them major percentage (93.60%) of the studied families were belonged to Rajbanshi community, followed by Namashudra, Jugi, Kapali each of them had the same percentage and the rest of the

families like Brahmin, Santal and Nepali people were found in very poor in number (Table 4.1). However, there were ten number of castes, communities and ethnic groups and their number of families were varied. Now their population strength may be observed.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Population according to Caste/Community/Ethnic Group etc.

Sex	Caste/Community/Ethnic group										Total
	Rajbanshi	Namashudra	Jugi	Kapali	Brahmin	Teli	Kshatriya	Biswakarma	Muslim	Santal	
Male	594 93.84	10 1.58	5 0.79	9 1.42	1 0.16	2 0.32	2 0.32	3 0.47	4 0.63	3 0.47	633 100.00
Female	568 93.88	7 1.16	4 0.66	7 1.16	3 0.50	4 0.66	2 0.33	3 0.50	6 0.99	1 0.17	605 100.00
Total	1162 93.86	17 1.37	9 0.73	16 1.29	4 0.32	6 0.48	4 0.32	6 0.48	10 0.81	4 0.32	1238 100.00

The total number of population in the studied families was 1238 (100%) of which males were quite more than the females. Among the studied people a large number of population belonged to Rajbanshi community (93.86%) out of which male members were quite more than the females. Meanwhile there were some other caste/communities also but their representatives were very poor (Table 4.2).

Age and Sex wise People: It is first and foremost prime factor in demographic composition of a specific area. On the other hand, to speak sex ratio we understand the number of females for every thousand males in a given population. It is linked to different social outcomes like marriage, family formation, labour supply and gender roles. The details of the above are shown below-

Table 4.3: Distribution of Population according to Age and Sex

Age group	Male	Female	Total	Sex ratio
0-4	57 44.48	70 55.12	127 100.00	1228
5-9	108 49.32	111 50.68	219 100.00	1027
10-14	125 53.88	107 46.12	232 100.00	856
15-19	47 61.48	29 38.16	76 100.00	617
20-24	31	35	66	1129

Age group	Male	Female	Total	Sex ratio
	46.97	53.03	100.00	
25-29	40 37.04	68 62.96	108 100.00	1700
30-34	47 45.19	57 54.81	104 100.00	1213
35-39	59 58.42	42 41.58	101 100.00	712
40-44	41 74.55	14 25.45	55 100.00	314
45-49	23 42.59	31 57.41	54 100.00	1348
50-54	22 55.00	18 45.00	40 100.00	818
55-59	16 66.67	24 33.338	24 100.00	500
60-64	10 58.82	7 41.18	17 100.00	700
65-69	4 80.00	1 20.00	5 100.00	250
70+	3 30.00	7 70.00	10 100.00	2333
Total	633 51.53	605 48.87	1238 100.00	956

The highest percentage of population (18.74%) was noticed in 10-14 years age group. On the contrary, the lowest percentage of population (0.4%) was found in 65-69 years age group. Particularly among the male, the highest percentage of population (19.75%) was noticed in the age group of 10-14 years and the lowest (0.47%) was in the age group of 70 and above years remarkably while among the female, the highest (18.35%) and the lowest percentage (0.17%) was noticed in the age group of 5-9 years and 65-69 years respectively. On the other hand it is observed that the average sex ratio of the studied people was 956 and it was highest (2333) and lowest (250) at the age group of 70 and above years and 65-69 years respectively (Table 4.3).

Marital Status of the People: Marital status especially is known to be an important predictor of the overall quality of human life. It seems to have a great contribution in the development of society because it is directly related to fertility, family formation and kinship system.

Table 4.4: Marital Status of the People

Sex	Unmarried	Married	Widow	Widower	Separated	Total
Male	368 58.14	259 40.92	-	6 0.95	-	633 100.00
Female	306 50.58	263 43.47	30 4.96	-	6 0.99	605 100.00
Total	674 54.44	522 42.16	30 2.42	6 0.48	6 0.48	1238 100.00

The data reveals the fact that 41.86 per cent male 49.42 per cent female were ever married and unmarried males were more than the females. Apart from both widow and widower there were only separated women also. However, to know more, the details of the marital status of the people are shown in the following table

Table 4.5: Marital Status of the Male and Female

Age group (in years)	Male				Female				Total
	Unmarried	Married	Widower	Total	Unmarried	Married	Widow	Separated	
0-4	57 100.00	-	-	57 100.00	70 100.00	-	-	-	70 100.00
5-9	108 100.00	-	-	108 100.00	111 100.00	-	-	-	111 100.00
10-14	125 100.00	-	-	125 100.00	107 100.00	-	-	-	107 100.00
15-19	47 100.00	-	-	47 100.00	17 58.62	12 41.38	-	-	29 100.00
20-24	22 70.97	9 29.03	-	31 100.00	1 2.86	34 97.14	-	-	35 100.00
25-29	9 22.50	31 77.50	-	40 100.00	-	67 98.53	-	1 1.47	68 100.00
30-34	-	47 100.00	-	47 100.00	-	54 94.74	1 1.75	2 3.51	57 100.00
35-39	-	58 98.31	1 1.69	59 100.00	-	39 92.86	2 4.76	1 2.38	42 100.00
40-44	-	40 97.56	1 2.44	41 100.00	-	12 85.71	1 7.14	1 7.14	14 100.00
45-49	-	23 100.00	-	23 100.00	-	27 87.10	4 12.90	-	31 100.00
50-54	-	20 90.91	2 9.09	22 100.00	-	10 55.56	7 38.89	1 5.56	18 100.00
55-59	-	16 100.00	-	16 100.00	-	5 62.50	3 37.50	-	8 100.00
60-64	-	9 90.00	1 10.00	10 100.00	-	3 42.86	4 57.14	-	7 100.00

Age group (in years)	Male				Female				Total
	Unmarried	Married	Widower	Total	Unmarried	Married	Widow	Separated	
65-69	-	3 75.00	1 25.00	4 100.00	-	-	1 100.00	-	1 100.00
70+	-	3 100.00		3 100.00	-	-	7 100.00	-	7 100.00
Total	368 58.14	259 40.92	6 0.95	633 100.00	306 50.58	263 43.47	30 4.96	6 0.99	605 100.00

However, generally marriage was found to be started among the male members when they crossed the threshold of 19 years age cohort while the same was from 15 years age cohort in case of females. The ever married male members were found to be highest in 35-39 years group and in case of females it was in 25-29 years age cohort while the lowest was found in male members when they crossed the threshold of 60-65 years age cohort and in case of females it was in the age group of 60-64 years. Total six widowers were found in the studied families of which the highest percentage was in the age group of 50-54 years. On the other hand, the number of widow was 30 and the highest percentage was found in two different age group that was 50-54 years and 70 and above years age cohort. No unmarried male was found in 30 and above years age group while no unmarried female was found in 25 years and above age group (Table 4.5).

Family: Family is an old age universal organisation that can be seen in every society even from primitive to civilize stage. It plays an important role in maintaining the social structure. Family is the principal institution for the socialization of children. Anthropologists have often supposed that the family in a traditional society forms the primary economic unit. However, to understand the situation the study was conducted on 250 families. Their caste/community/ethnic group wise number of families have been mentioned in the Table 4.1. Now if we observe the type of family the data reveals that among the studied total 250 families three types of families viz. Nuclear, joint and extended families were found and among them more than 3/4th (76%) were the nuclear families followed by the joint families (21.20%) and extended families (2.80%).

Table 4.6: Size of the Family

Family size	1-3	4-5	6-7	8 & Above	Total
No. of family	30	147	59	14	250
	12.00	58.80	23.60	5.60	100.00

The data also reveals that most of the families were composed of four to five members followed by six to seven, one to three, and eight and above members (Table 4.6) and their average family size was 4.95 i.e. five.

Educational Profile: Education is one of the decisive factors for the development of a society or a community. It is the cradle of a society. Considering its importance, educational status of the studied people is highlighted here.

Table 4.7: Educational Status of the People

Sex	Illiterate		Literate	Total
	Can sign	Cannot sign		
Male	16	204	307	527
	3.04	38.71	58.25	100.00
Female	31	255	208	494
	6.28	51.62	42.10	100.00
Total	47	459	515	1021
	4.60	44.96	50.44	100.00

(Excluded 0-6 age group)

The aforesaid data manifests that around 50 per cent people were illiterate and it was more among the females than the males. Among the illiterate, few of the males and females could sign but not read (Table 4.7). The rate of illiteracy among the female was quite more and behind it there were so many socio-cultural factors which may be discussed later.

Table 4.8: Age Group Wise Educational Status of the Male and Female

Age Group (in years)	Male			Female		
	Illiterate	Literate	Total	Illiterate	Literate	Total
7-9	2	57	59	4	66	70
	3.39	96.61	100.00	5.71	94.29	100.00
10-14	17	108	125	20	87	107
	13.60	86.40	100.00	18.69	81.31	100.00
15-19	11	36	47	9	20	29
	23.40	76.60	100.00	31.03	68.97	100.00

Age Group (in years)	Male			Female		
	Illiterate	Literate	Total	Illiterate	Literate	Total
20-24	9 29.03	22 70.97	31 100.00	29 82.86	6 17.14	35 100.00
25-29	26 65.00	14 35.00	40 100.00	56 82.35	12 17.65	68 100.00
30-34	33 70.21	14 29.79	47 100.00	49 85.96	8 14.03	57 100.00
35-39	34 57.63	25 42.37	59 100.00	37 88.10	5 11.90	42 100.00
40-44	31 75.61	10 24.39	41 100.00	13 92.86	1 7.14	14 100.00
45-49	16 69.57	7 30.43	23 100.00	29 93.55	2 6.45	31 100.00
50-54	15 68.18	7 31.81	22 100.00	17 94.44	1 5.56	18 100.00
55-59	11 68.75	5 31.25	16 100.00	8 100.00	-	8 100.00
60-64	8 80.00	2 20.00	10 100.00	7 100.00	-	7 100.00
65-69	4 100.00	-	4 100.00	1 100.00	-	1 100.00
70+	3 100.00	-	3 100.00	17 100.00	-	17 100.00
Total	220 41.75	307 58.25	527 100.00	286 57.89	208 42.11	494 100.00

(Excluded 0-6 age group)

The data reveals the fact that the literacy rate was high among the male and female population of 7-9 years age group followed by 10-14 and 15-19 years age groups. But it was noticed from the age group of 20-24 years and onwards that the female literacy rate got sharply declined as compared to male literacy rate. In the context of education the females were neglected owing to socio-cultural practices. Most of the parents thought that the female children do not need to be educated rather their prime duty is to serve the family and also have to learn and practice necessary household works because after marriage they have to do it. Therefore, the illiteracy rate was high among the females.

Table 4.9: Educational Standard of the Male and Female

Sex	Educational standard				
	I-V	V-VIII	IX-X	XI-XII	Total
Male	186 60.59	103 33.55	14 4.56	4 1.30	307 100.00
Female	145 69.71	61 29.33	1 0.48	1 0.48	208 100.00
Total	331 64.27	164 31.84	15 2.91	5 0.98	515 100.00

(Excluded 0-6 age group)

The data reveals the fact that among the total 515 (100%) literate people, major percentage of the people had the education up to primary level and around 32 per cent had V-VIII standard whereas very few had more than that. After class VIII the representation of the women was very poor than the male. All over, the educational scenario of the studied people was very unpleasant. So many factors were responsible for the backwardness of their education which may be discussed later.

Working and Non Working Population: The total population in the studied area was divided into two different categories viz. working force and non working force.

Table 4.10: Working and Non Working Population

Sex	Working force (primary and secondary)	Non working force	Total
Male	524 90.97	52 9.03	576 100.00
Female	487 91.03	48 8.97	535 100.00
Total	1011 91.00	100 9.00	1111 100.00

(Excluded 0-4 years; male- 57, female- 70 and total 127)

It is the fact that among the studied people around 91 per cent of male and female were engaged in various works though it was slightly high among the female (Table 4.10).

Occupational Status of the People: The people in the studied area were involved in various works. The details about their working involvement are mentioned below-

Table 4.11: Occupation of the Male and Female

Sex	Type of work (Primary Occupation)						Type of work (Secondary Occupation)		
	Stone based work	Day labour	Maid servant	Driver	Others	Total	Stone based work	Others	Total
Male	489 93.32	20 3.82	-	3 0.57	12 2.29	524 100.00	12 80.00	3 20.00	15 100.00
Female	475 97.54	2 0.41	6 1.23	-	4 0.82	487 100.00	6 100.00	-	6 100.00
Total	964 95.35	22 2.18	6 0.59	3 0.30	16 1.58	1011 100.00	18 85.71	3 14.29	21 100.00

(Excluded 0-4 years age group population)

In respect to primary occupation, it was found that out of 1011 (100%) working population, 95.35 per cent peoples were involved in stone based occupation followed by day labour, others, maid servant and driver. Among the total number of male working population, mostly were engaged in stone based job while very few were involved in day labour, other various occupations and driver. On the contrary, among the total number of female working population, around 98 per cent female members were engaged in stone based job and the rest females were attached to maid servant, other various occupations and day labour work. However, as secondary occupation, only 21 (100%) persons were also engaged in various works. Among them majority were engaged in stone based work while very few were engaged in other various occupations. The mentionable matter was that as secondary occupation, all the working females were involved in stone based work only (Table 4.11).

Monthly Income: To get their actual fiscal state the monthly income of the studied families was divided into five categories like up to Rs. 1000/-, Rs. 1001/- to Rs. 2000/-, Rs. 3001/- to Rs. 4000/- and Rs. 4001/- and above.

Table 4.12: Distribution of Studied Families on the basis of Monthly Income (including the income of working children)

Child workers' family	Monthly income (in Rs.)					
	Up to 1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	4001 & above	Total
No. of family	7 2.80	112 44.80	105 42.00	20 8.00	6 2.40	250 100.00

Among the studied families, around 90 per cent families had the monthly income not more than Rs. 3000/-. On the other hand, around 10 per cent families could earn more than Rs. 3000/- and above per month (Table 4.12). Several factors are responsible behind this economic situation as well as income. The details regarding their economy may be discussed later.

Demography is the science of people. It is a statistical and mathematical study of the size, composition, spatial distribution of human population, and of changes over time in these aspects through the operation of the five processes of fertility, mortality, marriage, migration and social mobility mainly. However, the size and shape of population, aspects related to birth rate and death rate, composition and density of population, socio-economic problems, quantitative and qualitative problems of population may be known very simply. By demography of any particular group of people we may get an idea at a glance related to above mentioned issues.

Through this demographic discussion of the present studied people, we could know the details about the people, their number, age and sex wise distribution, sex ratio, family size, family type, migration, caste, community and ethnic composition, religion, language, marital status, educational status as well as situation, economy etc. The studied people were Hindu, Muslims and Santal tribe. Among the Hindus there were nine castes and among them there were upper caste, OBCs and SCs. Apart from these, the only scheduled tribe, Santals also lived there. However, among the total studied people the Rajbanshis were numerically dominant (93.86%) and Brahmin, Kshatriya, Teli, Biswakarma, Santal each of them had one family. There were Bengali, Hindi and Nepali speaking people. There were total 250 families but the number of family members was varied between 1 and 10 but most of their family size varied between 4 and 5 persons and their average family size was 5. Three types of family were there but most of them were nuclear families.

The total studied population was 1238 where the males were quite more than the females and the sex ration was not equal (956). Further the age wise distribution of population was always not equal. Around 47 per cent people belonged to the age group of 0-14

years. The males were highest in the age group of 10-14 years and the females were highest in the age group of 5-9 years. It is the fact, that after 64 years the number of people both male and female got reduced (2.58%) tremendously. Regarding marital status around 45 per cent of the studied people were married and it was started for the male from 20-24 years age group and for the female it was quite early i.e. from 15-19 years age group. Apart from these, certain numbers of widow, widower and separated women were there. In respect to education half of the people were literate and it was quite more among the males than the females. But most of their education was mainly confined in primary and secondary level and very few could cross this boundary whereas the participation of the females was very rare. The studied people came here and mostly (91%) engaged themselves either primarily or secondarily in various works for survival. In this regards, mostly (95.35%) were engaged in stone based work. Apart from this, few of them worked as day labour, maid servant, driver and others. Though major section of the family members were engaged in various works but most of their (89.60%) monthly income was primarily confined up to Rs. 3000/- where the rest could earn more than that. Moreover, various aspects of the studied people i.e. their composition, age, sex, sex ratio, migration, family, marital status, education, economy, religion etc. as well as changes in various aspects have been known through this above discussion and as whole the changes and other aspects regarding this community highlighted clearly.

However, it may be summarized that with the passage of time the vacated land of the Balasan River Basin has been changed into a permanent village by the migrated people who belonged to various caste/communities/ethnic groups, linguistic groups and religious groups too came from various places and are residing there permanently. For maintaining their livelihood they engaged themselves in various works and mostly in stone based work. The occupational as well as earnings influences may be observed on their family type, size and life span too. Among the ever married people there was married, widow, widower and separated women also. The educational institution, shops and some other infrastructural facilities are available a little bit in this village and its number is increasing regularly. Therefore, it may be said that they are living with various groups of people and various aspects of their life are continuously being changed.

References

Cox, Peter R. (1950), *Demography*, London: Cambridge University Press.

Franco, M. et al. (October 27th 2009), *Social state of the World*, Catalonia: Escola Politècnica Superior de Castelldefels.

Sinha, V.C. and E. Zacharia, (1984, Reprinted 2009), *Elements of Demography*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private Limited.

Thomson, E. (Feb 2007), What is Demography?; [http://www.suda.su.se/docs /What%20is%20Demography.pdf](http://www.suda.su.se/docs/What%20is%20Demography.pdf), retrieved 19.05.2013, at 2.35 p.m.

CHAPTER V: OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

Occupation is defined as the work that a person does particularly as a means of living. It is the fact that participation in occupation helps to create one's identity as well as meaningful lives and life. The central aspect of the human experience is occupation which fulfils all basic needs necessary for survival. Occupation helps to develop the innate capacities of a biological, social and cultural nature of human beings. Without occupation people cannot survive. All over the world people are involved in various occupations. In this connection the studied people primarily depend on stone based occupation for maintaining their livelihood. The details are discussed below –

Stone based Occupation

The studied village, Purba Rangia is located on the Balasan river basin which is very nearer to Siliguri town where most of the people were involved in stone based occupation for maintaining their livelihood. It has been mentioned in earlier that the Balasan River comes down from the upper Himalayan region and with its flow various natural resources viz. Stone, boulder, sand etc. also come down and depend on its stone based occupation has been developed. Primarily the stone based occupation was the backbone of economy of the studied people. It was such type of economic sector where there was no need of monetary investment to do it. The stone based work was of various types such as stone collection, sand gathering, stone crushing, truck loading and so on. The details related to this economy are discussed below -

It is the fact that during coming down to the plain land from the upper Himalayan region the stones and boulders get broken gradually by the river flow.

Stone and Sand: The studied people mainly depended on the stone based occupation. In this regard, different types of stones and boulders were available in the river, which were collected by the concerned people and then broke into different sizes and shapes as per necessity and later they sold it. On the basis of size and shape these were termed as

various names like *big size maitel*, *maitel-3/4(duplicate)*, *maitel-3/4(original)*, *big size boulder*, *medium size boulder*, *small size boulder*, *chipis-1/2 inch*, *chipis-1inch*, *brash maitel*, *single*, *acurate bajri*, *special bajri*, *pure bajri*, *chalu bajri*, *1/4-bajri*, *girit bajri*, *gota bajri*. As per the demand of outside markets the stones were further broken to give desire sizes and shapes by applying a number of processes which are discussed below briefly–

Three types of boulder were collected from the river directly. The stones like *brash* and *maitel* of both sizes were made through crushing from boulders. Particularly the *brash* and *big size maitel* were made from big size boulder. On the other hand, the *maitel-3/4* and the *big size maitel* were also made from medium size boulder; and the *maitel-3/4* could also be made from small size boulder through the process of crushing. The stone, *single* was picked out exclusively through shifting with the help of sieve without any other process and it was generally found in big size as compare to *bajri*. The *chipis* was such type of stone which was generally made from the single through the process of crushing. It was classified into two types on the basis of its size of which one was known as *chipis-1/2 inch* and another was *chipis-1inch*. On the other hand the sand was gathered from the river directly. Apart from these, two types of sand were found in the river, one was coarse sand and another was plain sand which were gathered by the people.

The sand and the stone like accurate, special and single had a high demand in the market. The stones and sand were used for various purposes which are mentioned below –

Table 5.1: Usages of Different types of Stones and Sand

Types of stone/sand	Purpose of use
Big size <i>maitel</i> and <i>maitel-3/4</i>	For road construction
Big size boulder	For damp making
Medium size boulder and small size boulder	For road construction
<i>chipis-1/2 inch</i> and <i>chipis-1 inch</i>	For pillar/beam making
<i>Single</i> and <i>brash maitel</i>	For road construction
All <i>bajri</i>	For building and road construction

Types of stone/sand	Purpose of use
Pure <i>bajri</i> and special <i>bajri</i>	For plinth and wall making and also for the well-ring and pillar making
Accurate and 1/4 <i>bajri</i>	For floor making
Accurate and <i>chipis</i>	For pillar and roof making
Sand	For building and road construction as well as for well-ring and pillar making also.

However, its demand was never constant forever because of changeable market demand. In this regard, the price of stones usually varied for its quality as well as for the market demand. Different types of stones and its price per 100 cft are shown below –

Table 5.2: Distribution of Stones and Sand According to its Price per 100 cft

Types of stone	Present price per 100 cft.	
	If a person crushes the stones after collection from the river	If a person crushes the stones provided by <i>Sardar</i>
Big size maitel	Rs. 400/-	Rs. 150/-
<i>maitel</i> -3/4(duplicate)	Rs. 400/-	Rs. 300/-
<i>maitel</i> -3/4(original)	Rs. 500/-	Rs. 300/-
<i>Chipis</i> -½ inch	Rs. 1200/-	Rs. 800/-
<i>Chipis</i> -1 inch	Rs. 800/-	Rs. 600/-
<i>Brash maitel</i>	Rs. 500/-	Rs. 300/-
Types of Stone	Sell it directly without any process of crushing and sifting	
Big size boulder	Rs. 90/- to Rs. 120/-	
Medium size boulder	Rs. 125/-	
Small size boulder	Rs. 100/-	
Types of stone	Sell it directly after sifting only	
<i>Single</i>	Rs. 100/-	
Accurate <i>bajri</i>	Rs. 800/-	
Special <i>bajri</i>	Rs. 400/-	
Pure <i>bajri</i>	Rs. 300/-	
<i>Chalu bajri</i>	Rs. 300/-	

Types of stone	Present price per 100 cft.	
	If a person crushes the stones after collection from the river	If a person crushes the stones provided by <i>Sardar</i>
$\frac{1}{4}$ bajri	Rs. 300/-	
Girit bajri	Rs. 400/-	
Gota bajri	Rs. 300/-	
Types of sand	Sell it directly after sifting only	
Coarse sand	Rs. 100/-	
Plain sand	Rs. 100/-	

Wage for Truck Loading: Two types of truck loading were usually found in the stone crushing field. One was stone loading and another was sand loading.

(a) **Stone Loading:** Generally the labour charge was paid as per the amount of stone loaded irrespective of any truck which was mainly considered in pursuance of 100 cft. In this way the labour groups were generally paid Rs. 300/- for loading of 400 cft stone which was shared among the labourers those who performed it together and often also rewarded through receiving Rs. 100/- from the truck drivers to complete it with hardness. The number of labourers were normally varied according to carrying capacity of the trucks which are mentioned below –

Table 5.3: Involvement of Labourers According to Carrying Capacity of the Trucks

Types of truck	No. of labourers were required for loading
Shaktiman (four wheeler)	4
Canter (four wheeler)	4 to 5
Punjab (six wheeler)	6
Punjab (ten wheeler)	7 to 8

(b) **Sand Loading:** Generally the Shaktiman truck went to the river directly for loading sand. But it never could be done in case of ‘Punjab’ truck and ‘Canter’ as those were always loaded from the river bed and often that could also be seen in case of Shaktiman

truck. The number of labourers and wage rate were generally varied as per the carrying capacity of the trucks which are mentioned below –

Table 5.4: Involvement of Labourers and their Wage Rate According to Carrying Capacity of the Trucks

Types of truck	No. of labourers were required for loading	Wage rate per truck loading
Shaktiman	4	Rs. 70/-
Big Canter	2	Rs. 100/-
Small Cnater	2	Rs. 100/-
Tata Canter	2	Rs. 100/-
Punjab Truck	6	Rs. 300/-

Carrying Capacity, Trip and Destination of Different Trucks: Different trucks were used to carry the stones and sand. In this context, the truck like Canter including ‘Tata 407’, ‘small Canter’, ‘big Canter’, ‘Punjab’ including six wheeler and ten wheeler, and ‘Shaktiman’ trucks were used. It was known that the ‘Tata’ and ‘small Canter’ carried the same whereas the ‘big Canter’ carried the doubles of the aforesaid trucks.

Table 5.5: The Carrying Capacity of Different Trucks

Type of trucks		Carrying capacity (stone/sand)
‘Canter’	Tata	100 cft. to 200 cft.
	Small Canter	100 cft. to 200 cft.
	Big Canter	300 cft. to 400 cft.
‘Punjab’	Six wheeler	400 cft. to 500 cft.
	Ten wheeler	700 cft. to 1100 cft.
‘Shaktiman’		125 cft. to 150 cft.

For local areas, the 'Shaktiman' truck usually carried sand or stone for five to six times in a day whereas the 'Shaktiman' or 'Tata' trucks for Siliguri or adjacent areas carried the same for four times in a day. But the trucks like 'Punjab' and all types of 'Canter' only once for a day.

Table 5.6: Average Trip of Different Trucks per day

Type of trucks		Average trip per day
Shaktiman for local areas		5-6 times
Shaktiman for Siliguri and adjacent areas		4 times
Punjab		1 time
Canter	Small Canter	1 time
	Big Canter	1 time
	Tata	1 time

The 'Shaktiman' truck and 'big Canter' covered entire local areas including Siliguri and its adjacent areas. On the other hand, the truck like 'Tata' and 'small Canter' covered the hilly areas as much as possible. But the 'Punjab' truck covered entire North Bengal and Kishanganj, Dalkhola etc. to supply stones and sand.

Wage Rate and Payment: The decision regarding changes of wage rate was generally taken by the truck owners without any discussion with others. The wage rate usually varied from stone to stone. It may be clear more through an example, if Rs. 50/- is increased as wage rate by the truck owners then *Sardar* will get Rs. 40/- and rest Rs. 10/- will be added with the previous rate which will be given to the labourers as a new rate. Thus, the labour groups were generally deprived of the original wage rate. Another regrettable matter was that the studied people were dispossessed of getting the proper wage in comparison to the market price. Even they were paid such amount of remuneration which was not adequate for eking out a living properly. The labourers usually got their payment from the *sardars* especially on weekly market day, Tuesday in every week. They purchased their daily essential goods, foods, vegetables and so on from the weekly market known as 'Matigara hat'.

Types of Labour in the Stone Crushing Field: There were different types of labour found to be involved in various kinds of stone based activities in the stone field. In this regard, the labour groups in the stone crushing field can broadly be classified into five categories. These are –

- (a) The labourers those who collected the stones directly from the river for crushing and then sold it to the *sardars* they could get appropriate rate according to its types and quality.
- (b) Some labourers who collected stones from the river and sold it directly to the *sardars* without any crushing.
- (c) Another kind of labourers those who crushed stones provided by the *sardars* as they did not collect it from the river directly. In this case they were able to get the rate pursuant to contact with the *sardars* in lieu of the actual rate of stones.
- (d) Some of the labourers in the stone crushing field mainly involved in truck loading.
- (e) In the stone crushing field a number of people were involved in sifting of stones to pick up the *single* and *bajri* and then sold it to the *sardars*.

Lease Holder: Pursuant to Government rules, a person usually may become a lease holder of five acres river-land for the period of five years. In this way, there were ten lease holders from the Balasan river bridge to M.M. Terrain region. If a person wanted to be a lease holder then he had to apply for the same to the Government along with proper residential certificate of local area or adjacent area and other necessary testimonials. The selection was made in a proper way through Writers Building, Kolkata. After the fulfillment of all the procedures, the said amount of land was to be leased in the name of the selected person for five years but a condition was imposed on that lease holder by the Government. The condition was that, the concern person had to show the transaction of at least one lakh cft. stones for every one year by the month of March which is to be continued for five years. After the period of agreement, the concerned lease holder could retain his position again for next five years by showing the performance of last five years

to the Government but indeed it totally depended upon the decision of the Government. The *challan* book was provided from the Land Revenue Office to the lease holder for tax collection including VAT (Value Added Tax) properly from each stone or sand loaded truck. The tax was collected by the royalty office under the supervision of lease holder. The lease holder was locally known as *ghat malik* who could appoint a number of staff in the Royalty Office for tax collection as well as to look after the whole matter.

The another matter was reported from the *sardars* of the stone crushing field that if the land of any person is engulfed by the river then the affected person might apply to the Land Revenue Office to get royalty permit for the said land but he had to go through this procedures only when he expressed his eagerness to use that land for the purpose of stone based economy. After getting acceptance he was provided the *challan* book from the Land Revenue Office to collect the tax properly with VAT from every stone or sand loaded truck. Besides this, the concerned person usually got Rs. 10/- to Rs. 20/- from each loaded truck only when the sand and stones were collected from his land.

The *ghat malik* was generally benefited from the *challan* book and the matter becomes clear more through an example, if Rs. 250/- is received from a truck through *challan* book then Rs. 200/- is to be submitted to the Government and the rest Rs. 50/- is considered as a profit for the *ghat malik*.

Role of Royalty Office: The *challan* book was provided to the *ghat malik* from Land Revenue Office for tax and VAT collection through royalty office. The total amount of stones, boulders and sand those were loaded in the trucks for the whole day could be calculated better from the *challan* book. Pursuant to *challan* book they could collect for a particular amount of stones and sand such as 300 cft., 250 cft., 200 cft., 150 cft. and 125 cft. The details information regarding the same are shown below –

Table 5.7: Distribution of total Amount including Royalty Charge and VAT against the Amount of Stone and Sand

Stone/Sand	Amount of stone or sand	Royalty charge	VAT (4%)	Total amount (in Rs.)
Stone	300 cft.	Rs. 436/-	Rs. 17.44/-	Rs. 453.44/-
Sand	300 cft.	Rs. 404/-	Rs. 16.16/-	Rs. 420.16/-
Stone	250 cft.	Rs. 363/-	Rs. 14.52/-	Rs. 377.52/-
Sand	250 cft.	Rs. 337/-	Rs. 13.48/-	Rs. 350.48/-
Stone	200 cft.	Rs. 290/-	Rs. 11.60/-	Rs. 301.6/-
Sand	200 cft.	Rs. 270/-	Rs. 10.80/-	Rs. 280.80/-
Stone	150 cft.	Rs. 220/-	Rs. 8.80/-	Rs. 228.80/-
Sand	150 cft.	Rs. 200/-	Rs. 8/-	Rs. 208/-
Stone	125 cft.	Rs. 180/-	Rs. 7.20/-	Rs. 187.20/-
Sand	125 cft.	Rs. 170/-	Rs. 6.80/-	Rs. 176.80/-

The Role of Labour, Munsii, Sardar and Truck Owner: The total work like stone collection and crushing, sifting, sand gathering and truck loading were performed by the labourers who were controlled by the *sardars*. A number of persons were appointed under a *sardar* to look after the works of the labourers locally known as *munsii*. *Sardars* played a vital role as mediator between labourers and truck owners to supply the stones and sand. The truck owners supplied it to the builders or contractors. The interesting matter was that the *sardar* and truck owner may be same person if he is the owner of truck and it was noticed there were so many *sardars* who had own truck.

Mantheni System: In the stone crushing field it can be noticed that some of the *sardars* used to sign in a contract with the truck owner especially with the Shaktiman and Tata owners, to use their trucks for transportation of stones and sand by paid Rs. 10,000/- per month for Shaktiman truck and Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 12,000/- for Tata truck as per the agreement. But this system was not applicable for Punjab and Canter truck.

Implements: To do this work, different types of implements were used in the stone field which are discussed below –

- (i) *Knata*: It was made up of both iron and wood. The said implement was mainly used to move stones towards oneself during stone collection from waist level water.
- (ii) *Gaini*: This iron made implement was used to crush the *single* for making both types of *chipis*.
- (iii) *Matul*: The said implement was made up of both iron and wood. It was used to crush the boulder for making all types of *maitel*.



Figure 5.1: 1- *Knata*, 2- *Gaini*, 3- *Matul*

- (iv) *Thika*: The said implement was made up of iron and four rods were encircled through a ring. It was used during stone collection from the river. The said implement was locally known as '*thika*' which was kept stand on the river basement and on its top the *tukuri* was kept. People collected the stones from the river and then kept these in *tukuri*.



Figure 5.2: *Thika*

- (v) Sieve: Two types of sieve could be noticed in the stone crushing field, which were locally known as *jharni* and *oelty*. The said implements were made up of both wood and iron wires. These were used to isolate the stones from sand. The *jharni* was used to isolate *bajri* and the *oelty* was used to isolate *single*.



Figure 5.3: *Jharni*



Figure 5.4: *Oelty*

- (vi) *Belcha*: The said implement was made up of both iron and wood. It was used to uplift the stones and sand in the basket and trucks.



Figure 5.5: *Belcha*

- (vii) *KB box*: The said implement was made up of wood. It was square in shape with a length and breadth of 2 feet and had a depth of 1.5 feet. The said wooden box was used to measure the amount of stones and also used to load the stones to the trucks.



Figure 5.6: *KB box*

- (viii) *Tukuri*: It was made up of bamboo split. The said implement was used to carry the stones and sand from one place to another and also used to measure the amount of stones. Two types of '*tukuri*' were used in the stone crushing field which could be classified on the basis of its size. One was normally 24'/24' in length and breadth and another was 22'/22' in length and breadth.



Figure 5.7: *Tukuri*

Measurement of Stones and Sand: The stones and sand were generally measured as cft. which was accepted by all the persons involved in stone based occupation. Besides this, the *KB box* and *tukuri* were also used to measure the same. In this regard, 36 *KB* = 100 cft. whereas 1 *KB* = 2.77 cft. On the other hand, 70 *tukuri* (measures about 24'/24') = 170 cft. whereas 1 *tukuri* = 2.43 cft.; and 80 *tukuri* (measures about 22'/22') = 170 cft. whereas 1 *tukuri* = 2.12 cft. Such type of *tukuri* measured 24'/24' contained 2.43 cft. stones or sand at a time. On the contrary, the *tukuri* measured 22'/22' which had the capacity to contain 2.12 cft. stones or sand at a time.

The *tukuri* and *KB box* were not required to load the stones or sand in 'Shaktiman', 'Tata' and 'Canter' trucks as these trucks were generally measured with a measuring tape and then marked with a chalk which helped to know how much amount of stones or sand could be carried and pursuant to that the said amount of stones or sand were to be loaded up to the mark with the help of *belcha*. But in case of 'Punjab' truck, the stones were usually loaded with the help of *tukuri* or *KB box* and sand with *tukuri* only without any help of measuring tape. The *KB box* was not needed as such to measure the stones but *chipis*. On the contrary, the sand was usually measured with the help of *tukuri* only. It is necessary to mention here that the usages of *tukuri* or *KB box* were to be found frequently at the time of purchasing stones or sand from the labourers and these were sold to the *sardars* who supplied it to the truck owners through the above mentioned process.

Child Workers and their Occupational Profile

In the studied area a large number of children were found to be involved in stone based work throughout the day to contribute to their family income.

Table 5.8: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Religion

Sex	Religion			Total
	Hindu	Muslim	Others	
Male	183 98.39	1 0.54	2 1.08	186 100.00
Female	187 97.91	4 2.09	-	191 100.00
Total	370 98.14	5 1.33	2 0.53	377 100.00

Table 5.9: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Caste, Community, Ethnic Group

Sex	Caste/Community/Ethnic group									
	Rajbanshi	Namashudra	Jugi	Kapali	Brahmin	Behari	Nepali	Muslim	Santal	Total
Male	175 94.09	2 1.08	2 1.08	3 1.61	-	1 0.54	-	1 0.54	2 1.08	186 100.00
Female	182 95.29	-	-	2 105	1 0.52	1 0.52	1 0.52	4 2.09	-	191 100.00
Total	357 94.69	2 0.53	2 0.53	5 1.33	1 0.27	2 0.53	1 0.27	5 1.33	2 0.53	377 100.00

The working children in the studied area can broadly be categorized pursuant to their religion. In the context of religion the data shows a major percentage of working children (98.14%) belonged to Hindu community. Meanwhile the tribe, Santal and the Muslims were numerically very poor. There were different castes, community and ethnic groups found to reside in close proximity in the studied area. Considering this fact a classification has been made to focus on the status of working children. In this connection Table 5.9 represents a classification of working children according to their caste, community, ethnic group which manifests around 95 per cent of working children in the studied area were belonged to Rajbanshi community.

Table 5.10: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Age and Sex

Age group (in years)	Male	Female	Total
5-6	20 51.28	19 48.72	39 100.00
7-8	31 43.06	41 56.94	72 100.00
9-10	42 46.15	49 53.85	91 100.00
11-12	47 52.81	42 47.19	89 100.00
13-14	46 53.49	40 46.51	86 100.00
Total	186 49.34	191 50.66	377 100.00

Table 5.9: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Caste, Community, Ethnic Group

Sex	Caste/Community/Ethnic group									
	Rajbanshi	Namashudra	Jugi	Kapali	Brahmin	Behari	Nepali	Muslim	Santal	Total
Male	175 94.09	2 1.08	2 1.08	3 1.61	-	1 0.54	-	1 0.54	2 1.08	186 100.00
Female	182 95.29	-	-	2 1.05	1 0.52	1 0.52	1 0.52	4 2.09	-	191 100.00
Total	357 94.69	2 0.53	2 0.53	5 1.33	1 0.27	2 0.53	1 0.27	5 1.33	2 0.53	377 100.00

The working children in the studied area can broadly be categorized pursuant to their religion. In the context of religion the data shows a major percentage of working children (98.14%) belonged to Hindu community. Meanwhile the tribe, Santal and the Muslims were numerically very poor. There were different castes, community and ethnic groups found to reside in close proximity in the studied area. Considering this fact a classification has been made to focus on the status of working children. In this connection Table 5.9 represents a classification of working children according to their caste, community, ethnic group which manifests around 95 per cent of working children in the studied area were belonged to Rajbanshi community.

Table 5.10: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Age and Sex

Age group (in years)	Male	Female	Total
5-6	20 51.28	19 48.72	39 100.00
7-8	31 43.06	41 56.94	72 100.00
9-10	42 46.15	49 53.85	91 100.00
11-12	47 52.81	42 47.19	89 100.00
13-14	46 53.49	40 46.51	86 100.00
Total	186 49.34	191 50.66	377 100.00

In the studied area a large number of children got involved in stone based work. The data reveals that total 377 children were found to work in the stone field and among them females were more (50.66%) than the males. However, highest number of working children was found in the age group of 9-10 years and it was lowest in the age group of 5-6 years. Moreover, it is the fact that from very early ages i.e. from 5 to 6 years many of the little children involved themselves into the stone based work for enhancing their family income.

Table 5.11: Family Size and Employment Status of the Children

Family size (no. of members)	No. of family with average no. of working children				
	1	2	3	4	Total
1	1 100.00	-	-	-	1 100.00
2	1 100.00	-	-	-	1 100.00
3	25 89.29	3 10.71	-	-	28 100.00
4	60 76.92	18 23.08	-	-	78 100.00
5	38 55.07	23 33.33	8 11.59	-	69 100.00
6	18 48.65	14 37.84	5 13.51	-	37 100.00
7	7 31.82	6 27.27	5 22.73	4 18.18	22 100.00
8	1 20.00	3 60.00	1 20.00	-	5 100.00
9 and above	2 22.22	5 55.56	1 11.11	1 11.11	9 100.00
Total	153 61.20	72 28.80	20 8.00	5 2.00	250 100.00

Table 5.11 represents the family size and employment status of children. In this field the data reveals that 153 (40.58%) child workers were found in 153 (61.20%) studied families while 144 (38.20%) child workers from 72 (28.80%) families means two working children from each family followed by 60 (15.92%) child workers from 20 (8.00%) families and 20 (5.30%) child workers from 5 (2.00%) families.

In the studied area it was common to notice that most of the child workers got involved in both stone crushing and stone collection activities. Their different types of work has been shown in the following table –

Table 5.12: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Type of Work

Sex	Type of work												Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Only stone crushing	Only stone collection	Both 1 & 2	Only sand gathering	Both 1 & 4	Both 2 & 4	Both 1, 2 & 4	Only truck loading	Both 1 & 8	Both 2 & 8	Both 4 & 8	Both 1, 2 & 8	
Male	67 36.02	1 0.54	90 48.39	1 0.54	1 0.54	-	2 1.08	3 1.61	14 7.53	1 0.54	1 0.54	5 2.69	186 100.00
Female	80 41.88	-	95 49.74	-	7 3.66	2 1.05	5 2.62	-	2 1.05	-	-	-	191 100.00
Total	147 38.99	1 0.26	185 49.07	1 0.26	8 2.12	2 0.53	7 1.86	3 0.80	16 4.24	1 0.26	1 0.26	5 1.33	377 100.00

The data reveals that around half (49.07%) of the working children did both stone crushing and stone collection activity whereas around 39 per cent of total working children were involved in stone crushing activity only. But the mentionable matter is that only very few of the males were involved in truck loading because they could not perform this type of activity as they were little and physically not able to do such type of hard labourious job (Table 5.12).

On the basis of nature of work, the child worker can be divided into three categories. The first category is that who worked individually; the second, who worked with their families; and third one is those who worked in a group. The details are given below –

Table 5.13: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Nature of Working Involvement

Age group (in years)	Nature of working involvement							
	Male				Female			
	Individual	With family	Group wise	Total	Individual	With family	Group wise	Total
6-May	-	20 100.00	-	20 100.00	-	17 89.47	2 10.53	19 100.00
8-Jul	-	31 100.00	-	31 100.00	-	35 85.37	6 14.63	41 100.00
10-Sep	1 2.38	36 85.71	5 11.90	42 100.00	-	44 89.80	5 10.20	49 100.00
12-Nov	1 2.13	41 87.23	5 10.64	47 100.00	-	35 83.33	7 16.67	42 100.00
13-14	5 10.87	19 41.30	22 47.83	46 100.00	1 2.50	28 70.00	11 27.50	40 100.00
Total	7 3.76	147 79.03	32 17.20	186 100.00	1 0.52	159 83.25	31 16.23	191 100.00

The noticeable matter was that a major percentage of working children worked with their families and this tendency was quite high among the female children. However, next they preferred to work in group (Table 5.13).

Generally there was no fixed working hour in the stone crushing occupation and it was common to notice that they worked for daylong as their remuneration depended on amount of work rather than time of work. The considerable fact was that if they worked more then they could earn more. Despite hard manual labour, they used to be paid very little remuneration that was simply inadequate for maintaining their livelihood. Therefore, they had to work together with children for the whole day to enhance their earnings for eking out a living with utmost difficulty.

Table 5.14: Distribution of Child Workers' Parents on the basis of Working Hours in a day

No. of parents	Working hours in a day					
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	8 and above	Total
No. of father	-	1	10	121	98	230
No. of mother	2	12	48	151	33	246
Total	2	13	58	272	131	476

The data reveals that around 75 per cent of the mothers of working children worked for 7-8 hours or more than that; and in case of the fathers of working children it was around 95 per cent (Table 5.14).

The children also had to do the work and it can be classified on the basis of their working hours –

Table 5.15: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Working Hours in a Day

Sex	Working hours in a day					
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	8 and above	Total
Male	4	30	70	54	28	186
	2.15	16.13	37.63	29.03	15.05	100.00
Female	4	28	79	65	15	191
	2.09	14.66	41.36	34.03	7.85	100.00
Total	8	58	149	119	43	377
	2.12	15.38	39.52	31.56	11.41	100.00

The working hours for the children were not so much less in comparison to their parents. The data shows that a greater section (82.49%) of the children had to work 5 and above hours in a day while around 43 per cent of the total working children used to do this work in a day for 7-8 hours or more than that (Table 5.15).

Table 5.16: Distribution of Child Workers on the Basis of Work Experience

Age group (in years)	Work experience of child workers (in years)										Total	
	≤1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 and above		
5	10 100.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10 100.00
6	24 82.76	5 17.24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29 100.00
7	17 45.95	14 37.84	6 16.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37 100.00
8	6 17.14	14 40.00	11 31.43	4 11.43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35 100.00
9	7 16.28	8 18.60	10 23.26	13 30.23	5 11.63	-	-	-	-	-	-	43 100.00
10	3 6.25	2 4.17	9 18.75	19 39.58	12 25.00	3 6.25	-	-	-	-	-	48 100.00
11	3 8.82	4 11.76	6 17.65	5 14.71	10 29.41	6 17.65	-	-	-	-	-	34 100.00
12	1 1.82	4 7.27	1 1.82	7 12.73	14 25.45	14 25.45	12 21.82	2 3.64	-	-	-	55 100.00
13	1 3.57	2 7.14	3 10.71	1 3.57	3 10.71	8 28.57	8 28.57	2 7.14	-	-	-	28 100.00
14	3 5.17	4 6.90	3 5.17	3 5.17	6 10.34	10 17.24	15 25.86	11 18.97	2 3.45	1 1.72	-	58 100.00
Total	75 19.89	57 15.12	49 13.00	52 13.79	50 13.26	41 10.88	35 9.28	15 3.98	2 0.53	1 0.27	-	377 100.00

It was the fact that more than 80 per cent of the children had been working in the stone field for more than 1 year while 38.20 per cent children had been working for 5 and above years. The interesting matter is that the children involved themselves in this work from very early i.e. from 5 years too. It was true that most of the children of the studied families were bound to do this work as it was essential for maintaining their livelihood as well as survival.

Persons Who Motivated the Children to do the Work: It was reported from the working children in the studied area that they were motivated by several persons to get involved in stone based work. The details are given below –

Table 5.17: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Motivation for Working Involvement

Sex	Person from whom they were motivated					
	Parents	Other elder persons of the family	Friends	Neighbour	Self	Total
Male	154	12	10	4	6	186
	82.80	6.45	5.38	2.15	3.23	100.00
Female	162	12	7	4	6	191
	84.82	6.28	3.66	2.09	3.14	100.00
Total	316	24	17	8	12	377
	83.82	6.37	4.51	2.12	3.18	100.00

It was know that most of them were motivated by their parents mainly. Apart from this the other family members, friends, and neighbours also took part for the same. Sometime due to local environment few were motivates to work by self also.

Holidays: Indeed, they could hardly seem to feel the holiday because their working involvement for the whole day without any adequate rest was common to observe in the stone crushing field. Every day was their working day. They used to be paid only on Tuesday as it was their weekly market day and due to this fact the Tuesday was their half working day. Generally after getting the payment they went to the weekly market locally known as 'Matigara hat' held at a specific place of Matigara which was around 4 km away from the studied village. They purchased their necessary vegetables, foods and so forth for a week. In fact, they had to work hard for day long because their physical labour only could provide a fold of rice. It was always in their mind that how much time could be spent for more work. Therefore, except emergent situation they never wanted to spend time for other purposes. Ultimately no such off day was found in a week for them.

Collection of Payment: The payment of the working children was collected by different persons that can be shown in the following table (Table 5.18) –

Table 5.18: Collection of Payment of Child Workers

Sex	Person received the payment of working children			
	By parents	By other elder persons of the family	By self	Total
Male	141 75.81	8 4.30	37 19.89	186 100.00
Female	161 84.29	9 4.71	21 10.99	191 100.00
Total	302 80.11	17 4.51	58 15.38	377 100.00

The payment paid to the working children was collected mostly by their parents and in this regard the data reveals that around 76 per cent of male and more than 84 per cent of female working children were paid through their parents. Apart from the parents, few elder members of the family of the working children were found to be collected the same. The noticeable matter was that certain section of the child workers also received their payment directly.

Monthly Income: They worked hard daylong. It is the fact that most of the child workers had to work on an average 5 and above hours. They worked various stone based works like stone and sand gathering, stone crushing and even truck loading also. However, after this daylong hard work how much did they earn, has been stated below –

Table 5.19: Distribution of Child Workers by their Monthly Earnings

Sex	Earnings per month (in Rs.)						Total
	≤100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501 and above	
Male	15 80.6	52 27.96	35 18.82	49 26.34	8 4.30	27 4.52	186 100.00
Female	15 7.85	54 28.27	26 13.61	75 39.27	8 4.19	13 6.81	191 100.00
Total	30 7.96	106 28.12	61 16.18	124 32.89	16 4.24	40 10.61	377 100.00

The data reveals that around 89 per cent of the working children could not earn more than Rs. 500/- in a month whereas a very little percentage of working children could earn more than that. Moreover, a very little remuneration was found to be paid notwithstanding their hard manual labour for the entire day. It was not satisfactory at all to the working children those who began to understand a bit.

The stone based occupation was the backbone of economy of the studied people. The studied people lived in Purba Rangia which is located on the Balasan River basin. This occupation includes various types of works such as stone collection, sand gathering, stone crushing and truck loading. With this occupation various categories of worker and department are attached such as labourer, *munsi*, *sardar*, truck owner and truck driver and helper, lease holder, and Land Revenue department of the government. The people who were attached with the stone collection and crushing, sand gathering and truck loading work were treated as labour. Both adult and children were attached with this work and without any monetary investment they could do the work. Apart from sand gathering, the concerned people primarily collected different types of stones and boulders from the river and then broke into different sizes and shapes and then sold it. Depends on its sizes its names and rates were varied. Along with the collection of sand and stones and stone crushing many of the people were also engaged in truck loading of sand and stones. The wage rate of the said work was varied and it depended on amount of production of stone crushing, sand collection and number of truck loading. These raw materials were needed for various construction works and these were sent to the various places for the said purposes. Moreover, to do this stone based work there were five categories of labourers. Apart from these, there were so many lease holders in Balasan River. According to Government rules, a person may become a lease holder of five acres river-land for the period of five years but the selection was made in a proper way. The Land Revenue Office provided the *challan* book to the lease holder for tax collection including VAT (Value Added Tax) properly from each stone or sand loaded truck. The tax was collected by the royalty office under the supervision of lease holder. On the basis of the amount of stones and sand the taxes were varied. The stones and sand were generally measured as cft. Apart from this, the *KB box* and *tukuri* were also used to measure the same. To do this work different types of implements were used in the stone field. In the studied area a large number of children got involved in stone based work especially in both stone crushing and stone collection activities for the whole day to contribute to their family earnings. On the basis of nature of work they were divided into three categories- worked individually; worked with their families; and worked in a group. But a major percentage of them worked with their families. In the stone field it was common to notice that they worked for daylong as their remuneration depended on amount of work. They were paid a very little remuneration in spite of hard manual labour for the whole day.

CHAPTER VI: RESPONSIBLE FACTORS FOR WORKING INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHILDREN

Every child wants to play, wish to go to school, enjoy and so on. Parents also want to help them and try to settle them educationally, economically and so forth. But many of them fail to provide these facilities to their children. Even for maintaining the very minimum livelihood and others too the children are also involved in work for earnings apart from their normal involvement like education, play, enjoyment etc. to support their family. In this regard, that may be observed among the working children of the stone crushing families –

Case Study 1: Govinda Singha was a 12 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. He was born in Bangladesh. Their total four *bighas*¹ of land was forcefully grabbed by the Muslim people of Bangladesh. As a result, their only earning source became lost. Even all the vegetables and fruits of their kitchen garden used to be grabbed by these Muslim people and further their scope of work as well as earnings got reduced. Primarily due to this serious economic setback they migrated to Balasan River basin in 2006 in roofless, shelterless and resourceless condition. In his family he had father, mother, three younger sisters and an elder brother. After migration stone based work was the only way of making their living. Both his parents and also his elder brother got involved in stone based economy to earn their living. They worked hard daylong and earned Rs. 1400/- only per month. But with this little earnings they could not feed them to the fill. His family could not provide him minimum educational requirements such as necessary books, note books, pen, pencil, private tuition etc. Sometimes he was scolded bitterly by the teachers. He failed in the final examination and gradually he lost his fondness of education. He had to help his parents in the stone field and domestic chores as well. He had no guidance and no required materials for education. As a consequence, he dropped out of school when he was in class III. In this connection the parental

¹ *Bigha*: A measure of land in India, varying from 1/3 to 1 acre (1/8 to 2/5 hectare).

illiteracy and lack of interest could not be ignored. Indeed, owing to illiteracy both of his parents could never understand the importance of education. They preferred to involve him in stone based occupation instead of sending him to school. His eyes filled with tears while asking about his school education. His parents and his elder brother worked hard throughout the day in the stone field but they could earn too little to meet all the needs of their five members' family such as food, proper shelter, health, treatment, education, dress etc. They could hardly afford to meet these needs at minimum level. It is to be mentioned that Govinda and his family could not afford to eat meal not more than twice a day. They could eat rice, pulses and vegetable curry. Sometimes, they had to starve. They could hardly arrange breakfast but it was only tea and biscuits or pup rice. Due to utter financial constraint they could not afford to maintain the nutritious food diet and even it was out of their capacity to accumulate the least expensive animal protein. Moreover, Govinda and his family had to face a lot of difficulties in living. Their dwelling house was *kachha* type that was made of wattle walls with corrugated tin roof, muddy floor and poor ventilation. Further, it was broken too and they could hardly meet the expense of repairing it. There was no drainage system as well as electricity and latrine facility in their house. The house composed of two little rooms and there was no separate kitchen. Moreover, Govinda and his rest of the family members had no well dress because due to poor economy they failed to provide it. He had only two dresses. Parents failed to purchase the school uniform and due to this fact he had to be scolded by his teachers. Even in last *puja*² festivals his parents could not provide any dress to him. It was the fact that they had not the capacity to purchase a new dress. Their condition was just like after meat comes mustard. In fact, the poverty, large family size, illiteracy and ignorance of the parents, lacking of minimum infrastructure facilities and materialistic requirements, migration and displacement, ill constructed shelter, inter-familial and intra-familial conflicts, daylong working involvement of parents and other family members, motivation of parents for working involvement of the children, social and environmental condition, socio-political situation, involvement of all the villagers in the same working field and same livelihood pattern, and his growing up under these circumstances greatly influenced

² *Puja*: It is the act of showing deep respect to a god or a spirit through devotion, prayer, religious songs and rituals. Among Hindus puja is a prayer ritual to respect and worship their deities and it helps to make a spiritual connection with the divine.

him and forced him to get involved in this stone based work. Due to these facts, Govinda was involved in this job since he was only seven years old boy. He stated that his father was a cruel man who scolded him always and even sometimes he was beaten up soundly by his parents if he was absent in work or even raised his eyes from work. He had to do this work against his will.

Case Study 2: Rita Barman, an 11 years aged girl. In her family she had her father, mother and an elder brother and sister. They came here from Bangladesh about eight years ago i.e. in 2003 due to poverty and political unrest as well. They had five *bighas* of agricultural land in Bangladesh. One day all their crops were pillaged and land was grabbed by Muslims forcefully and that made them indigent. As a result, the migration as well as displacement took place for survival. They became penniless. Under this circumstance, they came in Balasan river basin of Darjeeling district, West Bengal, India and made a house of two little rooms on the River bed with the help of local *sardar* and to earn their living they got involved in stone based occupation. They could earn Rs.1600/- per month which was not enough for maintaining their large family. Due to this fact Rita and her elder brother were sent to work. Rita was reading in class IV. Due to extreme poverty her parents could not provide educational materials like books, note books, private tuition etc. Rita could not maintain regular schooling as during day time she had to be very busy with work in the stone field as it was essential to support the family income. In fact, only this hard manual labour could feed them because without their contribution it was impossible to survive. Hardly they could take breakfast with tea and pup rice. Due to poor income they could not manage food more than twice a day and further it was poor nutritious. She had her both lunch and dinner with rice, pulses and vegetable curry. The nutritious food like meat, fish, egg, milk, fruits etc. were almost absent in their diet. Moreover, their living condition was very much poor and unhygienic. They lived in *kachha* and broken house and it was ill ventilated and damp. She fell ill but her parents could not provide better treatment, medicine and food to her. She had to share the single little room with rest family members. As a result, she could not maintain her privacy. There was no electricity and sanitation facility in the house. She had only two sets of dresses but her parents could not provide more than that. She had no well dress. Even, her parents failed to purchase the school uniform too for her. Indeed, they were

going through a tough condition due to utter economic constraint in the family. The parents needed an extra earnings to augment their family income. Rita confessed, she was provoked by her parents to do this job when she was only seven years little baby. She admitted that her working involvement had an adverse impact on her studies. She had a fear of scolding if she was absent in work and often she was beaten up soundly by her parents for the same reason. They altogether could earn Rs. 2500/- per month. She was first generation learner but she did not get any support from her parents for education. However, due to the above reasons she started to loss interest in education and ultimately dropped out of school. The ignorance of parents; failing to meet minimum material needs; conflict due to poverty; no treatment and no medicine; motivated by parents and others as well to do the work; poor social environment; and poor socio-political situation etc. were the reasons due to which she got involved in this work as there was no other option.

Case Study 3: Prabhu Barman was an 11 years aged boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. They came here around 10 years ago i.e. 2001 from Bangladesh. In Bangladesh they had two *bighas* of cultivable land which was their only earning source. But this land was grabbed by the Muslim people and even, all their produced crops were looted by some Muslim people. As a consequence, their only source of earning became lost that created a serious financial constraint. The fundamental needs and rights to live became increased and violated and the problem of survival got emerged. In his family he had father, mother, two younger sisters and an elder brother. Under this situation, this six members' family with utter economic instability resulted in poverty and misery, and also the security and protection for living were found lacking. As a consequence, they were forced to migrate illegally in India and came in Balasan River basin in 2001 through their close relatives. They made a *kachha* house of two little rooms in the River basin by lending money from a *Sardar* of the stone crushing field. Finding no other alternative scopes, they had to choose the stone crushing occupation as their only earning source. Both of his parents and elder brother earned their living as stone crusher but their earnings failed to ensure a minimum security for living. They altogether could earn not more than Rs. 1800/- per month and this amount was too little to meet the minimum needs for living. The fulfillment of necessary requirements like food, dress, expense of

education and treatment, house repairing etc. were at very poor level. The teachers scolded him bitterly because he had no school uniform. In most of the cases his parents could not provide books, note books, or other requirements to him. Moreover, the parents were unable to provide private tuition to him because of its unaffordable expense and even they could not guide him as well. He never got the support from his parents for his studies and perhaps it was just due to the fact of his parental illiteracy. Ultimately he dropped out of school when he was in class IV. They could arrange food not more than twice a day and it was just rice, pulses and vegetables. They could rarely eat meat, egg, fish, fruit and milk. They could hardly manage a little breakfast with tea and pup rice. Even in many cases they had to starve. They used to suffer from various diseases and ailments throughout the year but had no capacity to bear the expense of treatment. They could never purchase all the doctor prescribed medicines and even could not maintain its full course. They could not afford the cost of specialist doctors due to unbearable expense. They had a quarrel all the time at home over these matters. To get a relief from tension his father used to take alcohol everyday and also used abusive words and beat them soundly. Moreover, their family members did stone based work throughout the day on the river bed and even at the beginning sometimes their food and other necessary things were taken by Prabhu to the river bed which influenced him to get involved in this work. Ultimately, poverty and lack of security (food, survival) were more acute. He had no well dress because of acute poverty his parents could not afford to purchase a new dress for him. He was found crying his eyes out while describing the fact. For the agony of hunger parents motivated Prabhu to get involved in the stone based work. He had been doing this work since he was only 8 years old. He spent most of the time in a day for work. He had to work against his will because he had a fear of scolding and even beating too by his parents.

However, there must be a reason or some reasons behind any incident. Therefore, in the context of the involvement of children in work obviously there were certain reasons. These are stated below one after another –

Economic Situation: Economy is an important constituent of the community life and plays a deciding role in the formation of the cultural and social structure of society. The

economic life of the people helps us to understand an important feature of their culture (Vidyarthi and Rai, 1976: 93). The studied people mostly came from Bangladesh and the rest came from other districts of West Bengal. The studied people who came from Bangladesh all were settled agriculturalist and had agricultural land in Bangladesh from where they could get their required crops and so on. Apart from this, from rivers and wet lands they could get ample amount of fishes. Meanwhile after independence of Bangladesh the said people started to face a lot of problems to maintain their daily livelihood which is still continuing. Their economic source became shrunk as most of their properties were looted and prime earning source, agricultural land were grabbed by the Muslim people of Bangladesh and ultimately the situation became alarming. It affected their both lives and livelihood. It was reported that many of the studied families lost all their properties and even many became shelterless and resourceless. Moreover, in this situation they were forced to come here and for minimum survival they started to settle down in this studied area, Balasan River bed. The people who came from other districts of West Bengal or other area were mainly due to poverty. The Balasan River carries with its stream huge boulders, stones and sand which have great demand in this locality for urban and other constructions. To do this work primarily physical labour is needed, thus, finding no other good alternatives the studied people accepted this occupation for their minimum survival. However, the stone based work was the prime source of earnings of all the studied families. They used to wake up very early in the morning with the ray of sun up. After morning fresh they went to the stone field. They returned home in the evening when the work was over for the day. They worked throughout the year ignoring the fact of scorching heat of summer and biting cold of winter. On an average around four members in each family were involved in this work. They did various types of stone based activities like stone collection, stone crushing, sand gathering, and truck loading. In the stone field both male and female working children were mostly found to be involved in stone collection and stone crushing activities. Whereas only two female and few male children were involved in truck loading activities because it was very much hard labourious and painful, and physically the children were not able to do it. The children were found to do the work in the stone field for an average seven hours in a day. Moreover the studied people did this work hard throughout the year

for maintaining their livelihood. Now the distribution of the families on the basis of monthly income (except the income of working children) are shown in the following table –

Table 6.1: Distribution of Child Workers' Family on the basis of Monthly Income

Child workers' family	Monthly income (in Rs.)					Total
	Up to 1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	4001 and above	
No. of family	23	172	40	10	5	250
	9.20	68.80	16.00	4.00	2.00	100.00

(Excluding the Income of Working Children)

The data reveals that most of the studied families failed to earn more than Rs. 2000/- per month and they had to face a serious economic setback. Generally they used to be paid a very little remuneration as compared to their hard physical labour for the whole day. The fulfillment of their daily livelihood requirements was a seldom happening factor on this little earnings. Even, their income was too little to meet the expense of reconstruction or repairing their houses. They were in a crying need to have extra room in their houses. But not everybody had the necessary money to build another room in their houses. However, the condition of roof of most of the houses was very poor. There were too much moisture in their rooms that might have caused serious ill health like various skin problems, a chronic cold and cough with nasal blockage and frequent sneezing, headaches, difficulty in breathing and so on. The most obvious way that moisture entered their rooms was through rain that was falling on their leaky roofs. These roof leaks were usually noticeable and that had to be repaired immediately. But due to utter financial constraints they could not repair it. They had to bear it silently as they had no other option. Even, there was not sufficient space in their rooms. They had to stay altogether in a room with utmost difficulty. Due to lack of space in the room they could not live comfortably. Their dwelling houses were no longer perfect for living.

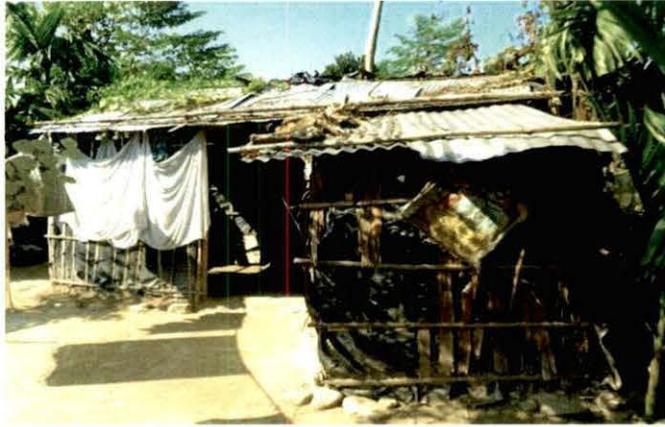


Figure 6.1: Dwelling house

Moreover, owing to poverty they could eat meal not more than twice a day. In their daily diet they could eat rice, pulses and little amount of vegetable curry. They never wanted to go home for lunch, because the amount of work would be reduced. Their payment was completely based on amount of work as well as production, so they never wished to waste time, even not for a moment too. They were in a condition of near starvation. They were not able to accumulate proper nutritious food like egg, fish, meat, milk, fruits etc. and even, the least expensive animal protein could rarely be seen in their diet. Moreover, their little earnings could not provide them the required food too. They had to do the work in hungry. They became too weak and often they fell ill. But due to utter financial constraints they were unable to meet the expense of better treatment and even could not purchase all the prescribed medicines too. Most of the children were forced to get involved in stone based job in order to contribute to their family income. It was simply unbearable for most of the parents to spend money for livelihood requirements as well as diseases or other form of disability and also for familial ceremonies. In most of the cases to run the hearth they had to take loan from ‘samiti’³ (co-operative) on certain conditions that they had to repay it with interest within 45 weeks. Indeed, they could not seem to stay out of debt that made them feel every moment to find out the way of extra earnings. Many of them had no citizenship and due to absence of voter identity card and ration card

³**Samiti:** In english it is called as cooperative society. However in the studied village there was a cooperative society which was locally known as ‘Bandhan’ formed by the local people from where they could get the loan with a low interest; and the members of the *samiti* got the share of profit.

they could not enjoy government economic facilities like ration, loan, house, treatment benefit, educational support for children, electric facility for BPL etc. Under these circumstances, sending children to work seemed like a best option to them. Poor economy was the main cause of the involvement of children in work. Poor parents sent their children to work not out of choice but for reasons of economic expediency. Indeed, the poverty was the major decisive factor in prevalence of child worker in the studied area.

Large Family Size: It was observed that among the studied families there were 250 families and their average family size was five. Though, some (29.20%) were composed of 6-10 members. There is a need of balance between family size and income. But it was observed that the average monthly family income was Rs. 2146/-; and per head monthly income was Rs. 433/-. With this poor income they had to face problems to maintain their family and it was the fact that in respect of family income the family size was large.

Table 6.2: Size of the Child Workers' Family

Family size									Total number of family
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 & above	
1	1	28	78	69	37	22	5	9	250
0.40	0.40	11.20	31.20	27.60	14.80	8.80	2.00	3.60	100.00

Table 6.3: Family Size and Family Wise Number of Working Children

No. of total members	No. of working children per family				Total
	1	2	3	4	
1	1 100.00	-	-	-	1 100.00
2	1 100.00	-	-	-	1 100.00
3	25 89.29	3 10.71	-	-	28 100.00
4	60 76.92	18 23.08	-	-	78 100.00
5	38 55.07	23 33.33	8 11.59	-	69 100.00
6 and above	28 38.36	28 38.36	12 16.44	5 6.85	73 100.00

They could not make a living and a family with this little earnings. Due to large family size with comparatively less income the fulfillment of minimum basic necessary requirements for the family was simply tough and that's why the involvement of children in work for a financial aid was very much essential. But if the family size would be limited, then there might have no need to send their children to work rather they would have carefully educated them or they could have provided other necessary things for their progress and development. They had firm belief that more children means more earnings but they were not aware about the reality that extra children means extra mouth to feed. Ultimately, their burden of expense was getting higher with a significant increasing of family members. However, another responsible factor for the involvement of children in work was large family size and low income.

Illiteracy and Ignorance of Parents: Education is a cultural pursuit consisting in the appropriate training of the human being as such, and this, like truth or health, is one of the values desired for their own sake. Education (from *educare*) ringng means the bringing up or developing in the pupil those habits and attitudes with which he may successfully face the future, though it does not exclude the idea of leading the student in the acquisition of knowledge and experience in accordance with the values cherished in a society. Education is one way or another is necessary and universal feature of society by which every generation transmits to the next its social heritage. It is basically an agency of social control both in the conservative and in its innovating aspects. It is in itself one of the most faithful expressions of the ideals and ends of society (Pascual Gisbert, 1957: 266 and 280). We can regard formal education in modern societies as communicating independently ideas and values which play a part in regulating behaviour. Education contributes independently to the regulation of conduct, and that is in the early socialization of the child (Bottomore, 1962: 270-271). According to Census of India, 2011 the literacy rate in our country is 74.04 per cent of which male is 82.14 per cent and female is 65.46 per cent and the Scheduled Castes literacy rate is 66.1 per cent of which male is 75.2 per cent and female is 56.5 per cent. In this regard, the educational scenario of the parents of working children of the studied families is shown in the following table.

Table 6.4: Educational Status and Level of the Child Workers' Fathers and Mothers

Category	Illiterate	Literate	Total	If literate then level	
				Primary	Secondary
Father	173	57	230	36	21
	75.21	24.78	100.00	63.16	36.84
Mother	205	41	246	31	10
	83.33	16.67	100.00	75.61	24.39

The data reveals that majority of the parents were illiterate; and among the literate category, most of them had education up to primary level. Both in cases the situation of women was very poor. The educational scenario of the parents of working children of the studied families was very poor in condition. Due to plight educational scenario with less income most of the parents could not understand that premature entry into work robbed the childhood off their children. They believed that more children means more opportunity of income. Most of the children were motivated by their parents to get involved in stone based work. A large number of parents could not hide the expression of their feelings that “education can provide us nothing rather it seems like a burden of expense which creates economic scarcity. In fact, to tell the truth, providing education to our children is out of our capacity. Hence, it will be better for us if we involve our children in work so that we can get a monetary support to enhance our family income a bit at least”. They stated the fact that “everything in life is fated and who will undo what is ordained by fate?” There was a doubt about their willing in favour of education as they never expressed it even for a moment too. They were pleased with how much they gained from the involvement of their children in work. The thinking about the future of their children was not at all a matter of grave concern to them. If they were educated, they might have understood the importance of education in child’s life. However, the illiteracy and ignorance of parents was another influential factor in prevalence of child worker in the studied area.

Educational Backwardness: Another important factor for the involvement of children in work was their educational backwardness.

Table 6.5: Distribution of Literate Child Workers on the basis of Private Tuition Facility (Past and Present)

Private tuition facility		
Yes	No	Total
37	295	332
11.14	88.86	100.00

Concerning educational backwardness, the data reveals that a major percentage of working children were debarred from getting private tuition (Table 6.5) as their parents could not afford to bear the expense of it. It was known from them that the quality of school education was not satisfactory. They were unanimous in their conviction that “without tuition how to do the home work or who will guide us at home?” As a consequence, they did not want to go to school because they had a fear of getting punishment to attend the class without home work. And in the meantime 119(35.84%) child workers already stopped their education at their very early age and it was due to their working involvement for the whole day and lack of necessary educational requirements as well as proper guidance. Moreover, all the above situations adversely affected their progress of education and these were primarily responsible for their poor level of education.

Table 6.6: Distribution of School Going Working Children According to their School Attendance

School attendance		
Regular	Irregular	Total
29	184	213
13.62	86.38	100.00

The data reveals that very few of the school going working children could attend school regularly (Table 6.6). The above mentioned hindrances and unfavourable circumstances did not support them to continue their studies smoothly. Ultimately they lost the interest in education, and as a result they failed in the examination and resulted in drop out of school and later they involved themselves in the stone based job to improve the financial

condition of their family. In this studied area the noticeable matter was that a bulk of children were debarred from getting necessary educational requirements like private tuition, adequate books, note books, pen, pencil etc. primarily on account of severe fiscal stringency and local socio-cultural environment.

Absence of Parents or Guardians: Absence of parents or guardians affects largely and due to this fact in many cases the studied children were forced to take the responsibility to run the family sacrificing the enjoyment of childhood.

Table 6.7: Distribution of Families on the basis of Child Workers With and Without Parents

Parents	Situation of the family			Total family
	Living with family	Dead	Separated and formed new family	
Father	230 92	13 5.2	7 2.8	250 100
Mother	246 98.4	3 1.2	1 0.4	250 100

In this concern, it was observed that the children of few families lost their father and mother too. Besides this, in few cases it was noticed that the fathers of 2.80 per cent families left their family permanently and established a new family by remarriage (Table 6.6). Under these circumstances, the children were bound to share the economic and other familial responsibilities too. Thus, another responsible factor for working involvement of the children was the absence of their parents or guardians.

Insecurity: Among the studied families, it was observed that most of the parents could not stay at home during day time as they had to work throughout the day in the stone field. The data reveals that around 95 per cent and 75 per cent of the total studied fathers and mothers respectively had to do this work for more than seven hours in a day (Table 5.14). During day time most of the children had to stay at home without guardians and often they felt insecure and this problem was mainly faced by the female children. Owing to this fact, they were supposed to go to the working field with their parents and gradually got involved in stone based work. However, insecurity or absence of parents at home was another factor which promoted them to do the work.

Dissatisfaction of Personal Needs: It was the fact that the studied children were dissatisfied as their various needs were not fulfilled. In few cases it was noticed that the children involved themselves in stone based work for earnings to satisfy their personal needs like favourite food items- fruits, chocolate, ice cream etc.; sports materials- bat, ball, wicket, foot ball, sports shoe, various toys and so on; dresses- well shirt, pant, T-shirt, various female dresses and woolen garments etc.; sandals, shoes etc.; cosmetics, ornaments (imitation) leisure and recreation i.e. purchasing sport requirements for what they like to play, watching cinema and theatre, etc.; personal hygiene- purchasing necessary cleaning agents such as soap, shampoo etc. for body cleanliness, surf and soap for washing dirty clothes and so on. Their parents could not provide the above always to them as they earned very little and finding no other way to satisfy their requirements they got involved themselves in stone based occupation.

Motivation for Working Involvement: Proper motivation is an important matter by which a person mould himself even can reach to the exact destination. In the studied area it was observed that some of the working children were motivated by their friends, neighbours and other elder persons of the family to do the stone based work. In this connection, the data reveals that 6.37 per cent, 4.51 per cent and 2.12 per cent of working children were motivated by the elder members of their family, friends and neighbours respectively (Table 5.17). Thus, it was another factor, which was responsible for the involvement of children in stone based work.

Migration: Due to displacement as well as migration the normal setup of any existing society is shaken even many things are changed too to adjust with the new setup. In this regard particularly the children are very much affected. Migration played an important role in prevalence of child worker in the studied area. The mentionable matter is that all of the studied families were migrants and mostly (80.80%) came from Bangladesh due to some unavoidable circumstances. Apart from this, 16.80 per cent and 2.40 per cent came from adjoining districts and states of the country respectively (Table 3.2). They were forced to leave their early place of residence, land and property. They became homeless, roofless as well as resourceless. They had to face a serious economic setback and other problems like adjustment with new socio-cultural system, shelterless situation, hunger etc. However, finding no other alternatives, they accepted the stone based job

for eking out a living. But they were paid very little remuneration which was not enough for maintaining the livelihood. Under these circumstances, they thought that the involvement of their children in this work was the only way to get rid a bit of severe economic instability. Thus, migration as well as displacement brought a turning point in their way of livelihood as well as in their socio-cultural practices which might have an adverse impact on their way of living, and obviously it was the cause of involvement of the children in the work.

Conflict Situation of the Families and Psychological Pressure: Any conflict hampers the peace and affects the normal way of living. It seriously affects the progress and development too as it creates tension which affects our thinking, working etc. However, among most of the studied families the relationship between fathers and mothers was not in well state at all. Even in some cases parents failed to maintain good relationship with their family members too. For not getting required food, dress, required shelter, study materials like books, note books etc.; leisure time for enjoying etc., for the inability to bear the expense of treatment etc. and other materials a continuous unhappiness, chaos, conflict etc. were noticed among the children and also their other family members. Particularly due to inability to provide the above materials to the children and other family members the fathers had to go through mental agony as in the family there was a continuous chaos and conflict over this matter. To get relief from this situation many of them used to drink alcohol.

Table 6.8: Alcoholism of Child Workers' Fathers

Father of Working Children	Alcoholism		
	Yes	No	Total
No. of Father	187	43	230
	81.30	18.70	100.00

The data reveals that a major percentage of fathers (81.30%) of working children used to drink alcohol (Table 6.8). A serious conflict and usage of abusive words could be noticed in every family when their father developed alcohol; a disturbance among the members at home and also with others had been taken place. In this regard, the prime responsible factor was their continuous hard struggle against extreme poverty for survival that kept them away from peaceful living. It was the fact that altogether their monthly income was

too poor to provide the minimum daily livelihood requirements. The relationship among the family members was mostly based on economic performances that told upon their children's psychology atrociously. Majority of the children did not get proper care, guidance, love and affection. Under these circumstances, some of the children felt that if they do not do the work, they have not any value in their family. They also realized that parents needed an economic support. Thus, their psychology was developed in such a way. Therefore, conflict situation and above mentioned reasons of the children and families created a psychological pressure on them to get involved in this work as soon as possible to solve or reduce the problems.

Social Environment: It is very important as from the society as well as locality a person learns several things. In their daily life they observe and learn the habits, practices, behaviour, way of living, way of earning and so on. It is the fact, culture is learned and shared and it is transmitted from generation after generation. In this regard, in the studied area it was common to notice that most of the children born in extreme poverty. Society pushed them to the jaws of death after birth. They were dispossessed of their basic needs and rights to grow up in a healthy way. Even they were deprived of getting love, affection, sympathy, kindness as well as proper care of their parents. From very beginning they had to see a continuous hard struggle of their parents to feed them. In most of the cases, mother took their little baby to the stone field. As a consequence, from the very beginning their thinking patterns were surrounded by stones, sands and other stone crushing implements. So naturally, an inclination for the same was gradually developed into their mind and perhaps they could able to adjust themselves with such type of environment. They used to observe daily that so many people were doing different types of stone related activities in the stone field such as stone collection, sand gathering, stone crushing, truck loading and so on. Children gradually learnt the work and got involved in this work.



Figure 6.2: A little child observing his mother crushing stone

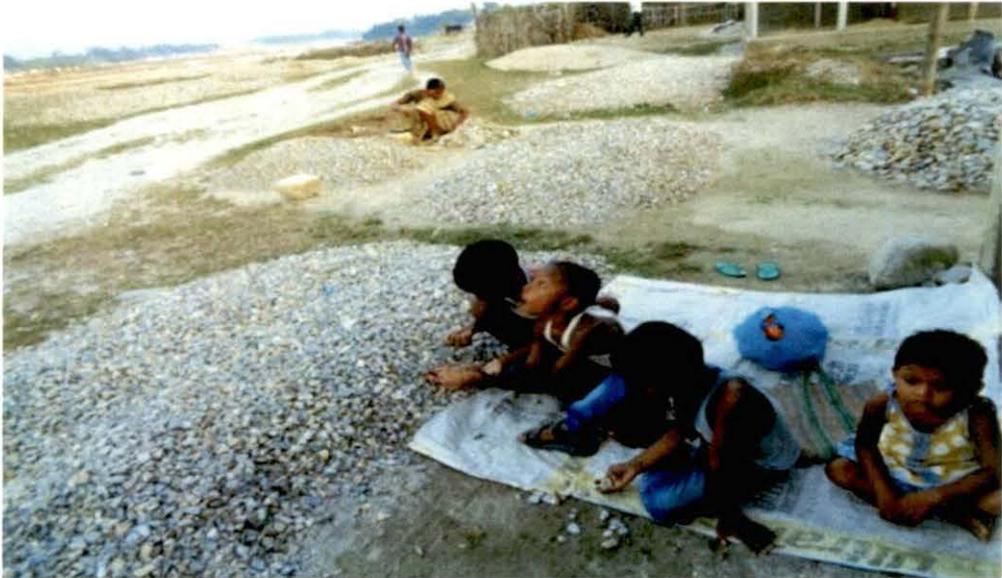


Figure 6.3: Little children participating in sport with stones and also observing stone based work

Most of the children did not get adequate co-operation from their parents to fulfill their requirements. Even they did not get any cooperation as well as proper guidance and awareness from neighbours, relatives and other elder members of the family rather they

were prompted by them to follow their livelihood pattern. Besides these, the peer group also plays an important role in socialization process. But in the studied village it was common to notice among the working children that most of the members of peer group were going through almost same situation and they were also motivated by each other to do the same work. Obviously it was due to same socio-economic and cultural practices of the families. Therefore, it may be said that social environment was most influential factor to involve the children in this work.

The present chapter has demonstrated that all the studied families were forced to migrate mainly due to loss of their economic resources as well as extreme poverty. Apart from these, socio-political reasons and some other factors were also responsible for the same. It was the fact that the studied people settled on the Balasan river bed and involved themselves in the stone based work. They did this work daylong for all the year round but they failed to enhance their income as they required by which they could fulfill the necessary demand of their family members. It was the fact that with their little income, they failed to provide vegetarian rice meal not more than twice a day, while eating egg, fish, meat, milk, fruit etc. was the seldom happening factor. They failed to provide the educational requirements and also failed to provide good dress to their children; broken houses were not repaired at proper time or that could not be extended and as a result, average five members' family had to stay in the single room houses mostly. Complete treatment was not possible with this income, that's why many were suffering from various diseases and ailments. Ultimately many had to work in hungry. The overall situation forced the children to get involved in stone based work to provide financial aid to their parents. In this regard, the poverty was the main cause of involvement of the children in work. Most of the parents believed that more children means more earnings. It was the fact that in many cases the family size was very large while the number of earning members was less. In fact due to large family size with less income, it was simply impossible to fulfill the minimum basic necessary livelihood requirements and due to this fact they had an urgent need to augment their income. Under these circumstances, they thought that the involvement of children in work was the best option for them. Besides these, they could not understand that if the children are forced to do the work at very little age then their overall growing up, development, socialization as well as personality

formation is hampered seriously. Thus, the illiteracy and ignorance of parents was another influential factor for the involvement of children in this work. In few families due to absence of parents or guardians the children had to take the burden of responsibility at a very early age to run their family. However, their parents could not afford to provide minimum requirements to them. They could accumulate rice meal twice a day only, but the animal protein like fish and meat and also the egg could rarely be seen in their diet. They could not afford to eat fruit, milk and other health drinks. They had not minimum adequate dress and even, they had not school uniform as well. Most of them had two set of dresses and these dresses became dirty soon due to rough use of it. But they could rarely wash it. However, they had a very hard time in winter because they had no proper warm clothes to protect themselves from severing cold. It was true that during winter the climate of Balasan River basin became very cold and their every pores of skin felt a biting touch of blowing cold wind. They had to suffer pain a lot, but indeed, they had no way but tolerating it silently. Sometimes, especially the female children had an earnest longing to use ornaments but they could not meet it. Moreover, the children could not meet the minimum needs of sports materials and they wept bitterly for this but their parents could not provide it to them. Apart from these, the parents could not bear the expense of minimum educational requirements for their children. Due to this fact, the studied children had to face serious problems in their studies and lost their interest of education. During study the children were suffering from various diseases and ailments throughout the year. But they did not get proper treatment because, their parents had not the capacity to bear the expense of treatment with necessary diagnostic tests and also could not afford to purchase all the prescribed medicines. Often to satisfy their requirements they got involved in stone based occupation. In fact, this extreme poverty became a constant companion in their daily life. Due to this fact, they had to do the work hard for the whole day in the stone crushing field in the hope of enhancement their earnings a bit. Even, sometimes few of them had to do the work in the stone field after evening also. Under these circumstances, during day time the children had to stay home alone and no one was there to look after them and this matter made their parents worried deeply. In this regard, especially the female children became a matter of anxiety to their parents because their parents could not feel secure to leave them alone at home. So, the

parents took them at very little age to the stone crushing field. Besides these, the relatives, neighbours and also their friends took them to the stone field. It was the fact that most of the children were motivated primarily by their parents to do the work in the stone field. Apart from these, due to several reasons, they were forced to migrate from one place to another even from one country to another country too. As a result, the normal socio-cultural set up of the concerned families as well as society was very much hampered and it seriously affected the children too. It was the fact that after migration the concerned families started to settle on Balasan River bed and involved themselves in the stone based job where the children were not excluded from it. Therefore, it may be said that migration also played an important role in the prevalence of child worker in the studied area. It was the fact that the parents worked hard throughout the day in all the seasons. But their monthly income was too poor to maintain livelihood. The necessary requirements like food, dress, shelter, educational materials, treatment etc. nothing of these could be provided properly. Even, due to extreme poverty they hardly could manage food not more than twice a day and it was very poor nutritious. In many cases they had to starve also. As a result, they became very sick and weak physically. Ultimately, a chaos and conflict was common to notice in their family over the inability to provide the required materials to the family members. This situation increased their mental pressure and anxiety very much. However, under these circumstances the children felt that if they do not do the work, they have not any value in their family, thus they involved themselves in this work at an early age. Moreover, the relationship among the family members was mostly based on economic performances. Besides these, social environment is very important to grow up as well as socialization and personality formation. After family, a person learns all the habits, attitudes, behaviours, practices, way of earning and so on from the society. In this regard, here, a child after his/her birth see that all the family members and the people of this locality do the stone based work, hunger, illiteracy, shelterless, ill health as well as extreme poverty, quarrel and so on. Ultimately, they did not get the opportunity to learn more than that in their growing stages. Therefore, no doubt the social environment was most important responsible factor for the involvement of children in this work. As a result, they were completely dispossessed of necessary opportunities for their overall development. Moreover, poverty

was the prime responsible factor for their working involvement and also for all types of deprivation. The other responsible factors for the same were large family size, illiteracy and ignorance of parents, educational backwardness, absence of parents or guardians, insecurity, dissatisfaction of personal needs, motivation for working involvement, migration, conflict situation of the families, psychological pressure, and social environment. However, they were forced by the above factors to get involved in the stone based work at an early stage of life which robbed their childhood.

Reference

Bottomore, T.B. (1962, Forth Impression 1979), *Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature*, Bombay: Blackie & Son (India) Ltd.

Census of India 2011, New Delhi: Government of India.

Pascual Gisbert, S.J. (1957, Reprinted 2001), *Fundamentals of Sociology*, Kolkata: Orient Longman Ltd.

Vidyarthi, L.P. and B. K. Rai, (1976, Reprinted 1985), *The Tribal Culture of India*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

CHAPTER VII: ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL PROFILE OF THE WORKING CHILDREN

Children are the gift of the god and also the blossoming flowers of the gardens. Hence, it is a responsibility of every members of society to save those flowers from each type of harmful effect. The socio-economic development of the nation depends on proper channeling, training and educating the energy, genius and mental faculty of every child. Politically, socially and economically a child is the seed of future development. It is the fact that economy and education are the two major parts of the society and these are closely related to every part of human life. The nature of growth of the economy and education is an important indicator of the development of a society.

Economy is an essential part of the community life and it plays an important role in making of socio-cultural structure of a society (Vidyarthi and Rai, 1976: 93). The development of a nation mainly depends on its economic infrastructure without which we simply can't step forward for a moment too in our life. It is a well established fact that the low level of occupational status usually leads to poor level of education and basically the poor standard of education leads to the involvement of the people in the low paid economic sectors. In India, most of the poor families are bound to send their children to do work primarily for the sake of utter indigence. Child work is a hard truth, encouraged by socio-economic and historical coercion. It is the fact that poverty, illiteracy and population growth are the most important reasons for serious problem and that their redress is indispensable for eradicating child labour. The prevalence of child labour has been more or less in periods of time, through varied in its nature and dimension, depending on the existing socio-economic structure of society. Child labour is a socio-economic phenomenon. It is generally conceded that illiteracy, ignorance, low wages, unemployment, poor standard of living, stark poverty, deep social prejudices and appalling backwardness of the countryside are all, severally and collectively, the root causes of child labour. It has been officially necessitated that, "child labour is no longer a

medium of economic exploitation but it necessitated by economic necessity of the parents and in many cases that of the child himself' (Punecha, 2006: 1 and 33).

While analysing child labour, one has taken into account the economic, social and cultural factors which affect the nature of child labour. The class position of parents, their educational background, cultural values, fertility level and family structure etc. affect the type of work children perform. The family which supply child labour may be having sizeable proportion of their population between the age of 6 and 14 years. This is in fact an age in which the children should be in the schools. Since the children are sent to work, it is expected that they are deprived of even the elementary education which may lead to low level of education of the households from where these children have been withdrawn. Even a large part of the population may not have any formal education (Sharma and Mittar, 1990: 11, 30 and 31). The literacy rate is comparatively poor in the areas where the rate of child labour is higher as the illiteracy and promotion of child labour practices is interrelated phenomenon. (Mittal, 1994: 45). It is the fact that illiterate parents usually do not think of the future as they are satisfied with their present. They have a firm belief in employing children and they are never worried about the future of their children. Education is an essential need of the child especially the kind of education that will help him to develop the knowledge, judgment, and social and moral values to play his proper role in society when he becomes an adult. Thus, in the fulfillment of this constitution no child should be allowed to work on street, or in other places of employment. The child should ideally be attending school to grow into a responsible adult (Mittal, 1994: 46). The happening of child work is historically and socially conditioned and its rise and growth are inherently bound with the varying tendency in production and reproduction of a specified social condition. It is the fact that the socio-economic backwardness is a major factor in the emergence and growth of child labour. However, the studied people came in Balasan River basin and involved themselves in stone based occupation in a particular situation. The studied people were mostly illegal migrants and they came from Bangladesh. Their prime economic resources, agricultural land, crops, other properties etc. were grabbed and looted by the Muslims in Bangladesh. Their socio-cultural life as well as basic human securities were continuously threatened by them and as a result, the overall situation became difficult for living and ultimately these several crisis forced

them to come here by leaving Bangladesh immediately as their survival was prime one. They came here moneyless, roof less, shelterless and resourceless in condition. Thus, it is expected that for survival most of the family members had to work hard as it was their prime challenge instead of others and it was also true for the children. Therefore, it is assumed that for survival the children might have to join in work like other family members and the overall situation might have an impact on their education. In this present chapter mainly the concentration has been given to highlight the economic and educational profile of working children in the studied area –

Economic Profile

All of the families in the studied area were migrants. Basically due to some unavoidable circumstances they were forced to leave their own place, land, house and property. As a consequence, they became homeless, landless as well as resourceless and thus came here without having any valuable asset and accepted the stone based occupation as their prime source of income for eking out a living. The studied village is located on Balasan River Basin. The river comes down from Himalayas with natural resources like – sands, stones and boulders those were supplied to the outside markets mainly for urban construction that's why the stone based occupation was the backbone of economy in the studied area. It is to be mentioned that stones were supplied to the outside either directly or after crushing with requisite size. There was no age and gender biasness in this work and further there was no need of any monetary investment in this economic sector rather it was only dependent on manual labour. They came here primarily to get involved in stone based occupation. In spite of getting little remuneration, they could not leave this job as it was out of their capacity to invest in any other suitable business or occupation. Moreover, their poor educational standard kept separate from getting better occupational opportunity. Thus, seeing no other means they had to get involved in stone based occupation which was the only way of making their living. However, their way of livelihood as well as socio-cultural life got changed with the changes of economic scenario and living environment.

Among the studied families an important highlighting issue is that due to little earnings they could not lead healthy and a normal life and also could not meet to minimum necessary livelihood requirements. Due to this fact, they had an urgent need to get a monetary support and to meet the need they involved their children in stone based job. In this regard, most of the parents opined that it was the only way to get rid of extreme indigence a bit. Considering the fact that, almost all of the parents of working children were primarily involved in stone based work.

Table 7.1: Occupational Status of Fathers and Mothers of Child Worker

Type of involvement	Occupational status of fathers			Occupational status of mothers		
	Type of work		Total	Type of work		Total
	Stone-based work	Non stone-based work		Stone-based work	Non stone-based work	
Primary	226 98.26	4 1.74	230 100.00	238 96.75	8 3.25	246 100.00
Secondary	4 66.67	2 33.33	6 100.00	2 66.67	1 33.33	3 100.00
Total	230 97.46	6 2.54	236 100.00	240 96.39	9 3.61	249 100.00

The data reveals that a major percentage of fathers (98.26%) and mothers (96.75%) of working children were primarily involved in stone based occupation (Table 7.1). It was also stated earlier that finding no other means, they had to get involved in stone based job and most of their children were forced to do this work.

Case Study 1: Manabi Barman, a 12 years aged Rajbanshi girl was born in 1999 in Bangladesh. But later, in 2011 her family migrated at Purba Rangia village from Bangladesh and started to live permanently here. In earlier her father was a landless sharecropper. Poverty and political turmoil were the prime decisive factors for their migration. After migration from the stone based occupation was their only source of earnings. Later on, her father was died of heart attack in 2006 that resulted in utter economic instability in the family. After this incident, her mother and grandmother together were involved in stone based job and earned Rs. 1600/- per month. But their

income was not enough at all for living. Manabi had to get involved in this work when she was ten years old. She had a young brother who also helped them in the stone field. She did both stone collection and stone crushing activities. They could hardly earn Rs. 2000/- per month and their four members' family was maintaining on this little earnings. She had to do work hard for the whole day and often she made herself injured with stone chips and iron implements. Manabi confessed that she was not so interested to do this work but she was helpless because she was forced by her mother to do this work. Her eyes filled with tears when she was telling the fact. However, Manabi had to do this work against her will.

Case Study 2: Sephali Barman was a 14 years unmarried girl, belonged to Rajbanshi Community. In her family she had her father, mother and an elder brother. They came here from Bangladesh about nine years ago i.e. in 2002 due to political unrest. After migration her parents started stone based work as their prime source of earnings. They could hardly earned Rs. 1400/- per month. But they could not afford to run their family on this little earnings. Therefore, both Sephali and her elder brother had to get involved in the stone based work. They did this job altogether. Sephali confessed, she and her brother both were provoked by their parents to get engaged in the said work because it was difficult for their parents to run the family on their little earnings. Therefore, the parents were in a crying need to augment their family income. She did both stone crushing and stone collection activities and could hardly earn Rs. 150/- per week and she provided her total earnings to the parents. Thus, altogether they earned Rs. 2600/- per month. But Sephali was not satisfied with the earnings as compared to hard physical labour for all the day. She had been doing this work since she was only seven years old. Sephali opined that she had lot of experience of stone crushing occupation.

Case Study 3: Manik Barman was a 10 years aged boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. They came here around ten years ago i.e. 2001 from Bangladesh. In his family he had his mother and elder sister. His father was died of physical illness nearly five years ago i.e. 2006. His father was the bread earner and stone crusher by profession. After his death the rest family members altogether shared the burden of economic responsibility by doing the work in stone field. The stone crushing occupation was the

only source for eking out a living. Their total family income was Rs. 1600/- per month. Manik was involved only in stone crushing activity. Pursuant to him it was very much hard and hazardous job but nonetheless he had to do it as his contribution to the family income was very essential. He started this job nearly three years ago when he was only seven years aged boy. He was not so interested to do this job. He opined if he gets any other better opportunity then shall leave this job. But who will offer him better job? A tear rolled down his face when he was telling “they are poor so they can’t hope for something better and nobody will come forward to extend their helping hand”. Manik worked hard for the whole day in inhuman working condition. He earned nearly Rs. 100/- per week and contributed to the family income by providing his total earnings. Due to heavy work load he could hardly manage the time to study at home, play games and also for other recreational purposes. He was encouraged to involve in this job by his mother. He spent most of the time in a day for work.

Case Study 4: Babli Roy, 13 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had father, mother, three younger sisters and a younger brother. They came here about five years ago i.e. in 2006 from Jalpaiguri. Earlier, her father was a rickshaw-van puller and often he used his rickshaw-van in order to hand over of the stolen timbers secretly under a log smuggler. One day, suddenly he was chased by police and feeling a tight corner, he left his van on the road to save himself. Ultimately, his timber loaded rickshaw-van was seized by the police and afterwards he did not take any initiative to release it from the police custody because he would know very well as it was a serious criminal offence. As a consequence, he became jobless and due to this fact he came here along with his rest family members. After migration they started a new way of living. Both of her parents earned their living as stone crusher but their earnings simply failed to ensure a minimum security for living. Under this circumstance, they thought that sending their children to work is the best option to improve their economic condition. Therefore, Babli was motivated by her parents to get involved in work at very early age. Except last two youngest one, rest two children were also prompted by their parents to contribute to their family income by doing work in the stone field. Babli did both stone crushing and sand gathering works and earned nearly Rs. 100/- per week. She contributed to the family income by providing her total earnings. However, the total family income was nearly Rs.

2500/- per month. She was not satisfied with this job as pursuant to her it was very much labourious and hazardous. Nevertheless she had no other option but doing it because she had a fear of scolding or often beating up too by her parents. She burst into tears while telling about her pathetic state as the parents behaved like employers with her because she was often rebuked or even beaten up soundly by her parents if she raised her eyes from work for a moment too.

Case Study 5: Soumen Singha was a 12 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. He was born in Islampur of Uttar Dinajpur District in West Bengal. In his family he had father, mother and two brothers and a sister. Among them, the elder brother aged 15 years and rests were junior to him. They came here in the year 2000 due to familial problem and poverty. His father was earlier a rickshaw-van puller who was the bread earner of the family. Presently stone based work is the only way of making their living. Both his parents got involved in stone based economy to earn their living. But their little earnings could not feed them to the fill. Therefore, for the compulsion of hunger they forced their children to involve in this work. Except youngest one, the rest three children had to get involved in stone based work at very early stage of life in order to contribute to their family earnings. Soumen had been working for last six years. He did stone crushing activity and often had to help his parents in stone collection activity. He earned nearly Rs. 100/- per week and he contributed his total hard earnings to the parents. Their total family income was approximately Rs. 2800/- per month. Apart from this, he had to help his parents in domestic chores such as carrying water, cleaning house and utensils, shopping and so on. Often he went to market and brought what his parents needs. Soumen expressed that his father was a ruthless man who reproached him always and even sometimes beat him soundly if he was absent in work or raised his eyes from work for a moment also. He could play only when his father went to market but indeed it was a seldom happening factor. His mother usually scolded him if he did not help her in household chores. Their relationship was based upon economic performance.

Case Study 6: Lalita Barman was a 12 years unmarried girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. She was born in Bangladesh. They migrated here in 2006 mainly due to oppression of neighbours and along with it, the financial matter was partly responsible

factor in terms of migration. Lalita had three younger sisters and an elder brother. Earlier, her father was a day labour but after migration both her parents got involved in stone based occupation. But feed to the fill was simply out of their capacity. To get a financial support both the parents motivated their children to do this work but the youngest one. Lalita had been working for last three years. She mainly did both stone crushing and stone collection activities throughout the year. She earned Rs. 100/- per week. She contributed her earnings to the family. Lalita had to do this job against her will because her parents were quite satisfied with her earnings but they never loved her a bit too. In working field the parents behaved like employers with her because they scolded her and sometimes even beat her soundly when she raised her eyes from work. The relationship between Lalita and her parents was mostly based on economic performance. She was found crying her eyes out while describing such bitter experience.

The children were supposed to do this work as their whole participations was a production unit and this was the common scenario observed among them. Basically they got involved in various stone based activities viz. stone collection and crushing, sand gathering and truck loading. Generally they were paid by the *sardars* once in a week especially on Tuesday and the payment was totally dependent on the amount of work whatever the quality of stones was a considerable matter. Tuesday was locally known as payment day. In the stone field, the noticeable matter was that, they worked in a group of 4 to 5 members especially for truck loading. Each of them used to be paid Rs. 20/- to Rs. 25/- individually for loading each truck and they could load hardly four trucks in a day. But it was a seldom possible factor to the children as this type of activity was not fitted for the children due to lack of physical strength. Nevertheless some of the working children (6.89%) were involved in this activity (Table 5.12). The severe economic crisis in their families created an urgent need to augment the family earnings.



Figure 7.1: Children participating in stone collection from the river with their parents



Figure 7.2: A little girl crushing stones with her family



Figure 7.3: A little boy removing sand from the stones with his parents



Figure 7.4: Children participating in loading of truck

Table 7.2: Monthly Income of the Child Workers' Family

Category	Monthly income (in Rs.) of Child workers' family					
	Up to 1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	4001 and above	Total
Excluding the income of working children	23 9.20	172 68.80	40 16.00	10 4.00	5 2.00	250 100.00
Including the income of working children	7 2.80	112 44.80	105 42.00	20 8.00	6 2.40	250 100.00

The data regarding their actual financial situation reveals that the monthly income of a large section (around 90%) was very poor (up to Rs. 3000/-) while nearly one-fifth of the families had more than that (Table 7.2). Such low paid work was a prime decisive factor for the involvement of children in work and in this regard, the presence of working children in every studied family gave such indication. Their precious contribution to the family earnings could improve in their family earnings.

Table 7.3: Distribution of Family on the basis of Number of Child Worker

No. of child worker per family			
One	Two	Three and above	Total
153	72	25	250
61.20	28.80	10.00	100.00

The data shows that majority of the studied families (61.20%) had the single working child while rest of the families had two or more working children. Each and every studied family faced the serious economic problem and due to this fact they had an urgent need to enhance their earnings.

Table 7.4: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Monthly Income of the Family

Category	Monthly income (in Rs.) of Child workers' family					
	Up to 1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	4001 and above	Total
Including the income of working children	8 2.12	151 40.05	180 47.75	29 7.69	9 2.39	377 100.00
Excluding the income of working children	32 8.49	269 71.35	57 15.12	13 3.45	6 1.59	377 100.00

A large number of the working children came from the poor families whose monthly income was very poor. The precarious fiscal state was a single decisive obstruction to meet the basic needs of the family and due to this fact the children had to contribute to their family earnings. In this way the level of income became improved a bit.

Table 7.5: Child Workers' Contribution to the Family Income

Sex	Contribution to their family income		
	Whole income	Part income	Total
Male	184 98.92	2 1.08	186 100.00
Female	190 99.48	1 0.52	191 100.00
Total	374 99.20	3 0.80	377 100.00

The data reveals that except very few (0.80%) all the working children contributed their whole earnings to the family (Table 7.5). Indeed, the financial condition was quite improved due to precious contribution of working children to their family earnings.

Table 7.6: Distribution of Child Workers by their Age of Initiation at Work

Sex	Age of initiation									Total
	≤5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Male	58 31.18	54 29.03	25 13.44	21 11.29	11 5.91	10 5.38	4 2.15	1 0.54	2 1.08	186 100.00
Female	70 36.65	48 25.13	39 20.42	16 8.38	8 4.19	4 2.09	2 1.05	3 1.57	1 0.52	191 100.00
Total	128 33.95	102 27.06	64 16.98	37 9.81	19 5.04	14 3.71	6 1.59	4 1.06	3 0.80	377 100.00

The aforesaid table reveals that the working children and their age of initiation at work. The data manifests that around 78 per cent of working children in between 5 to 7 years age entered the stone based work (Table 7.6). Basically all their hopes began to crumble away due to their busy working schedule for the whole day without any adequate rest as they showed their inclination to continue education, play games and watch television or cinema. A major section of working children were not so interested to continue such type of work because according to them its remuneration was very poor and had to apply hard

manual labour in hazardous working condition. A large number of them expressed their will to shift over another suitable job but it was next to impossible.

Table 7.7: Distribution of Child Workers' Family on the basis of Monthly Savings

Child workers' family	Monthly savings (in Rupee)					Total
	≤200	201- 400	401- 600	601- 800	No savings	
No. of family	1	1	1	3	244	250
	0.40	0.40	0.40	1.20	97.60	100.00

Table 7.8: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Monthly Savings of the Family

Sex	Monthly savings (in Rupee)					Total
	≤200	201- 400	401- 600	601- 800	No savings	
Male	1	1	1	2	181	186
	0.54	0.54	0.54	1.08	97.31	100.00
Female	-	-	1	2	188	191
			0.52	1.05	98.43	100.00
Total	1	1	2	4	369	377
	0.27	0.27	0.53	1.06	97.88	100.00

The data manifests that around 98 per cent of the studied families could not save their earnings and nearly the same percentage of working children were from these families (Table 7.7 and table 7.8). Due to serious economic crisis the saving was hardly possible for them and even it was simply out of their expectation. However, it was simply beyond their capacity to do it.

There was a co-operative society named as 'Bandhan'¹ at Matigara just adjacent to the studied area from where they took loan with certain terms and conditions. The minimum amount of loan was Rs. 1000/- and maximum was Rs. 10,000/-. Usually Rs. 100/- per thousand rupees had to be deposited at the time of taking loan and Rs. 25/- per thousand rupees had to be paid once in a week after borrowing of money. In this way it was continued up to 45 weeks. The members of the concerned co-operative society used to visit the village only on Wednesday for collection of payment as per the above mentioned terms and conditions. The co-operative society generally used to take Rs. 20/- per

¹ *Bandhan*: A co-operative society locally known as *bandhan*.

thousand rupees loan from the deposited money and the rest was used to be refunded to the borrower after paying off within the limited time period. Mainly most of the families had to take loan from 'Bandhan' for various purposes like house construction and repairing, marriage ceremony, treatment of ailments and diseases and so forth. Hence, according to terms and conditions they had to repay it once in a week which was continued for 45 weeks. They were deeply indebted and they never made themselves free from the net of debts. As a consequence, the various forms of disabilities and imbalance in family budget arose greatly which pushed them in a condition of near starvation. The little income prevented them at every moment in the fulfillment of basic needs like food, cloth, proper shelter, health and education for their children. Many children in the studied area were forced to get involved in stone based job at an early age rather than going to school. Nevertheless, most of fathers of the studied children spent some money daily especially for drinking and often for gambling and lottery too. They were going through a tough condition primarily due to the fact of extreme pecuniary hardship which was the prime decisive contributing factor for the involvement of children in stone based work at the very beginning of life.

All the studied families were migrated and mostly came from Bangladesh. They came in Balasan River basin in roofless, shelterless as well as resourceless situation. All their properties and agricultural land were looted and grabbed by the Muslim people of Bangladesh and due to these facts they were forced to come in Balasan River basin for permanent settlement and earning. The Balasan River carries with its stream a huge amount of sand, stones and boulders and these are used for urban construction that have huge demand in this locality. It was the fact that to do the stone based work only physical labour was needed and due to this fact this stone based work was readily accepted by the studied families. They worked throughout the year paying no attention to scorching heat of summer and biting cold of winter. They did different kinds of stone based activities like stone collection, stone crushing, sand gathering, and truck loading. They worked hard throughout the day but they earned very little as compare to their work amount. Their average monthly income was Rs. 2000/-. Due to little earnings they could not manage their living. Therefore, they sent their children to work to augment their earnings. In the stone field the children mainly did both stone collection and stone crushing

activities but very few were involved in truck loading activity as it was very much hard labourious. They had to do the work in the stone field for an average seven hours in a day. On an average around four members in each family were involved in this work. Their remuneration was too little to meet the needs of living such as sufficient food, clothing, proper shelter and education. They always had to struggle against poverty. They worked hard in the stone field for all the day. They had a crying need to augment their earnings for living but finding no other means most of the parents sent their children to the stone field. Hence, due to extreme poverty the children had to do this work from the very beginning. The average monthly income of the children was around Rs. 400/-. They provided their total earnings to their family. The children were not satisfied with this work and they opined that if they get better opportunity then they shall leave this job. They had to struggle against poverty in order to accumulate a fold of rice twice in a day. They used to wake up very early in the morning with the ray of sunup and after having little breakfast they went to the stone field and returned home in the evening when the work was over for the day. After resettlement their prime need was to have a strong economic backbone but the present stone crushing occupation could not provide the concerned security to them. A strong competition in economic field, struggle for survival and an anxiety for future were found among them. Another surprising matter was that in working field most of the parents behaved like employers with their children that was a bad treatment for a child. The relationship between parents and children was mostly based on economic performance. Ultimately the children were affected badly and they were robbed off their childhood.

Educational Profile

Education is the customary means of imparting the culture of a group. The educational process is the agency through which he acquires the greater part of his adjustive behaviour.

“As we teach a child, so he learns”

In the educational process the individual is taught to behave in conformity to group customs and is discouraged from behaviour which violets such custom. Therefore,

education transmits the culture through successive generations. Formal education, in turn is either tutorial or institutionalised in the form of schools (institution for teaching novices) and learned societies (institution for the exchange of knowledge between experts), (Slotkin, 1950: 525-31). Durkheim (1922) defined education as 'the action exercised by the older generations upon those who are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to awaken and develop in the child those physical, intellectual and moral states which are required of him both by his society as a whole and by the milieu for which he is specially destined'. Education has been defined as the art of developing and cultivating physical, intellectual, aesthetic and moral facilities of the individual with a view to enabling him to respond positively to demands and responsibilities of his social being (Mittal, 1994: 45). Over the past fifty years, the provision of educational opportunities for all children has come to be recognized morally as a right of the child and a duty of the community. Actually, however, schools and educational advantages vary greatly with respect to the character and position of the community and of the child's family in the community. Lack of educational opportunity is correlated with the extent of child labour. Child labour is regarded as harmful to the child in that it tends to hinder continuing education (Lee, 1946, reprinted 1953: 23-24). Child work was a common phenomenon in the studied area where most of the working children came from poor economic background. Their parents and most of the other family members including most of the children were involved in stone based economy but their earnings was too little to run their family. Obviously it had an impact on the education of children which is discussed below-

Case Study 1: Sadhana Barman was a 11 years unmarried girl, belonged to Rajbanshi community. She was born in Bangladesh. They came here in 2006. After migration stone based occupation was their prime source of income but both her parents could not run their family on little earnings. Therefore, Sadhana was provoked by her parents to get involved in the stone based job. She admitted that her working involvement affected her studies adversely. Sadhana could not go to school every day due to her working involvement. They altogether could earned Rs. 2000/- per month. Due to poor earnings the parents could not provide her minimum educational requirements like necessary books, note books, pen, pencil, private tuition etc to her. Due to absent of private tuition

she could not finish all the home works and particularly she was very much weak in mathematics. Both her parents were illiterate and due to this fact she did not get any support and cooperation from her parents for education. As a consequence, she had a fear of scolding and also a fear of beating by her class teachers. Under these circumstances, she lost the interest in going to school. Moreover, her parents did not prefer to send her to school. The teachers scolded her bitterly because she had no school uniform. As a result, she failed in the final examination and ultimately dropped out when she was reading in class IV. She had to do work throughout the week. She worked from morning to evening. Generally she used to go to the stone field very early in the morning after having little breakfast. At the noon she came back home for having lunch and very after she took rice meal to the stone field for her parents and returned home in the evening. As a result, her school attendance was a seldom happening factor. Another mentionable matter was that often she went out from the class to join with her parents in the stone field. The untiring labour in the stone field made her body painful resulted in she could not study her lessons. Their dwelling house was broken and *kachha* type. The rainy water was falling on the leaky roof which damaged her books and notebooks and due to this fact she faced a problem of reading those books and her notebooks became disabled for writing too. Besides, there was no electricity in their house and due to poor light she could not read and write well at night. The house composed of the single little room and there was no sufficient space in the house for her studies. They cooked inside the room because there was no separate kitchen in their house. They used earthen oven or cooking pit that emitted huge smoke and their rooms became smoky. The smoky environment caused her eyes to go red and start watering and as a result, she could not read the books and also could not write well. Even, due to hard manual work and lack of sufficient and nutritious food she became very weak and as a consequence, she could not pay attention to her studies. Besides these, she had to assist her parents in domestic chores and due to this fact her study got hampered badly. Moreover, the socio-cultural systems and local environment hindered her education very much and as a consequence, within very early she started to loss the interest in education. Ultimately all the situations were unfavourable for her educational progress.

Case Study 2: Mithun Singha was a 14 years aged Rajbanshi boy. He was born at Islampur in the district of Uttar Dinajpur. They came here from Islampur in 2005. After coming here both of his parents got involved in stone based work to earn their living. But their earnings could not provide them a minimum support to run their family. Mithun had to get involved in stone based job when he was 8 years old. His two younger brothers, Niloy aged 10 years and Dulu aged 8 years also involved in stone based work. Mithun did both stone collection and truck loading activities. He had to do work for the whole week without any adequate rest. They altogether could earn Rs. 2800/- per month but they could not run their five members family on this little earnings. His parents could not afford to provide minimum educational requirements such as necessary books, note books, pen, pencil, etc. to him which affected his studies badly. Even, his parents failed to provide private tuition to him. His class teachers provided home works to him but due to absence of private tuition he could not complete it. He mainly faced problem in mathematics and english because he was very much weak in these subjects. In this regard he did not get any help from his parents as both the parents were illiterate. The parents did not prefer to send him to school because they had an urgent need to get a financial aid. As a result, he lost interest and failed in the final examination and ultimately he dropped out of school when he was in class IV. His eyes filled with tears while asking about his education. He admitted that he always tried to attend the class regularly but it was hardly possible because of his daylong working involvement. He reported that his two younger brothers had to face the same problem. Niloy was reading in class V and Dulu in class IV. They had no adequate books and note books and even private tuition too and as a result they faced serious problems in their studies. Due to absent of private tuition they had to go to the school without homework because they could not get many parts of their studies especially in mathematics and english. Even, they used to go out from the classes to join the work in the stone crushing field. Under these circumstances, they also began to lose the interest of going to school. Their parents never encouraged them to go to school. They did not get any support and cooperation from their parents for education. Mithun and his brother were scolded bitterly and often beaten up by their parents if they were absent in work or raised their eyes from work. They used to get up very early in the morning and after morning fresh and having little breakfast with tea and

pup rice they went to the stone field. They crossed the lunch period taking rice with pulses and little amount of vegetable curry. Even the work was often continued after evening too. They could eat rice meal not more than twice a day and it was very poor nutritious as their parents could not afford to feed them fish, egg, meat, milk, fruits and other health drinks. Even, their parents could not feed them to the fill and often they had to starve. Due to hard manual work and lack of sufficient and nutritious food they became weak and as a result they could not pay attention to their studies. Due to poor health they did not get any interest to study the lesson. They lived in *kachha* and broken house of a little room. The rainy water entered the room through cracked walls and leaky roof which made their books and note books disable for reading and writing. However, they could not enjoy the electricity at home and due to this fact they could not read and write properly at night. All the family members had to live altogether in single little room and as a result of which, they could not pay attention to their studies. They cooked food inside the room using earthen oven that made their room smoky and they could not read the books and also could not write well because the smoky environment made their eyes red and started watering. Besides these, the social environment like inter familial and intra familial conflict, alcoholism of father, gambling etc. affected their educational atmosphere at home badly.

Case Study 3: Alodini Barman was a 14 years unmarried girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. She was born in Bangladesh. They came here in 2008. After migration the stone based job was the only way of making their living and both her parents were the only bread earner of the family but their earnings could not fulfill their basic necessary requirements for living. As a result, Alodini was provoked by her parents to get involved in the stone based occupation. She had three sisters and a brother who were younger to her. They were Maloti aged 12 years, Mukti aged 10 years, Nitai aged 8 years and Radha aged 6 years. All of them had to get involved in stone crushing work but only her very youngest sister, Radha. They altogether could hardly earn Rs. 3200/- per month. But this earnings was not enough to run their seven members family. They did several kinds of stone based work such as stone collection and crushing and sand gathering. The utter financial constraint and working involvement had a serious impact on their education. Both Alodini and Maloti dropped out of school when they were reading in class IV and

Mukti stopped schooling when she was in class III. Nitai was reading in class III but he became very irregular in school attendance. Due to poor earnings their parents could not afford to provide necessary educational requirements like books, note books, pen, pencil etc to them. Even they had no private tuition and due to this fact in many cases they could not understand their studies and lost interest. It was the fact that due to the illiteracy of parents they did not get any guidance and cooperation from their parents rather they were motivated by them to do the work in the stone field. They had a fear of scolding by their class teachers because owing to absence of private tuition they could finish their home works. Even they could not reply the queries of their class teachers and because of this fact they were scolded by their class teachers. The untiring labour in the stone field made their body painful resulted in they could not study their lessons. Under these circumstances, they lost the interest of schooling. Besides these, they had to starve in many times and hardly eat meal twice in a day. Their parents could not feed them sufficient and proper nutritious food like fish, meat, egg, milk, fruits and other health drinks. They had a burning sensation in their stomach due to extreme hunger and as consequence they could not pay attention to their studies. Even, Alodini and her two younger sisters, Maloti and Mukti had to assist their parents in domestic chores as well and due to this fact their study got hampered. However, due to poor housing they could not concentrate to their studies. Their single room house was *kachha* type and even, due to little space they could hardly manage the seating place inside the room and they mainly faced this problem at the time of study at home that hindered their attention to study the lesson. Besides these, the family atmosphere was a great hindrance in their study at home as owing to alcoholism, gambling, regular quarrel and chaos affected their concentration to the study badly and ultimately, they had to face a lot of problems in their studies.

Case Study 4: Dipti Sarkar was a 12 years Rajbanshi girl. She had four younger sisters. Both of her parents were involved in stone based work. But they could not provide for such a big family. They could not find their daily food. As a result, Dipti and her next younger sister, Tripti aged 9 years had to contribute to their family earnings. They worked in the stone field with their parents. They did both stone collection and stone crushing work. Dipti had been working for the last five years and her sister for three

years in the stone crushing field. Their total monthly earnings was hardly Rs. 2600/- . With this little earnings they could not manage their seven members' family. Dipti dropped out of school when she was the student of class III and her sister, Tripti was reading in class IV. But they had to face many obstructions in their studies. They had not sufficient study materials. Even both their parents had the education up to primary level and therefore, they could not guide their children properly. The absence of private tuition created a serious problem in getting many parts of their studies and in this regard Dipti admitted that she really could not understand the mathematics and her sister Tripti was very weak both in english and mathematics. It was the fact that, ultimately Dipti lost her interest and failed in the final examination and even, an absence of interest was found in Tripti too. Their parents had been in great difficulties to give their children a full feed. They felt uneasiness in the stomach due to hunger. They could not pay attention to their studies due to feel extremely hungry. They had to do work for all the day and due to this busy working schedule they could hardly attend the school. In fact for the compulsion of hunger they had to do the work. Apart from this, Dipti and her sister Tripti had to assist their mother in domestic chores like washing cloth, sweeping floor, cleaning the house and utensils, carrying water, going to shop and so on which kept them separate from their studies. They were very much displeased with their family atmosphere. The regular chaos and conflict in the family made them upset as they could not pay attention to their studies. They had no separate room for studies and ultimately their education got hampered badly. However, there were many obstacle factors besides working involvement resulted in their poor educational status.

Case Study 5: Pinku Barman a 10 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. He was born in Fatapukur of Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal. He had a younger brother, Rintu, a 6 years old boy. Their total family members were four. After coming here both his parents were involved in stone based occupation for eking out a living but their earnings was not enough to meet the needs of daily livelihood requirements. To run the family parents motivated Pinku to do the stone based work. Pinku had been working for last three years. He did both stone collection and stone crushing work throughout the day. He was reading in class IV and due to heavy work load he could hardly manage the time to maintain regular schooling. Even, he used to go out from the classes to join the work in

the stone crushing field. He had no private tuition and also had not adequate books and note books. He had a fear of scolding by his class teachers as due to absence of private tuition he had to attend his classes with incomplete homework. He admitted that during english class he could get nothing and he had a fear in mathematics too. It was the fact that owing to illiteracy both the parents could not understand his studies. Due to this fact he lost his interest and failed in the examination. Besides working involvement, he had to assist his parents in domestic chores and he could not concentrate to his study because at the moment in time often his mother ordered him to go to the shop. However, his parents could not feed him to the fill and often he had to starve. He worked in hungry in the stone field. Owing to hard manual work in extreme hungry he became weak. Due to poor health and agony of hunger he could no pay attention to his study and lost interest. Their dwelling house was broken and *kachha* type. The rainy water was falling on the leaky roof and damaged his study materials that got disabled for reading and even for writing too. There was no electricity in their house and due to poor light at night he had to face a problem of reading books. Due to lack of room they had to live in the single room and cooked food inside the room. They used earthen oven for cooking that emitted a lot of smoke and made their room smoky which caused his eyes to go red and start watering resulted in he could not read and write well. Again, he had to face a serious problem in his studies for bad family environment as due to regular chaos and conflict he could not concentrate to his studies. Moreover, the untiring labour in the stone field made his body painful and as a result he could not study his lessons. He had expression of pain in his tender eyes.

Case Study 6: Swapna Barman was a 13 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. She was born in Bangladesh. They came here about eight years ago i.e. in 2004. She had two sisters, Sumita, aged 10 years and Sandhya, aged 8 years and a brother, Karuna aged 6 years. Both her parents were stone crusher by profession but their earnings was not enough to run such a big family. Her father was a cruel man who was a drunker and also a gambler but her mother could never tolerate such type of expensive activities. Once she had a quarrel with him and was beaten up soundly. On the very next day, her father left the home forever and since then he never visited to see them and even he had not kept in contact with his family members. Swapna said, they do not know

where he is? Under this circumstance, Swapna and her younger sister Sumita had to take the responsibility of economic burden of the family. They had to share with their mother in contribution to their family earnings. They did stone collection, sand gathering and stone crushing work for all the day. They could not go to school as during day time they were very busy at work in the stone field. Their mother had not the capacity to provide educational materials and private tuition to them and even due to her illiteracy she could not guide them. In fact, the untiring labour throughout the day in the stone field made their body painful and they could not pay attention to their studies. Even they could not eat to the fill and in many times they had to starve that made their stomach incapable of eating much. They could not concentrate to their studies due to agony of hunger. They had to do several domestic chores such as cleaning house and utensils, sweeping floor, carrying water, helping their mother in preparing meal, going to shop to bring what their mother needs, taking care of younger siblings and so on which kept them aloof from their studies. Besides these, Swapna had to take cattle to the grazing land very early in the morning before going to the stone field and again she had to go there in the evening to get them back at home. She never got a single moment to eliminate for respiration. Even owing to poor housing their education got hampered very much. Due to these facts Swapna and her sister Sumita lost interest in their studies and ultimately dropped out of school when they were in class III. Swapna was found crying her eyes out when she was telling facts.

Table 7.9: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Educational Status and Educational Standard

Sex	Educational status			Educational standard		
	Illiterate	Literate	Total	I-IV	V-VIII	Total
Male	18 9.68	168 90.32	186 100.00	124 73.81	44 26.19	168 100.00
Female	27 14.14	164 85.86	191 100.00	128 78.05	36 21.95	164 100.00
Total	45 11.94	332 88.06	377 100.00	252 75.90	80 24.10	332 100.00

Table 7.10: Distribution of Literate Child Workers According to Status of their Schooling and Type of Attendance of the School Going Child Workers

Sex	Status of schooling			Type of attendance		
	Currently attending	Attended school/Dropout	Total	Regular	Irregular	Total
Male	113 67.26	55 32.74	168 100.00	15 13.27	98 86.73	113 100.00
Female	100 60.98	64 39.02	164 100.00	14 14.00	86 86.00	100 100.00
Total	213 64.16	119 35.84	332 100.00	29 13.62	184 86.38	213 100.00

The important matter that need to be mentioned in the context of their educational status that around 88 per cent of working children were literate (Table 7.9). But only around 64 per cent of them could afford to manage the time for schooling from their busy working schedule (Table 7.10), and most of them (86.38%) could not able to maintain the regularity due to their day long hard work in the stone field (Table 7.10). Most of the parents thought, it was the only way for eking out a living. Some of the working children opined that “if we do not work, who will feed us? So, we are bound to do it”. They had to spend most of the time in a day in stone field; as a result, they could not manage the adequate time for their educational purpose. In this context the data manifests that around 43 per cent of them had to spend seven to eight hours or often more than that in a day in the stone field while the rest of them were not much in less work as around 40 per cent of them had to stay in the stone field for five to six hours in a day (Table 5.15). Even the surprising matter was that often they went out from the classes to join with their parents in the stone crushing work. Hence, the longer hour of work in a day was perhaps a great obstacle for them to pay adequate attention to their studies. A woeful fact was that a number of them often went to school but could not pay attention, concentrate and learn, as apart from many obstacles they were hungry too. The working involvement for prolong hours a day kept them separate from schooling or study at home and it may be cleared if we follow the quantitative data regarding their school attendance.

Table 7.11: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Dropout, Stagnation, and Non Enrolment

Age group	Male					Female				
	Dropout	Stagnation	Non enrolment	Nil	Total	Dropout	Stagnation	Non enrolment	Nil	Total
5-6	-	-	1 5.00	19 95.00	20 100.00	-	-	3 15.79	16 84.21	19 100.00
7-8	2 6.45	17 54.84	1 3.23	11 35.48	31 100.00	5 12.20	22 53.66	3 7.32	11 26.83	41 100.00
9-10	11 26.19	23 54.76	2 4.76	6 14.29	42 100.00	18 36.73	19 38.78	5 10.20	7 14.29	49 100.00
11-12	15 31.91	26 55.32	3 6.38	3 6.38	47 100.00	19 45.24	15 35.71	7 16.67	1 2.38	42 100.00
13-14	27 58.70	7 15.22	11 23.91	1 2.17	46 100.00	22 55.00	8 20.00	9 22.50	1 2.50	40 100.00
Total	55 29.57	73 39.25	18 9.68	40 21.51	186 100.00	64 33.51	64 33.51	27 14.14	36 18.85	191 100.00

Table 7.12: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Dropout Rates

Sex	Dropout rates		
	Primary	Secondary	Total
Male	37 67.27	18 32.73	55 100.00
Female	51 79.69	13 20.31	64 100.00
Total	88 73.95	31 26.05	119 100.00

The data reveals that the dropout rate and non enrolment were more among the female working children than the males. The mentionable matter is that besides working involvement, most of the female children had to help their mother in domestic chores. Simply they could not manage the time for their studies. Again, the tendency to drop out was found more in primary level of education rather than secondary level (Table 7.12). Many of the parents thought that the females are born to serve the family and it is their prime duty. Even, after marriage they have to take responsibility to do this duty. As they have to give their daughter in marriage, so the parents thought that the female children do not need to take education. Therefore, it was more important for the female children to practice necessary household works. Some of them were of opinion that if their daughters become educated then the groom's family would be benefited. It was the fact that the

parents had not the financial capacity to make their children suitable for getting service through providing proper education.

Table 7.13: Child Workers On the basis of Involvement in Household Chores

Sex	Household Work		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	99 53.23	87 46.77	186 100.00
Female	154 80.63	37 19.37	191 100.00
Total	253 67.11	124 32.89	377 100.00

Besides money making job most of the working children had to assist their parents in domestic chores. It was imposed upon them forcefully which was an extra burden of work to them. In this context, the data reveals that the females were involved more than the males. The females were neglected and exploited more due to socio-cultural practices. Their parents believed that as the females will have to marry in future and have to start a new life in her husband's house, so they have to learn all the household works before their marriage. They thought that the female children do not need to be educated rather it is more important to be acquainted with all the domestic works. However, the circumstances were not in favour of continuation their studies. Most of the parents did not use to prefer to send their children to school rather preferred more to involve them in work to get a monetary aid. A large number of child workers (83.82%) were motivated by their parents to get involved in stone based work at a very little age and the rest percentage such as 6.37 per cent, 4.51 per cent and 2.12 per cent were motivated for the same by the other elder members of their families, friends and neighbours respectively (Table 5.17). A major section of working children opined that their parents did not use to say anything about their absenteeism in school rather they had to be reprovved sternly or even also beaten up soundly by their parents mainly either due to raise their eyes from work or absent in work. It is a pity that they had to hold a hammer (locally known as 'gaini or matul' used to crush stones) in lieu of study books at the very beginning of their life. In the working field most of the parents behaved like employers with their children which was a bad treatment for a child instead of love and affection. In the stone field,

almost all the family members including children altogether had to apply a continuous hard physical labour for the entire day only to accumulate a fold of rice. The poverty was an ultimate major obstacle factor in achieving the other necessary requirements for their development.

Table 7.14: Distribution of Child Workers' Fathers and Mothers on the basis of Educational Level

Parents	Illiterate	Literate	Total	If Literate		
				Primary education	Secondary education	Total
Father	173 75.22	57 24.78	230 100.00	36 63.16	21 36.84	57 100.00
Mother	205 83.33	41 16.67	246 100.00	31 75.61	10 24.39	41 100.00

The data of the educational standard of parents reveals that most of the fathers and mothers were illiterate and it was more among the mothers (Table 7.14). Due to illiteracy and lack of consciousness, most of the parents were not well aware or could not get the significance of education in a child's life. Generally they ignored the reality that working involvement deprived the children from all educational opportunities. Majority of the child workers were first generation learner as their parents were illiterate. They simply could not hope to get proper guidelines for education from their parents. A large number of parents expressed their view that the involvement of children in work in lieu of study would be very much helpful. Indeed, their expression made it clear that the burden of economic responsibility of the family was imposed upon the children at the very beginning of life that means children had to share the same with their parents and obviously it had a serious adverse impact on their educational life. A large number of parents had a conception that more children means more income. The parental illiteracy was an important responsible factor for the involvement of children in work. Ultimately children were exploited by their parents in many respects including education.

Besides these, the family environment was not in favour of them to grow up in a healthy way. A major section of their fathers (81.30%) became habituated with taking alcohol every day in the evening that used to make chaos in the family which was sign of bad family environment (Table 6.8). As a result, children could not pay attention to their

lesson which was a common feature in their daily life. Apart from these, the mentionable matter is that the social environment was also another obstruction for which their educational progress was affected badly. The alcoholism, gambling, intra-familial and inter-familial conflicts were so much pervasive among the adults which were not in favour of making a good educational environment for the children at home.

A large number of child workers were not so interested to keep working in the stone field. It is a pity that during school time mostly they were busy with stone based activities such as stone collection and crushing, sand gathering and truck loading. Besides these, they had to get involved in household chores like preparing meal, washing clothes, cleaning house and utensils, carrying water, taking care of younger siblings and so on. Moreover, the domestication of cows was to be noticed in a number of houses which was an extra burden of work to the children. The cows used to be taken to the grazing land and often the children had to look after them while they were grazing. In the evening, the cows used to be brought back to their places usually either outside of the houses in separate cattle sheds or in parts of their own houses. In this respect, the responsibility was mostly imposed upon them. However, they did not get any relaxation for a moment too from the heavy workload that did not let them go to school or study at home. Ultimately, a major section of them were deprived of getting private tuition, coaching or any other guidelines for education primarily for the sake of extreme indigence.

Table 7.15: Distribution of Child Worker Students on the basis of Accessibility of Tuition

Sex	Accessibility of tuition		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	22 13.10	146 86.90	168 100.00
Female	15 9.15	149 90.85	164 100.00
Total	37 11.14	295 88.86	332 100.00

The data reveals that very few of the total literate working children could access the private tuition and it was more among the boys (Table 7.15). But without tuition how they would get proper guidelines for education, which created confusion among them because most of them were not so satisfied with the quality of school education. Their irregular school attendance was also another important obstacle factor in understanding the lessons. The inaccessibility of tuition facilities was one of the important factors for their poor educational background. Though they had a keen interest in education but the unfavourable circumstances simply kept separate from their will. Due to above mentioned unfavourable circumstances the dropout and stagnation rate were found in high among them. Very few of them knew that without achievement of proper formal education it would never be possible to get a suitable job. Their dream was mostly on service, business and manufacturing but nevertheless they had no way to meet their dreams. Basically the extreme poverty of the family as well as their heavy workload for the whole day both were responsible to keep separate from making fruitful their dreams.

The educational scenario of the studied children was revealed an unpleasant condition. In this regard, poverty and busy working schedule affected their education badly. On an average they could earn Rs 2000/- per month but their little earnings could not feed them to the fill and even on this little earnings their parents could not provide minimum educational requirements such as necessary books, note books, pen, pencil, private tuition etc. to them. Even they had no school uniform and for this reason they were scolded bitterly by their teachers. Owing to absence of private tuition they could not understand many parts of their lesson and they mainly faced problem in english and mathematics because they were very much weak in these subjects. It lies in the fact that the literate and responsible parents can make a well plan for their children's future and also can make every possible attempt to keep their children safe from any harmful effect. But many of the studied children were first generation learner and due to this fact they did not get proper guidance and cooperation from their parents, rather they were beaten up and rebuked by their parents if they were absent in work. However, due to illiteracy of parents and absence of private tuition the studied children could not complete their homework and they had a fear of scolding by their class teachers owing to incomplete homework. Their parents preferred to send them to work in lieu of schooling. They

became very irregular in school attendance as during day time they were busy with work in the stone field. They used to go out from the classes to join the work in the stone crushing field. As a result, they lost interest in education. Many of them failed in the examination and dropped out of school. Apart from these, due to poor income the parents could not feed their children to the fill and many times they had to starve. They had a burning sensation in their stomach due to extreme hunger. Though they could provide rice meal twice in a day but it was insufficient and less nutritious as eating nutritious food like fish, meat, egg, fruit, milk etc. was rarely possible. Due to hard manual work and less nutritive foods they became very weak. Owing to ill health they could not pay attention to their studies. They had no separate room for studies. Most of the houses were broken and *kachha* type and composed of the single room. The rainy water was falling on the leaky roof which damaged their study materials like books, notebooks etc. that became disable for reading and writing. Even, there was no electricity in their houses and owing to poor light they could not read and write well at night. Owing to absence of separate kitchen they were found to cook inside the room. For the purpose of cooking they used earthen oven or cooking pit that emitted a huge smoke and made their rooms smoky which caused their eyes to go red and start watering and due to this fact the children could not read the books and even could not write well too. Owing to lack of room all the family members had to live in the single room and due to this fact the children could not concentrate to their studies. The poor socio-cultural environment like alcoholism, gambling, regular conflict and chaos made them upset because they could not pay attention to their studies. Even, the untiring labour in the stone field made their body painful resulted in they could not study their lessons. They had to assist their parents in domestic chores and in this regard especially the female children were forced to do it. They had to do several domestic chores like washing cloth, sweeping floor, cleaning the house and utensils, carrying water, going to shop, taking care of younger siblings and so on that kept them separate from their studies. Many of the parents had a notion that the prime duty of every female is to serve the family because after marriage they have to do it. So it is more important for them to learn and practice necessary household works rather than schooling. They thought that if the females become educated then their husband would be benefitted rather than their parents. Even, few of them opined that

financially they were too weak to make their children suitable for getting service through providing proper education. Therefore, in the studied families the non enrolment and dropout rate were more among the female than males. However, the children were very much displeased with their family environment. The regular chaos and conflict in the family made them upset as they could not pay attention to their studies. However, besides working involvement there were many obstacle factors resulted in their poor educational status. Ultimately, they had to face a lot of problems in their studies.

The studied families mostly came from Bangladesh and very few from other districts of West Bengal. During independence and post independence of Bangladesh several communal violence and political turmoil took place and as a result the life and livelihoods of many of the studied families got hampered. They lost their all properties and became roofless, shelterless as well as resourceless. Under these circumstances, they were forced to come in Balasan River basin for permanent settlement and earning and yet it is continuing. They migrated illegally and in Bangladesh they had agricultural land from where they could manage necessary crops and so on. But after independence of Bangladesh they started to face a lot of problems to run their family as their properties were looted and their agricultural land were grabbed by the Muslim people of Bangladesh. Due to this fact both their lives and livelihood were affected badly. For minimum survival they migrated to Balasan River Bed. They had not own homestead land and they could not purchase a plot of land for making house. Therefore, finding no other ways they made their houses on the Balasan River bed which was the vested land. The river Balasan downwards from Himalayan with natural resources to a great extent like sands, stones and boulders which are used for urban construction and therefore these have huge demand in this locality. The studied families readily accepted this stone based job because to do this work only the physical labour was needed. They did several types of stone based activities viz. stone collection, stone crushing, sand gathering, and truck loading. They had to do this work for all the year round ignoring the fact of burning heat of summer and freezing cold of winter but they were paid very little remuneration. Their average monthly income was very poor. Owing to this fact they failed to manage their living and to augment their earnings they involved their children in this work. The children were mainly involved in stone collection, sand gathering and stone crushing

activities. Very few of them did truck loading activity because it was very much hard labourious. They worked in the stone field for a long time. They had to wake up very early in the morning with the first ray of sunup and after morning fresh they went to the stone field and generally returned home in the evening when the work was over for the day. The average monthly income of the children was very poor as compare to their work amount. Most of the family members were involved in this work but their total earnings was too poor to ensure the necessary requirements of living like food, dress, proper shelter, treatment and education. It is the fact that this stone based occupation failed to provide the security of living to them. They had no proper shelter and even most of their houses were broken too. During rainy seasons the rain water entered the room through leaky roof and cracked walls which various ailments and also damaged many household stuffs and educational materials like books, notebooks etc. there were no sufficient space and electricity in their houses. As a result, the children could not pay attention to their studies and also could not read the books well. They had no well and sufficient dress. Due to poor income the parents could not always provide a new dress to them and many of them had no school uniform too. Eve the parents could not feed them to the fill and many times they had to starve. They had a burning sensation in their stomach owing to extreme hunger but nevertheless they had to do the work hungry in stone field which made them weaker and as a result they could not pay attention to their studies and lost interest in education. The parents could not provide adequate books, note books, pen, pencil, private tuition etc. to them. Due to lack of private tuition they could not solve all the home tasks those were provided by their class teachers and especially they faced problem in mathematics and english. Owing to this fact they had a fear of scolding and beating by their class teachers. Most of the parents were illiterate and due to this fact the children did not get any support and cooperation from their parents for education. Due to daylong working involvement they became very irregular in school attendance and often they went out from the classes to join the work in the stone field. The continuous hard labour in the stone field made their body painful and owing to this fact they could not pay concentration to their study. Apart from this, they had to assist their parents in domestic chores and due to this fact their study got hampered badly. The poor socio-cultural environment like regular conflict and chaos, alcoholism, gambling etc. affected their

educational atmosphere at home badly. As a result, they lost interest in their studies and many of them failed in the exam and ultimately dropped out of school. Ultimately the daylong working involvement, poor economy and poor socio-cultural environment had a serious negative impact on their education.

The forgoing discussion has made it clear that economically they were extreme poor in state. Their monthly earnings was too poor to run the family. The poor economic condition was most important factor for the involvement of children in work. It was known from the aforesaid discussion that so many factors such as poverty, daylong hard manual work, lack of study materials and absence of private tuition, poor educational background of parents, lack of proper guidance and cooperation, poor housing, poor socio-cultural environment etc. were responsible for their poor state of education. It is the fact that the education is one of the important solutions to the problem of child employment. Children with no approach to education have no option but getting involved in work. Educational opportunities can make the children free from involvement in unsafe and unhygienic work and also can assist them in finding better opportunity. It is said that, child is a valuable asset in society and they are the future of a nation. Therefore, they need special care and protection for all from their parents to grow up in a healthy way. But the studied children got nothing. Because their parents were in a crying need to get an immediate financial support for living and under these circumstances, the parents motivated their children to get involved in stone based job. A large number of parents had an earnest longing to give birth more children as they thought that more children means more earnings. But in fact, they could never understand the extra child means extra mouth to feed.

References

Durkheim, E. (1922), *Education et sociologie*, Paris: Felix Alcan.

Lee, A.M. (1946, reprinted 1953), *Principles of Sociology*, New York: Barnes and Noble Inc.

Mittal, M. (1994), *Child Labour in Unorganised Sector*, New Delhi: Anmol Publication Pvt. Ltd.

Punecha, L.B. (2006), *Child Labour: A Social Evil*, New Delhi: Alfa Publications.

Sharma, B.K. & V. Mittar (1990), *Child Labour and Urban Informal Sector*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications.

Slotkin, J.S. (1950), *Social anthropology: the science of human society and culture*, New York: Macmillan.

Vidyarthi, L.P. and B. K. Rai (1976, Reprinted 1985), *The Tribal Culture of India*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

CHAPTER VIII: HEALTH PROFILE OF THE WORKING CHILDREN

General Concept of Health

'Health is wealth' so runs the proverb. The word health has its origin from the word *hal* meaning safe and sound. Hence, dictionary meaning of health is "the state of being hale and sound in body, mind or soul especially from physical disease or pain". The health of man or of a nation is a concept which requires recognition that well-being depends upon attention to all the key social, political and economic variables that affect the life of man (Howard, 1972: 75). A more recent and increasingly used definition is contained in the constitution of WHO, health is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". In this regard, Milton Terris suggested a modification in the definition given by the WHO and said, "A revised WHO definition would thus read as follows: Health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being and ability to function and not merely the absence of illness or infirmity" (Terris, 1975: 161). The best known definition of public or community health is that of Winslow who in 1920 described it as the science and the art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health and efficiency through organized community efforts, the development of the social machinery which will insure to every individual a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health (Hanlon, 1963: 30).

Problems of health and illness are inextricably related to physical, behavioural and environmental factors. Each of these factors contributes to the kinds of problems encountered in medical management (Katz and Zlutnick, 1975:1). The factors that directly affect the health of the community because certain customs, practices, beliefs, values and religious taboos, etc. create an environment that helps in the spread or control of certain diseases and the factors that directly affect the health of the community as they are related to the problem of medical care to the sick and invalid (Hasan, 1967, cited in Rizvi, 1991:9). As an early example a study which gives evidence that the attitude of an

individual towards health is related to his socio-economic status. This study revealed that there is an increase in illness with a decrease in socio-economic status. The lower socio-economic class had the greater proportion of illness, and consulted physicians and were hospitalised less frequently (Syndenstricker, 1921; cited in Rizvi, 1991: 6). The relationship between the families and their sources of medical care and advice, and the use, by these families, of the institutions set up by the community to aid health. The health of the community is based upon the ideas, attitudes and behaviour patterns of the individual and his family, for these determine what he will or will not, or cannot, expect or accept from those who make his health their professional concern. The health attitudes and behaviour of a family are related to its position in the social class hierarchy of the community, and are significantly affected by the prescriptions and proscriptions regarding health shared by those who are members of the same class (Koons, 1954: 156-160).

Concerning health, the child health is a serious issue because a large number of children in our society cannot enjoy their necessary health rights and many of them suffer from numerous health hazards due to child abuse. In this context, the working involvement of children in hazardous sectors is a great hindrance in enjoying the highest attainable standard of health. Many jobs that children do are harmful for their health. The manner of their employment, the nature of their work and the contribution under which they are often employed subject them to severe health and safety hazards. Work in agriculture is also characterised by certain hazards, particularly with the introduction of advanced farming practices, new techniques and chemicals. This is also prolonged exposure to heat, sunlight, dust, wind and insects and the high costs in terms of safety and health associated with work in commercial and plantation agriculture. Children are particularly at risk from epidemic and parasitic diseases, diseases of the respiratory tract, dermatosis and fatal accidents. However, these problems are multiplied several fold of industries. Work may be heavy and intense; it may be highly mechanised and extremely monotonous; it may involve the use of sharp and dangerous objects and toxic substances; it may be carried out in conditions of extreme heat, dust and noise. Child workers in industries are faced with serious risks to their health and physical development. They may be required to undertake tasks for which they are entirely unprepared physically. In a

number of industries children are exposed to lead poisoning which may have no noticeable effect on adults. There are claims that children's brains are detrimentally affected due to exposure to lead poisoning. There are documented cases of paralysis caused by the use of toxic glues. The self-employed child who has an accident or contracts a disease of occupational origin obviously benefits from no form of social protection. If the child is a wage-earner he is not usually protected either since in the vast majority of cases he is working illegally. If he is the victim of an occupational accident or disease he and his parents must be prepared for fearful and irreversible consequences. The official statistics reveal a very small proportion of the occupational accidents or diseases that affect children. Thus, many jobs done by children are the cause of physical deformities and illnesses such as deformities of the spine, stunted growth, infections, burns, sores etc., or else they may aggravate defects or maladies. Child labour involves both short-term and long-term health risks.

A world Health Organisation report on child workers cites health hazards such as bony lesions and postural deformity attributable to such work as carpet weaving, embroidery and lifting heavy weights. Children generally work for long hours, which results in excessive fatigue and stunted growth. Poor children are generally malnourished but their work increases their energy requirements and calorie deficit. Moreover, if they suffer from anaemia, fatigue and inadequate sleep, they become more susceptible to accidents and infectious diseases. Excessively hot, damp or dusty conditions also create a milieu which favours the transmission of communicable diseases. Many of these diseases, for example, tuberculosis, may be very difficult to cure and involve lifelong illnesses (Gomango, 2001: 146-148). However, the present chapter mainly highlights the health profile of working children in the studied area from different points of view which has been stated below –

Health Profile of the Studied Working Children

The health profile of working children in the studied area is the key important issue in the present chapter. There were so many factors like their hazardous working condition, hard physical labour for day long, poor quality and unhygienic food habit, poor standard of

personal hygiene, absence of primary health centre, improper care of diseases and ailments, dependency on traditional medicine men and local quacks, lack of health consciousness and awareness, non accessibility to medical care, poverty and so on, these may have an adverse impact on their health which are discussed below one after another.

Daily Life and Health Issues: Diseases may be happened due to various reasons but it is the fact that various activities of the daily life, socio-cultural practices as well as daily habits, type of economy, nature of involvement, shelter and many other situations and factors etc. have a great impact on health. Further, nature of treatment as well as its scope and availability and the ability to bear the cost by the concerned people are also responsible for the same. These issues may be observed among the studied working children –

Case Study 1: Tulsi Roy was a 14 years aged Rajbanshi boy. In his family he had his father, mother and a younger brother and sister. All the family members were involved in stone based work. They could hardly earned Rs. 2700/- per month. Tulsi did both stone collection and stone crushing activities. He was busy with work in the stone field for all the year round ignoring the fact of scorching heat of summer and biting cold of winter. Due to daylong hard manual labour he often felt severe physical pain in his whole body. During winter he got weaker by acute physical pain and during summer the scorching heat of summer with extreme hunger made him weak very much. His left eye got injured badly with stone chips due to lack of concentration to work and for treatment he went to untrained local quack. But due to wrong treatment his injurious eye became swelled up with burning sensation and he was referred to North Bengal Medical College. But they had not the capacity to spend money for necessary diagnostic tests and also for purchasing doctors' prescribed medicines. As a result to purchase the same they had to take loan from the local *samiti* (co-operative society). He had to collect stones and sands from the river and therefore, his clothes got drenched but he had to work in wet clothes throughout the day and as a consequence, he was suffering from fever, cough and cold and headache almost throughout the year. Even, owing to long touch with water he had an uncomfortable feeling on his skin that made him want to scratch. But he could not see the doctor due to unaffordable expense. He had to wake up very early in the morning

with the ray of sunup and after having little breakfast with tea and pup rice he went to the stone field. He had to do a continuous hard work until lunch break. But he could not eat the fill and even many times he had to starve. Though, Tulsi could eat meal twice in a day but it was insufficient and poor nutritious as he could eat rice with pulses and little amount of vegetable curry. Eating nutritious food like fish, meat, egg, fruit, milk etc. was rarely possible, as a consequence, he became very weak. Due to hard manual labour with insufficient and less nutritious food he became very weak. Besides these, due to busy working schedule he became irregular in bathing and hardly used shampoo or any other cleaning agents during bathing. His unclean bathing caused skin problem as he had an uncomfortable feeling on his skin. He could not take care of his teeth properly because often he forgot to brush up his teeth. In fact, lack of sanitation, lack of proper care, inattention of parents, and due to day long hard manual work it was really impossible for him to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene. His socio-cultural habits like eating food without washing hand, taking river water for quenching, eating meal in the stone crushing field etc. also made him sick. Due to unhygienic food habit and also for drinking polluted water without filtering or boiling he had to suffer from dysentery and diarrhoea. But he could not see the doctor at proper time. Apart from these, he was suffering from breathing problem because in the stone field the dust emitted out from the broken up stones which was being inhaled though respiration. Ultimately the working involvement and improper caring affected his health badly.

Case Study 2: Rakhi Barman was a 14 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had her father, mother and a younger brother. She was involved in stone based job and altogether they could earn not more than Rs. 2000/- per month. She did both stone collection and stone crushing activities throughout the day with her parents in the stone field. She often felt serious physical pain in her whole body due to untiring hard labour for all the day. Even she could not sleep well at night due to serious physical pain. Besides these, often she made herself injured with stone chips and iron implements during crushing stones. But due to improper care and lack of proper treatment her injurious place became swelled up with blood secretion. But she could not see the doctor at proper time. She had to collect stones from the river for prolong hours resulted in her dress got drenched but she had to do work in wet clothes. As a consequence, she had to

suffer from fever, cold and cough, nasal blockage, sneezing, and headache throughout the year. For the treatment she went to the quack of local medicinal shop and traditional medicine man. But when it became complex, she was admitted to North Bengal Medical College. The doctor advised her for some clinical tests and also prescribed some medicines and for this purpose her father had to lend money from the local *sardar* of the stone field and still could not repay this loan. Even, her parents could not give her a full feed. Though, she could eat meal twice in a day but it was poor nutritious as in their daily diet she could eat only rice, pulses and vegetable curry. She felt uneasiness in the stomach due to extreme hunger and she had to do the work in hungry that made her weak very much. She used to wake up very early in the morning with the ray of sun up and went to the stone field after having little breakfast with tea and pup rice and took lunch directly in the stone field. She returned home in the evening when the work was over for the day. Very soon after returning home they made brisk preparation for dinner. Moreover, she took food without washing her hands and even, she used to eat stale food too and as a result often she was attacked with loose motion and other stomach problems. Due to drink polluted water without filtering and unhygienic food habit she was weak by dysentery. But due to financial constraint her treatment could not be continued and the course of prescribed medicines had to be stopped in the middle. Due to busy working schedule Rakhi could not maintain a good standard of personal hygiene as she became very much irregular in bathing and she rarely used shampoo, soap and any other cleaning agents during bathing. She had an uncomfortable feeling on her skin that made her want to scratch. Even sometimes she used to forget to brush up her teeth resulted in she had a serious teeth ache. However, her poor health made her weak badly. It was the fact that if they do not work, they cannot arrange their meal that's why she had to do work with ill health which made her weaker.

Case Study 3: Champalata Barman was a 13 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had her father, mother, two younger sisters and an elder brother. She had been working since she was eight years old. Their family earnings was not more than Rs. 2800/- per month. Champalata had to do work in the stone field throughout the day without any adequate rest. The untiring labour made her body painful. Moreover, often she made herself injured with stone chips and iron implements. Her left

side eye got injured badly and became swelled up. She went to faith healer and then quack but they did wrong treatment. Due to their wrong treatment the condition of her injurious eye became alarming and she was immediately sent to hospital but ultimately the treatment had to be stopped in the middle as her parents could not manage required money for it. They were already indebted to local *samiti* (cooperative society) and also to their local *sardar* of the stone field because they took loan from them and still could not repay it that's why they were not given loan further. Due to incomplete treatment her injurious eye became infected and it affected her vision badly but for the compulsion of hunger she had to do work with injurious eye. The parents could not give her a full feed and she felt uneasiness due to extreme hunger. She could hardly eat meal twice in a day but it was insufficient and less nutritious. She became very weak and she was suffering from malnutrition. She used to wake up very early in the morning and went to the stone field after morning fresh and necessary domestic chores. She usually returned home with her parents in the evening when the work was over for the day. They mainly took rice with pulses and little amount of vegetable curry. They could not afford to accumulate the least expensive animal proteins. She took her lunch directly in unhygienic stone field and used the river water for drinking. There was no water source in their house and due to this fact Champalata and her family had to depend upon both neighbour's uncovered well and river water for drinking, bathing and other domestic purposes. But they did not take any precautionary measures such as boiling and filtering. The diarrhoea and dysentery was common to notice in their family. She had to do work for long in touch of river water for the collection of stones and boulders from the river. She was weak by fever, cough and cold, sneezing, nasal blockage and headache. She had also an experience of snake bite during stone collection. However, their dwelling house was broken and *kachha* type which was composed of the single little room. During rainy season the rain falling on leaky roof that made their house damp and the floor became muddy. The fever, cough and cold etc. were common to notice in their family. Apart from these, due to busy working schedule Champalata could not maintain her personal hygiene as she was very much irregular in bathing, brushing up teeth, washing clothes and frequency of changing clothes etc. could rarely be seen. She became habituated with taking bath in the polluted river resulted in a serious skin problem found to her.

Case Study 4: Dipankar Barman was a 13 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. In his family he had his father, mother and a younger sister. All the family members were involved in stone based work and they could hardly earned Rs. 2200/-. Dipankar did both stone collection and stone crushing activities. He worked for all the year round in unhygienic stone field taking no notice of burning heat of summer and freezing cold of winter. Due to hard manual labour without any adequate rest he felt severe physical pain in his whole body. Often he made himself injured with blood secretion during crushing stones. But the injurious place became swelled up with burning sensation due to improper care over it. For the treatment his family had a strong faith on the quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional medicinal men. In fact, they had not the capacity to go the private doctors for better treatment. Even, his father was not in a position to provide sufficient and nutritious food to him that's why he had to starve many times. He took lunch with rice, pulses and little amount of vegetables but feed to the fill was a seldom happening factor. Due to utter financial constraint they could not afford to maintain the nutritious food diet, and even it was out of their capacity to accumulate the least expensive animal protein. Owing to untiring hard labour with insufficient and poor nutritious food he became very weak. Nevertheless, he had to do a continuous hard work with ill health resulted in he became weaker. In fact, if he did not do the work, he had to starve. Besides these, they had no proper shelter. They lived in a broken and *kachha* house. The house was composed of the single little room with muddy floor made of wattle walls, corrugated tin roof and devoid of proper ventilation. During rainy season the water entered the room through leaky roof and crack walls which made their house damp and muddy. As a consequence, Dipankar and his family became sick with fever, cough and cold, running nose, sneezing and headache. But they could not see the doctor at proper time. Dipankar and his family had to face a lot of difficulties in living. Besides these, they had to depend upon both uncovered well and river water for drinking, bathing, cooking and also for other domestic purposes. But they did not take any precautionary measures like filtering or boiling. As a consequence, he was weak by dysentery and loose motion. For treatment he went to local quack but he was not cured. Due to daylong working involvement Dipankar was not in a position to maintain his personal hygiene like regular bathing, brushing up teeth, washing of clothes etc. Owing to untiring hard

manual labour he became tired and even he could not sleep well at night because of severe pain in his whole body. In fact, due to extreme poverty he could not enjoy the better health and treatment.

It is the fact that the daily life of most of the working children was more or less same. They did the same work and they were growing up in the same environment. Their hazardous occupation and economy, socio-religious practices, lacking of other essential requirements for maintaining livelihood might have an impact on health.

Table 8.1: Showing Ailments of Working Children

Sex	Ailments		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	165 88.71	21 11.29	186 100.00
Female	157 82.20	34 17.80	191 100.00
Total	322 85.41	55 14.59	377 100.00

Table 8.2: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Type of Diseases

Sex	Diseases		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	114 61.29	72 38.71	186 100.00
Female	104 54.45	87 45.55	191 100.00
Total	218 57.82	159 42.18	377 100.00

It is the fact that in the studied area most of the working children were weak by several diseases and ailments. They were involved in stone based work. But due to poor earnings their parents could not provide better health facilities and treatment to them. They had to do a continuous hard work throughout the day in the stone field. Their untiring hard labour made their body painful but they could not take adequate rest. During crushing stones often they made themselves injured with stone chips and iron implements. But often these minute physical injuries had turned into blisters with mucous secretion due to their improper care over it. They were referred to the hospital but due to extreme poverty

the treatment had to be stopped in the middle and they could not complete the full course of doctors prescribed medicine. Owing to incomplete treatment many of their injurious eyes became infected and it affected their vision badly. But for the agony of hunger they had to do work with injurious eyes. For the treatment they had a strong faith on the quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional medicinal men but they could not provide proper treatment to them. They had not the capacity to go to the private doctors for better treatment. They had to take loan from local *samiti* (cooperative society) or from their local *sardar* of the stone field for the treatment of diseases and ailments. Even, their parents could not give them a full feed and as a result, many times they had to starve. They felt uneasiness due to extreme hunger. Though, the children could eat meal twice in a day but it was insufficient and poor nutritious. They took lunch with rice, pulses and vegetables. Due to utter economic hardship they could not afford to maintain the nutritious food diet. In fact, if they did not do the work, they had to starve. They took lunch directly in unhygienic stone field. Due to untiring hard manual labour with insufficient and less nutritious food they became very weak but they had to do a continuous hard work with ill health that made them weaker. However, it might have an impact on health.

Table 8.3: Showing Ailments of Male Working Children

Type of Ailments	Ailments of Working Children			(If yes) Age Group					
	Yes	No	Total	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	Total
Physical injuries	86 46.24	100 53.76	186 100.00	9 10.50	13 15.1	20 23.3	23 26.7	21 24.42	86 100.00
Cold and cough	70 37.63	116 62.37	186 100.00	7 10.00	12 17.10	14 20.00	19 27.10	18 25.71	70 100.00
Body pain	138 74.19	48 25.81	186 100.00	12 8.70	21 15.20	33 23.90	35 25.40	37 26.81	138 100.00
Headache	83 44.62	103 55.38	186 100.00	2 2.41	10 12.10	17 20.50	25 30.10	29 34.94	83 100.00
Teeth and gum problem	29 15.59	157 84.41	186 100.00	-	4 13.80	5 17.20	11 37.90	9 31.03	29 100.00
Digestive problem	8 4.30	178 95.70	186 100.00	-	2 25.00	2 25.00	1 12.50	3 37.50	8 100
Weakness	73	113	186	4	5	18	25	21	73

Type of Ailments	Ailments of Working Children			(If yes) Age Group					
	Yes	No	Total	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	Total
	39.25	60.75	100.00	5.48	6.85	24.70	34.30	28.77	100.00
Griping	14 7.53	172 92.47	186 100.00	1 7.14	-	5 35.70	3 21.4	5 35.71	14 100.00
Ear problem	14 7.53	172 92.47	186 100.00	-	1 7.14	4 28.6	4 28.6	5 35.71	14 100.00
Eye problem	11 5.91	175 94.09	186 100.00	-	1 9.09	3 27.30	3 27.30	4 36.36	11 100.00
Breathing problem	9 4.84	177 95.16	186 100.00	1 11.10	-	2 22.22	2 22.22	4 44.44	9 100.00
Throat problem	8 4.30	178 95.70	186 100.00	-	1 12.50	-	5 62.50	2 25.00	8 100.00
Bleeding from nose	5 2.69	181 97.31	186 100.00	-	-	1 20.00	2 40.00	2 40.00	5 100.00
Loose motion	9 4.84	177 95.16	186 100.00	-	-	3 33.30	1 11.10	5 55.56	9 100.00
Snake bite	3 1.61	183 98.39	186 100.00	-	-	-	1 33.30	2 66.67	3 100.00

Table 8.4: Showing Ailments of Female Working Children

Type of Ailments	Ailments of Working Children			(If yes) Age Group					
	Yes	No	Total	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	Total
	46.60	53.40	100.00	10.11	17.98	25.84	23.60	22.47	100.00
Physical injuries	89 46.60	102 53.40	191 100.00	9 10.11	16 17.98	23 25.84	21 23.60	20 22.47	89 100.00
Cold and cough	82 42.93	109 57.07	191 100.00	8 9.76	16 19.51	21 25.61	19 23.17	18 21.95	82 100.00
Body pain	141 73.82	50 26.18	191 100.00	12 8.51	28 19.86	36 25.53	33 23.40	32 22.69	141 100.00
Headache	85 44.50	106 55.50	191 100.00	3 3.53	13 15.29	20 23.53	22 25.88	27 31.76	85 100.00
Teeth and gum problem	31 16.23	160 83.77	191 100.00	1 3.22	7 22.58	6 19.35	9 29.03	8 25.81	31 100.00
Digestive problem	8 4.19	183 95.81	191 100.00	-	1 12.50	2 25.00	-	5 62.50	8 100.00

Type of Ailments	Ailments of Working Children			(If yes) Age Group					
	Yes	No	Total	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	Total
									0
Weakness	70 36.65	121 63.35	191 100.00	5 7.10	10 14.29	17 24.29	20 28.57	18 25.71	70 100.00
Griping	10 5.24	181 94.76	191 100.00	-	2 20.00	4 40.00	1 10.00	3 30.00	10 100.00
Ear problem	17 8.90	174 91.10	191 100.00	-	2 11.76	4 23.53	5 29.41	6 35.29	17 100.00
Eye problem	10 5.24	181 94.76	191 100.00	-	-	2 20.00	4 40.00	4 40.00	10 100.00
Breathing problem	7 3.66	184 96.33	191 100.00	-	-	1 14.29	2 28.57	4 57.14	7 100.00
Throat problem	6 3.14	185 96.86	191 100.00	-	-	3 50.00	1 16.66	2 33.33	6 100.00
Bleeding from nose	5 2.62	186 97.38	191 100.00	-	1 20.00	1 20.00	-	3 60.00	5 100.00
Loose motion	8 4.19	183 95.81	191 100.00	-	1 12.50	3 37.50	2 25.00	2 25.00	8 100.00
Snake bite	1 0.52	190 99.48	191 100.00	-	-	-	-	1 100.00	1 100.00

They worked for long in touch of river water for the collection of stones and boulders from the river that made them very sick with fever, cold and cough, sneezing, nasal blockage and headache. Only five common wells were noticed in the studied area setup by the local *panchayat* but these were always uncovered. They used water of uncovered wells and also used river water for drinking, bathing and other domestic purposes. They did not take any precautionary measures such as boiling and filtering. The diarrhoea and dysentery was common to notice in their families. But they could not see the doctor at proper time. Moreover, most of their dwelling houses were *kachha* type and the houses were mostly composed of the single little room with muddy floor made of wattle walls,

corrugated tin roofs and devoid of proper ventilation (Table 8.6 and 8.8). Most of the houses were broken and owing to this fact outside rain water leaked into their rooms through walls and roofs which made their house damp and muddy and as a result, they were weak by fever, cough and cold, running nose, nasal blockage, sneezing and headache. Besides these, owing to heavy work load many of them could not maintain their good standard of personal hygiene as they failed to maintain regular bathing with oil and soap, brushing up teeth, washing clothes, frequency of changing clothes etc. However, their untiring hard manual labour made their body painful and due to this fact many of them could not sleep well at night. Many children with ill health had to do the work hard for all the day otherwise they had to starve. Due to this fact they became ailing more.

So many factors like environmental sanitation and hygiene, working conditions and environment, food habit and personal hygiene, health care practices and medical facilities etc. might have related to this which are stated below one after another –

Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene: The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines ‘Environmental Sanitation’ as “the control of all those factors in man’s physical environment which exercise or may exercise a deleterious effect on his physical development, health and survival.” Environmental sanitation/hygiene includes all the activities aimed at improving or maintaining the standard of basic environmental conditions affecting the well being of people. In India many of the cities are congested mainly owing to high population, poverty and illiteracy as well. The inadequate water supply and insufficient facilities of human excreta, waste water and solid waste might have caused various infectious diseases that people suffer from (Healthizen; <http://www.healthizen.com/blog/index.php/genera/environmental-sanitation/>).

Environmental sanitation is an important factor influencing the health of a community as indeed it is the surroundings of a man which directly affects the health of man. Hence the bad environmental sanitation creates an abnormality of physical, psychological and social aspects as a whole.

In the studied area where small lanes with stagnant water and heaps of garbage was generally noticed on the backside of the houses, which was a common place for the said purpose and even sometimes the waste disposals were directly thrown on the road. In the

absence of drainage system in the studied village the waste water was flowing over *kachha* roads and especially during rainy season the water storage was common to notice which became the key birth place of various germs.

Table 8.5: Distribution of Child Workers' Family on the basis of Facilities Available at their Residence

Type of Facility	Facilities Available		
	Yes	No	Total
Electricity	26 10.40	224 89.60	250 100.00
Sanitation	66 26.40	184 73.60	250 100.00

In the studied area, under study the latrine was mostly found neither in the houses nor a common in the village except few (26.40%) families (Table 8.5). Even, they did not use to go so far away from their house for nature's call. The inadequacy of latrine facility in the studied families might have an adverse impact on their living environment. The data reveals that around 74 per cent of total studied families had no latrine of any kind (Table 8.5). Due to this fact they had to use the open field for defecation and the children often around their houses and especially they used to sit for nature's call in the river bed or at the back of the houses which was common practice in their daily life. In fact, their dire pecuniary state was a great impediment to construct it.



Figure 8.1 (on the right side) & 8.2 (on the left side): Practice of defecation in the open field

The habit of defecation in the open might be a responsible factor for various diseases. In the context of health and hygiene, the surrounding environment of the houses indicated a plight state which was polluted with waste disposal and human excreta. As a consequence, their living environment became alarming with unsavoury and taint to a great scale.

Table 8.6: Distribution of Child Workers' Families the basis of Type of House

Child Workers' Family	Type of House		
	<i>Kachha</i>	<i>Semi-pucca</i>	Total
No. of Family	209	41	250
	83.60	16.40	100.00

Table 8.7: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Type of House

Sex	Type of House		
	<i>Kachha</i>	<i>Semi-pucca</i>	Total
Male	155	31	186
	83.33	16.67	100.00
Female	156	35	191
	81.68	18.32	100.00
Total	311	66	377
	82.49	17.51	100.00

The dwelling houses of working children in the studied area were mostly (83.60%) *kachha* type with wattle walls, corrugated tin roofs and devoid of proper ventilation. Whereas 16.40 per cent families had the *semi-pucca* houses which were made of brick walls, concrete floor and corrugated tin roof (Table 8.6). Further, the data manifests that around 90 per cent of the total studied families were devoid of electric facility at their homes (Table 8.5). They had to face the poor light at night. Muddy floor was noticed in most of the houses and it was common to observe that during summer season the insider atmosphere of the houses was very much suffocating. Especially during rainy season the houses became damp and its floor became muddy and moisty. They were mostly found to cook inside the room.

Table 8.8: Distribution of Child Workers' Families on the basis of No. of Room

Child workers' family	No. of Room				Total
	One	Two	Three	Four and above	
No. of family	142	85	15	8	250
	56.80	34.00	6.00	3.20	100.00

Table 8.9: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of No. of Persons Living in a Room

Child Worker	No. of Person Living in a Room			Total
	1-3	4-5	6 and above	
No.	134	195	48	377
	35.54	51.72	12.73	100.00

The data regarding number of room shows that most of the families had to live in single room houses and next couple of room. Among the studied families the noticeable matter was that there was no provision of separate kitchen in case of having single room; and on the contrary, in case of two rooms, one was mostly used as a sleeping cum cooking room and rest of the houses having more than two rooms, of them one was especially used as kitchen room. It was reported from a major percentage of working children that in their families 4 to 5 members had to live altogether in single room (Table 8.9). This situation might have serious adverse impact on their health.

Table 8.10: Distribution of Child workers' Family on the basis of Use of Water

Purpose of water	Sources of water			Total
	River	Well	Both well and river	
Drinking	-	53	197	250
		21.20	78.80	100.00
Bathing	7	37	206	250
	2.80	14.80	82.40	100.00
Domestication	3	86	161	250
	1.20	34.40	64.40	100.00
Others	21	86	143	250
	8.40	34.40	57.20	100.00

In the studied area, the wells and the river were their only sources of water. All of the families had to depend directly either on uncovered wells or on the river for their

household works, drinking and other necessary purposes. The water available from all sources like river and wells were used for drinking, bathing and also for other domestic purposes. Only five common wells were noticed in the studied area setup by the local panchayat. Majority of the families (62.80%) of working children had no personal well, therefore, they had to use either neighbours' wells or common wells to meet their daily essential needs. In spite of utter economic hardship, 37.20 per cent families were able to set up personal well by their own expenditure but those were always uncovered and unprotected. Especially in the working field, during working hours they used the river water for the purpose of quenching. The surprising matter is that they did not take any type of precautionary measures such as boiling, filtering, etc. resulted in the water-borne diseases that was common to notice throughout the year.

Table 8.11: Distribution of Male Working Children on the basis of Type of Diseases

Type of Diseases	Diseases of Working Children			(If yes) Age Group					
	Yes	No	Total	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	Total
Arthritis	3 1.61	183 98.39	186 100.00	-	-	-	1 33.33	2 66.67	3 100.00
Dysentery	52 27.96	134 72.04	186 100.00	1 19.23	7 13.46	13 25.00	14 26.92	17 32.69	52 100.00
Skin disease	40 21.51	146 78.49	186 100.00	1 2.50	5 12.50	9 22.50	13 32.50	12 30.00	40 100.00
Fever	37 19.89	149 80.11	186 100.00	2 5.41	6 16.22	8 21.62	8 21.62	13 35.14	37 100.00
Jaundice	11 5.91	175 94.09	186 100.00	1 9.09	-	2 18.18	4 36.36	4 36.36	11 100.00
Diarrhoea	20 10.75	166 89.25	186 100.00	-	1 5.00	7 35.00	3 15.00	9 45.00	20 100.00
Pneumonia	6 3.23	180 96.77	186 100.00	-	-	1 16.67	2 33.33	3 50.00	6 100.00
Anaemia	1 0.54	185 99.46	186 100.00	-	-	-	-	1 100.00	1 100.00
Asthma	3 1.61	183 98.39	186 100.00	-	-	-	-	3 100.00	3 100.00

Table 8.12: Distribution of Female Working Children on the basis of Type of Diseases

Type of Diseases	Diseases of Working Children			(If yes) Age Group					
	Yes	No	Total	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	Total
Arthritis	1 0.52	190 99.48	191 100.00	-	-	-	-	1 100.00	1 100.00
Dysentery	50 26.18	141 73.82	191 100.00	2 4.00	8 16.00	12 24.00	12 24.00	16 32.00	50 100.00
Skin diseases	38 19.90	153 80.10	191 100.00	2 13.85	4 10.53	11 28.95	10 26.32	11 28.95	38 100.00
Fever	31 16.23	160 83.77	191 100.00	4 12.90	8 25.81	5 16.13	6 19.35	8 25.81	31 100.00
Jaundice	9 4.71	182 95.29	191 100.00	-	1 11.11	3 33.33	2 22.22	3 33.33	9 100.00
Diarrhoea	15 7.85	176 92.15	191 100.00	1 6.67	1 6.67	3 20.00	5 33.33	5 33.33	15 100.00
Pneumonia	7 3.66	184 96.33	191 100.00	-	1 14.29	1 14.29	3 42.86	2 28.57	7 100.00
Anaemia	3 1.57	188 98.43	191 100.00	-	1 33.33	1 33.33	-	1 33.33	3 100.00
Asthma	5 2.62	186 99.38	191 100.00	-	1 20.00	1 20.00	2 40.00	1 20.00	5 100.00

In the studied area it was common to notice that many of the working children were suffering from various diseases. In this regard, the stone crushing occupation and environmental sanitation caused several health hazards like dysentery, skin disease, fever, diarrhoea, jaundice, pneumonia, asthma etc. were found among them.

The working atmosphere of Balasan river basin was very much unhygienic and polluted that might have resulted in numerous health hazards to them. Besides these, the surrounding environment of their houses was very much unhygienic with waste disposal and human excreta. In this regard lack of drainage system and absent of latrine facility in the studied families might have an adverse impact on their living environment and might be a responsible factor for various diseases. However, their utter financial constraint and lack of health consciousness and awareness were the most important factors liable for their bad environmental condition.

Working Conditions and Environment: The children in the studied area had to work for prolonged hours in inhuman working condition that might have an adverse impact on their health.

Case Study 1: Anup Singha was a 12 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. He was involved in stone based work. In his family he had his parents, grandmother and a younger sister. He had been working since he was eight years little boy. He was busy at work in the stone field for seven hours in a day. The daylong hard manual labour resulted in backache and serious physical pain in his arms and waist. Even he could not sleep well at night due to acute physical pain. Often he made himself injured with both stone chips and iron implements. He was found crying his eyes out while showing his injurious eye that became swelled up with burning sensation due to improper care over it. Apart from these, he was suffering from breathing problem because in the stone field the dust emitted out from the broken up stones which was being inhaled through respiration during crushing stones that might have a probability to turn into chronic asthma in near future when he would grow old as his father was a asthma patient.

Case Study 2: Sangita Barman was a 14 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had her father, mother and two younger brothers. Sangita had to get involved in both stone collection and crushing activities for all the day in the stone field. She started this work when she was 8 years old. She had to work hard for eight hours in a day in the stone field. She worked throughout the year paying no attention to burning heat of summer and freezing cold of winter. Due to the hard physical labour for the whole day she often felt serious physical pain mostly in his arms and waist. Even she could not sleep well at night due to acute physical pain. She was not satisfied with this job because pursuant to her it was very much labourious and hazardous and often she made herself injured with blood secretion during working in the stone field. She had to do work in touch of river water for the collection of stones and boulders and due to this fact she was weak by fever, cough and cold, nasal blockage and headache. Due to her ignorance and negligence of parents often minute physical injuries had turned into blisters with mucous secretion. During crushing stones the dust emitted out from the

broken up stones which was being inhaled through respiration and as a result, she was suffering from respiratory problem.

Case Study 3: Sagar Singha was a 12 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. He had an elder brother and a younger sister. They all were involved in stone based job. Sagar had been working since he was seven years little boy. He did both stone collection and stone crushing activities. He worked throughout the year in the polluted and unhygienic stone field taking no notice of scorching heat of summer and biting cold of winter. Due to hard manual labour for the whole day he used to feel severe physical pain in his whole body. Even she could not sleep well at night due to this pain. Moreover, often he made himself injured with stone chips and iron implements during working in the stone field. He worked always in touch of river water resulted in cold and cough that was common to notice throughout the year. Due to improper care and lack of proper treatment often the diseases and ailments became complex.

Case Study 4: Ashalata Barman was a 13 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had her father, mother and a younger sister. She did both stone collection and crushing activities throughout the day with her parents in the stone field. She had been working since she was seven years little baby. She had to suffer from fever, cold and cough almost throughout the year because she did work for long in touch of river water for the collection of stones and boulders from the river. Besides these, she had also an experience of snake bite during stone collection. According to her the working atmosphere of Balasan River basin was very much unhygienic and sometimes she got injured with stone chips and iron implements during working in the stone field. She had to work throughout the year ignoring the fact of scorching heat of summer and biting cold of winter. Due to busy working schedule for the whole day she could not maintain her personal hygiene like regular bathing, brushing up teeth, washing of clothes etc. She was suffering from headache, skin disease and breathing problem too almost throughout the year.

In the studied area most of the children were forced to work in the stone field for an average 6 to 7 hours in a day and even sometimes more than that. They were busy at

work during day time and in this context, the data reveals that majority (82.49%) of them had to do work for 5 and above hours in a day (Table 5.15). Due to longer hour of work in a day they could not take adequate rest. In the stone field it was common to observe that during stone crushing work often they made themselves injured either with stone chips or with iron implements. Moreover, they were suffering from various ailments. The data reveals that physical injuries were found among 46.24 per cent and 46.60 per cent of total male and female working children respectively (Table 8.3 and Table 8.4). But it is a pity that due to their ignorance and negligence of parents the injured place often became swelled up with burning sensation. Besides this, sometimes minute physical injuries had turned into blisters with mucous secretion owing to their improper care over it. In the stone field it was common to notice that during crushing stones the dust emitted out from the broken up stones which repeatedly being inhaled by them through respiration. And as a consequence, they were suffering from acute respiratory problem which might have a probability to turn into chronic asthma in near future when they grow old as it was commonly noticed among the adult and elderly people in the studied area. Due to continuous hard manual labour in a day majority of the working children were suffering from various kinds of physical pain especially the backache, waist pain, pain in arms and legs, chest pain and eye pain (Table 8.3 and Table 8.4). In the stone field it was also observed that a large number of working children had to work for long in touch of river water for the collection of stones and boulders from almost their waist level water and sometimes it was up to their chest level. Moreover, the working environment was not in favour of them as the working environment was very much unhygienic and they worked hard throughout the year ignoring the burning heat of summer and biting cold of winter and under heavy showers. Due to unhygienic working condition they were weak by various health hazards like fever, cough and cold, pneumonia, headache, skin diseases, breathing problem, bleeding from nose and other minute problems throughout the year. Even very few of them had an experience of snake bite during stone collection from the river. It is noteworthy to mention here that often their diseases and ailments became complex mainly due to their improper care and lack of proper treatment.

Hence, from the aforesaid discussion it can be said that the working condition and environment of the stone field was very much alarming from hygienic point of view which might have led to morbid conditions among the studied children.

Food Habit and Personal Hygiene: Food is an essential part for survival. It plays very vital role in maintaining proper health and also helps in prevention and cure of diseases. Good nutritive food makes health but at the same time bad or unhealthy food gives rise to several diseases. Our cells, tissues and all organs work properly only with nutritious food which we eat. All body functions metabolic, hormonal, mental, physical or chemical cannot be performed by the body without nutritive food. Food provides us with important nutrition which is important in cure of disease. Bad food is responsible for lowered immunity system of body. A well-balanced, nutritive and correct diet is thus of utmost importance for the maintenance of good health and the healing of diseases (Importance of Food; <http://saven.Hubpages.Com/hub/Importance-of-Food>). Personal hygiene is the basic concept of cleaning, grooming and caring for our bodies. While it is an important part of our daily lives at home, personal hygiene is not just about combed shiny hair and brushed teeth; it is important for worker health and safety in the workplace. Workers who pay attention to personal hygiene can prevent the spread of germs and disease, reduce their exposures to chemicals and contaminants, and avoid developing skin allergies, skin conditions, and chemical sensitivities (Personal Hygiene; <http://www.statefundca.com/safety/safetymeeting/SafetyMeetingArticle.aspx?ArticleID=82>). In this regard, the food habit and personal hygiene of the studied children are stated below -

Case Study 1: Swapna Singha was a 12 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had her father, mother and two brothers. They were involved in stone based job to earn their living. But their earnings was too little to run the family. Swapna worked for the whole day in the stone field. She took little breakfast with tea and biscuits and after having it she had to continue this work until lunch break. She took lunch directly in the stone field. In her lunch she took rice, pulses and little amount of vegetables and mostly the same menu was served in the dinner. Due to utter financial constraint they failed to manage meal more than twice a day and it was insufficient and

poor nutritious. They could not afford to procure proper nutritious food such as fish, meat, egg, milk, fruits etc. and even taking rice meal for three times was a seldom happening factor. Her parents could not give her a full feed and she had a burning sensation in her stomach due to extreme hunger. She worked in hungry and as a result, she became weak. Due to busy working schedule Swapna could not maintain a good standard of personal hygiene. She could not maintain her regular bathing and even the use of shampoo and soap could rarely be seen during bathing. Sometimes she forgot to brush her teeth. Besides these, due to day long working involvement and rough use of dress, her clean dress became tattered and dirty very soon but the frequency of changing and washing clothes could rarely be seen. Owing to lack of sanitation Swapna and her family members went to open river bed for nature's call. Due to day long hard manual work it was simply impossible for her to take care of body cleanliness.

Case Study 2: Debasish Barman was a 13 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. In his family he had his grandmother, parents and one younger sister. All the family members worked altogether in the stone field. But they were paid very little as compare to their work amount. Their total family income was Rs.2400/- per month. Debasish worked in hungry because after having little breakfast with tea and pup rice he had to do continuous hard work hard until lunch break. He had his lunch with rice, pulses and little amount of vegetable curry. Due to busy working schedule he could not maintain the schedule for lunch. Often he had the lunch meal directly in the unhygienic river bed and sometimes he took the meal without washing the hand. He returned home in the evening when the work was over for the day. He had the dinner very soon after returning home but mostly the same menu was on the dinner. They could not accumulate proper nutritious food like meat, fish, egg, fruits, milk etc. on their little earnings. They hardly could manage meal twice a day and it was insufficient and less nutritious. He could not eat to the fill and many times he had to starve resulted in he became weak. But he became weaker due to work in ill health. Apart from these, due to busy working schedule he could not maintain a good standard of personal hygiene as he became very irregular in brushing up his teeth and bathing and he rarely used oil, shampoo or any other cleaning agents during bathing. Besides these, due to poor economic condition Debasish and his family members could not enjoy the sanitation facility and owing to this fact they used

open river bed for nature's call. Moreover, due to continuous hard work in polluted and unhygienic stone field his clean dress became tattered and dirty soon. But due to extreme poverty, habits and busy working schedule neither he could purchase a new dress nor could wash it regularly. Owing to day long hard manual work it was really impossible for him to maintain his personal hygiene.

Table 8.13: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Meal Taken in a day

Meal taken in a day								
Male			Female			Male and Female		
Twice	Thrice	Total	Twice	Thrice	Total	Twice	Thrice	Total
102	84	186	129	62	191	231	146	377
54.84	45.16	100.00	67.54	32.46	100.00	61.27	38.73	100.00

In this respect the data reveals that a major section of working children (61.27%) could eat their meal twice a day and in this concern the discrimination was more among the females (Table 8.13). Besides these, owing to their busy working schedule for the whole day they could not maintain a particular time for eating meal that made them very weak.

Table 8.14: Distribution of Child Workers' Families on the basis of Type of Food Taken

Type of food	Frequency						
	Daily	3-4 days in a week	Twice in a week	Once in a week	Rarely in a month	Hardly accumulate in a year	Total
Rice with minimum amount of vegetables	250 100.00						250 100.00
Meat	-	-	-	2 0.80	18 7.20	230 92.00	250 100.00
Fish	-	-	8 3.20	16 6.40	121 48.40	105 42.00	250 100.00
Egg	-	-	9 3.60	11 4.40	40 16.00	190 76.00	250 100.00
Fruit	-	-	-	6 2.40	21 8.40	223 89.20	250 100.00
Health drink	-	7 2.80	-	3 1.20	39 15.60	201 80.40	250 100.00

It can be understood better if the statistical data are followed which manifests around 80 per cent and 89 per cent of total studied families could hardly provide the health drinks and fruits respectively to their children in a year (Table 8.14). Even purchasing the least expensive animal protein from the market was a seldom happening factor. In this context, the data reveals that 92 per cent and 42 per cent of the studied families could hardly accumulate the meet and fishes respectively in a year. On the contrary, only around 6 per cent and 48 per cent of the families could manage the least expensive animal protein like fishes once in a week and rarely in a month respectively while only 0.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent of the studied families were able to manage the animal protein like meat for once in a week and rarely in a month respectively (Table 8.14). In the studied area the poor state of food habit of the families of working children indicates their inability to consume the adequate balance diet due to extreme financial constraint in their families. In their daily diet, they mainly took rice with pulses and little amount of vegetable curry. Even they could hardly afford eat rice thrice a day. The feed to the fill was simply unmanageable to them. The poor level of income was a severe constraint for them to purchase animal protein from the market. Moreover, it was out of their capacity to provide milk and other health drinks etc. to their children.

Due to their extreme poverty it was simply impossible for them to purchase the animal protein from the market. The protein and vitamin deficiencies might have resulted in the malnutrition and its virulence was noticed among the studied children which might have taken place due to their less nutritive food with continuous hard manual work. The premature entry into work and malnutrition might have an adverse impact on their physical development. Ultimately, their utter economic stringency kept them separate from nutritious diet which was required for them. Due to lack of adequate time they mostly preferred to take their lunch in the working field. Almost all of them took their meals to the stone field and had their lunch directly in the open river bed.



Figure 8.3: Taking lunch in the river bed

Even they did not use to clean their utensils and wash their hand properly before taking rice meal which could be seen in case of other meals also. The drinking water and water usage for household works is another highlighting issue in the context of health and hygiene. They fetched water from wells for the said purposes and the noticeable matter is that these wells were always uncovered and disinfected. Besides these, the another surprising matter was that in the working field they also used the river-water for the purpose of drinking, bathing and other necessary household works. They did not take any precautionary measures like filtering, boiling etc. It was simply out of their capacity to bear the extra burden of expenditure for fuel which was likely to be a great obstruction to boil the water. Nevertheless, they could have filtrated it even by cloth but they could not think so mainly owing to their lack of knowledge and awareness.

Personal hygiene of the working children in the studied area revealed an unpleasant condition. The frequency habit of taking bath is one of the most important factor which helps to keep safe the body away from the effect of ill health. Bath means the whole body is dipped into water and cleaning of skin. It is not adequate to clean the body by simply throwing of water on the body. If we do not clean our body regularly and properly then the opening sweat glands of the skin located beneath the epidermis of the whole body will be blocked particularly by the dirt particles, as a result, a serious disturbance is created in the functioning of the skin. But a major section of working children in the

studied area could never maintain their regular bathing. The use of oil, soap and shampoo could rarely be seen during bathing. They became habituated with taking bath in polluted river and often in wells. In fact, owing to busy working schedule they could not return home for bathing. Their unclean bathing might have caused various skin problems. Ultimately, most of the working children never used to take regular and proper bath but it was required because they worked in unhygienic and dusty environment throughout the day. Due irregular and unclean bathing they were suffering from various troubles. In this context, the data reveals that 21.51 per cent and 19.90 per cent of the total male and female working children respectively were suffering from skin disease (Table 8.11 and Table 8.12). Due to over working and rough use of dress, their clean dress became dirty very soon but the habit of washing and the frequency of changing clothes were hardly noticed among them, perhaps owing to their utter financial constraint as well as busy working schedule. Even they hardly paid attention to the cleaning of hair regularly and properly. Moreover, during bathing the usages of shampoo or any other cleaning agents for removal of accumulated dirt was a seldom happening factor. In fact, they cleaned their hair by simply throwing water on it. Besides these, the dental hygiene is likely to remain an important part of personal hygiene because the teeth play an important role in the human body. Hence, the healthy teeth are very much necessary for a person because it helps to break the food particles into smaller pieces which we think as a preliminary stage of digestion. But in the studied area most of the working children could not take care of their teeth. Very few of them used to brush up their teeth daily and some of them often once in a week. This malpractice was mainly due to their busy working schedule and also due to lack of health consciousness and awareness. It was the fact that, it was almost difficult for the working children to take care of their body cleanliness mainly due to their day long hard manual labour in the stone field as well as the improper care of parents was also responsible for it. Ultimately in the studied area a major section of working children were not in a position to maintain their good standard of personal hygiene.

Health Care Practices and Medical Facilities: The Institute of Medicine defines healthcare quality as the extent to which health services provided to individuals and patient populations improve desired health outcomes (Performance/Quality Improvement: The Definition of Healthcare Quality and the Institute of Medicine;

<http://www.peerpt.com/website/index.php?option=comcontent&view=article&id=10> &Itemid=10). The term "health care system" refers to a country's system of delivering services for the prevention and treatment of disease and for the promotion of physical and mental well-being. Of particular interest to a health care system is how medical care is organized, financed, and delivered. The organization of care refers to such issues as who gives care (for example, primary care physicians, specialist physicians, nurses, and alternative practitioners) and whether they are practicing as individuals, in small groups, in large groups, or in massive corporate organizations. A country's health care system also reflects in part the culture and values of that society (Gale Encyclopedia of US History: Health Care; <http://www.answers.com/topic/health-care>). In this regard, the medical facilities and the health care practices among the working children may be observed.

Case Study 1: Pradip Barman was a 14 years aged Rajbanshi boy. He was a stone crusher by profession. He had been doing this work since he was eight years old. He was suffering from various ill healths throughout the year. But there was no health centre in their village. So for treatment, Pradip and his family had to depend upon the traditional medicine men and quacks of local medicinal shops. Even, they could not go to the private doctors due to its unaffordable expense because their condition was like after meat comes mustard. But if the condition became critical, they were referred to North Bengal Medical College. He and his family members stated that the government doctors did not pay proper attention and usually neglected them. Even in most of the cases they could not enjoy the facility of getting adequate medicines with free of cost both from Matigara Primary Health Centre and North Bengal Medical College.

Case Study 2: Sumitra Barman was a 13 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. She had been doing the stone based job since she was seven years old. Due to hard manual labour for day long she was suffering from various health problems throughout the year. But for the treatment Sumitra and her rest family members had to depend upon the traditional medicine men and local untrained quacks because there was no health centre in their village. But it was impossible to get proper treatment with adequate medicines and necessary diagnostic tests. Moreover, due to utter financial

constraint they could not go to private doctors. Therefore, when the condition became critical then Sumitra and her family had to go Matigara Primary Health Centre or North Bengal Medical College for better treatment. But due to long distance it was almost impossible for them to go there for treatment. Sumitra and her mother told that if they go there, the work as well as earnings for the day would be lost because their labour could provide a fold of rice only. Even they reported that the government doctors did not pay much attention to the patients. Therefore, Sumitra and her other family members were debarred of enjoying better medical facilities.

All the families in the studied area were going through an unpleasant condition in terms of health care practices and medical facilities and as a result, they had to face a lot of problems. There was no health centre in the studied village. For the treatment of diseases and ailments they had to depend upon both traditional medicine men and untrained quacks of local medicinal shops but it was almost impossible to get proper treatment with adequate medicines and necessary diagnostic tests. So, the patients were mostly referred to Matigara Primary Health Centre or North Bengal Medical College only when their condition became critical. But the proper medical checkup for long time was hardly possible for them due to their utter economic hardship.

Table 8.15: Treatment of Illness of Working Children

Age group (in years)	Treatment of Illness							
	Male				Female			
	Modern	Traditional	Both	Total	Modern	Traditional	Both	Total
6-7	-	-	20	20	-	-	19	19
			100.00	100.00			100.00	100.00
8-9	1	3	27	31	1	1	39	41
	3.23	9.68	87.10	100.00	2.44	2.44	95.12	100.00
10-11	1	3	38	42	-	5	44	49
	2.38	7.14	90.48	100.00		10.20	89.80	100.00
12-13	2	1	44	47	-	2	40	42
	4.26	2.13	93.62	100.00		4.76	95.24	100.00
13-14	2	5	39	46	1	2	37	40
	4.35	10.87	84.78	100.00	2.50	5.00	92.50	100.00
Total	6	12	168	186	2	10	179	191
	3.23	6.45	90.32	100.00	1.05	5.24	93.72	100.00

Table 8.16: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Type of Treatment

Sex	Type of Treatment										Total
	TD	Q	TD & Q	MC & Q	TD, MC & Q	TD, MC, Q & MHC	Q & MHC	TD, Q & MHC	TD, MHC & JA	MH C, MC & Q	
Male	12 6.45	4 2.15	153 82.26	-	8 4.30	2 1.08	1 0.54	3 1.61	2 1.08	1 0.54	186 100.00
Female	10 5.24	1 0.52	158 82.72	1 0.52	10 5.24	2 1.05	-	8 4.19	1 0.52	-	191 100.00
Total	22 5.84	5 1.33	311 82.49	1 0.27	18 4.77	4 1.06	1 0.27	11 2.92	3 0.80	1 0.27	377 100.00

NB: (TD: Traditional, Q: Quack, MC: Medical College, MHC: Matigara Health Centre, JA: JesusAshram).

The data reveals that around 82 per cent of total studied children had to depend on both traditional medicine men and quacks as had no other ways to get better treatment (Table 8.16). Even, though three *Anganwadi*¹ centres were in the studied village but no other medicines or treatment facilities were imparted to the villagers especially for pregnant women but only polio-vaccine facility for the children. Besides these, there was also a 'Jesus Ashram'² in Matigara which was around 5 km. away from the studied village from where free medical check up with adequate medicines used to be provided to the patients. But nevertheless very few of them often went there for treatment as it was almost impossible for them to go there primarily for the long distance. In fact, they did not prefer to waste their valuable work schedule and the fact was that their hard manual labour for day long was the only way of making their living. Most of the working children and their parents opined that if they go there, the work for that day will be lost as only their labour could manage a fold of rice for them. However, they could not go to the private doctors due to the fact of unaffordable expense because they were not in a position to bear the

¹ *Anganwadi*: Anganwadi is a government sponsored child-care and mother-care centre in India. It creates to children in the 0-6 age group. It was started by the Indian Government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services programme to combat child hunger and malnutrition. A typical *Anganwadi* centre also provides basic health care in Indian villages. It is a part of the Indian public health-care system. These centres provide supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, nutrition and health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services.

² *Jesus Ashram*: Jesus Ashram provides fellowship where peoples' lives are transformed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is Christ-centered, church-centered and family-centered. This unique experience promotes deeper spiritual growth and discipleship to assist people in serving their local churches and communities. Instead of being centered on a guru as in the Indian culture, the Christian *Ashram* is centered on the person of Jesus Christ.

expense for proper medical treatment and other required clinical diagnosis. Therefore, both the traditional medicine men and quacks of local medicinal shops were their only consultant in respect of treatment. A large number of parents of working children reported that the government doctors never used to paid proper attention and usually neglected them. Even in most of the cases they were debarred of getting adequate medicines with free of cost both from Matigara Primary Health Centre and North Bengal Medical College. So, in case of seriousness, they had to purchase doctors' prescribed medicines by lending money from neighbours, money lenders or *samiti* (co-operative society) as there was no alternative way to them. They could realize that 'money' is the single decisive factor for enjoying proper health care facilities and better treatment. It was common to notice that a major section of them were mostly suffering from physical pain throughout the year and it was basically due to their continuous hard physical labour for day long but they paid mere importance to it. In this regard, the data reveals that such type of ailment was found among 74.19 per cent and 73.82 per cent of the total male and female working children respectively (Table 8.3 and Table 8.4). In this context, their dependency on both traditional medicine men and local quacks for quick remedy was noticed only when it became complex. The practice of traditional method of treatment was widely prevalent in the studied area as they had strong faith on it. They had a firm believe in traditional way of treatment as they thought that they could rejoin work in a quick succession without any expense. They preferred to go to the traditional medicine men for treatment and especially for ailments related to evil spirits. Because the concept of evil spirits and black magic was widely pervasive among them such as ghost attack, evil eyes and charming arrow were a believable matter to them. According to them, the evil spirits had a power to attack a person anywhere at any moment either in the stone field or any other places within the village territory. In this context a number of aged village members expressed their view with some experiences and according to them in these cases there were high probability of physical and mental illness among the attacked persons. Under these circumstances, their dependency was only upon the traditional medicine men. They had a firm belief that only the traditional medicine men had power to protect and save them from the effect of evil spirits or black magic and for which

usually they used to be provided amulet, *tel-para*³, *jal-para*⁴, and tablets made by extracts of various leaves and tubers but in many cases patients did not get any relief from it. Ultimately, many of them had to go to the local quacks. But when such type of illness became complex then the patients were readily sent either to Matigara Primary Health Centre or North Bengal Medical College in accordance with the condition of patient. But nevertheless, they retained their faith on traditional way of treatment which was being practiced alongside the modern treatment. The considerable fact was that in most of the cases their ignorance of the treatment at primary stage of illness might have created a chronic condition. It is a pity that a major section of working children did not pay much attention at the initial stage of ailments or diseases but when it was beyond their control then the consultation with local quacks could only be seen to rejoin work in a quick succession. Hence, in the studied area most of the working children and their families were debarred of enjoying better medical facilities due to their utter economic hardship as well as the absence of health centre in their village. So, to get remedy they had to rely upon the local quacks and traditional medicine men but in many cases their improper treatment over diseases and ailments might have resulted in a complex situation. Absence of health centre in the studied area was a great hindrance in the development of their health consciousness and awareness and they were also dispossessed of getting better treatment with free of cost mainly owing to this fact.

Health is wealth so runs the proverb. According to World Health Organization (WHO) health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. One of the fundamental rights of every child is to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. But this right is being violated badly in our society due to child abuse and especially because of their working involvement in hazardous sectors; as a result, they are suffering from numerous health hazards. The manner of working involvement, nature of work and working condition and environment subject them to serious health and safety hazards. In this context, the health profile of studied children reveals an unpleasant condition.

³ *Tel para* (sanctified oil): In order to treat the patient the traditional healer takes some mustered oil and then he sanctifies this oil by uttering some magical mantras.

⁴ *Jal para* (sanctified water): In order to treat the patient the traditional healer takes water and drops a few sacred Basil leaves in it and then he sanctifies this water by uttering some magical mantras.

The environmental condition of the studied area was very bad and unhygienic. The small lanes with stagnant water and heaps of garbage were generally noticed on the backside of the houses and even sometimes the waste disposals were directly thrown on the road. In the absence of drainage system the waste water was flowing over *kachha* roads. During rainy season the water storage was common to notice which became the key birth place of various germs. Besides these, the latrine was mostly found neither in the houses nor a common in the village. They used the open field for nature's call and the children often around their houses and this problem might have an adverse impact on their living environment. The living environment was polluted with waste disposal and human excreta. The dwelling houses of the studied children were mostly *kachha* type with wattle walls, corrugated tin roofs, *kachha* platform and devoid of proper ventilation. The studied families were devoid of electric facility at their homes and as a result they faced poor light at night. It was common to observe that during summer season the insider atmosphere of the houses was very much suffocating. Even, many of their houses were broken too. It was noticed that the rainwater leaked into their rooms through roofs and walls and due to this fact their houses became damp and muddy which caused various ailment like cough and cold, fever, nasal blockage, sneezing, headache etc. Due to lack of sufficient space there was no sitting place inside the room. Most of the families (90.80%) had to live in single room houses and next couple of room and owing to this fact they could not maintain their privacy. Due to lack of room they used to cook inside the room. However, this situation might have serious adverse impact on their health.

They were always busy with work in the stone field during day time. They did several kinds of stone based activity like stone collection and crushing, sand gathering and truck loading for all the day in the stone field. They had to do the work throughout the year in polluted and unhygienic stone field paying no attention to burning heat of summer and freezing cold of winter. The daylong hard manual labour resulted in serious physical pain in their whole body. Even, they could not sleep well at night due to acute physical pain. Often they made themselves injured with stone chips and iron implements. But due to their ignorance and negligence of parents often minute physical injuries had turned into blisters with mucous secretion. Apart from these, during crushing stones the dust emitted out from the broken up stones which was being inhaled through respiration resulted in

respiratory problem and it might have a probability to turn into chronic asthma in near future when they grow old as many of their elder family members were asthma patient. They had to collect stones and sands from the river and therefore their clothes got drenched but they had to do the work in wet clothes throughout the day and as a consequence, they were suffering from fever, cough and cold, nasal blockage, headache etc. throughout the year. Even, due to long touch with water many of them had an uncomfortable feeling on their skin that made them want to scratch. Besides these, few of them had also an experience of snake bite during stone collection. Due to busy working schedule for the whole day they could not maintain their good standard of personal hygiene as they became very irregular in bathing, brushing up teeth, washing of clothes etc.

In the studied families it was observed that in their daily diet they mainly took rice, pulses and vegetable curry but it was insufficient. Due to extreme poverty parents failed to provide nutritious food like animal meat, fish, egg, milk, fruits and other health drinks to their children. Most of the families could manage rice meal not more than twice a day on their poor earnings. Even sometimes they had to starve and they felt uneasiness in their stomach due to extreme hunger. They worked in hungry because after having little breakfast with tea and biscuits or pup rice they had to do continuous hard work hard until lunch break. The hard manual work with insufficient and less nutritious food might have caused a high prevalence of malnutrition among the working children. Apart from these, the wells and the river were their only sources of water. All the studied families had to depend on both uncovered wells and the river for their household works, drinking and other necessary purposes. But they did not take any type of precautionary measures such as boiling or filtering resulted in various water-borne diseases like dysentery, diarrhoea etc. were common to notice among them throughout the year. Due to busy working schedule they could not maintain a good standard of personal hygiene. They could not maintain their regular bathing. They used to take bath by simply throwing of water on the body. The uses of cleaning agents like shampoo, soap etc. could rarely be seen during bathing. But it is the fact that if they do not clean their body properly then the opening sweat glands of the skin located beneath the epidermis of the whole body will be blocked by the dirt particles and due to this fact a serious disturbance is created in the functioning

of the skin. In fact, they became habituated with taking bath in polluted river and often in wells without shampoo, soap and any other cleaning agents. However, the irregular and unclean bathing caused various skin problems which were common to notice among the studied children. Due to over working and rough use of dress in the stone field their clean dress became dirty very soon but the habit of washing was hardly noticed among them. Even they could not take care of their hair regularly and properly as they rarely used the shampoo and other cleaning agents during bathing. It is the fact that, the regular maintenance of dental hygiene is very essential because the teeth play an important role in the human body. The healthy teeth are very much required for a person because it helps to break the food particles into smaller pieces which is a preliminary stage of digestion. But due to both habits and busy working schedule the studied children could not take proper care of their teeth as they could not brush up their teeth properly and often also forget to do it. The fact is that this malpractice was mainly owing to their busy working schedule and also due to lack of their health consciousness and awareness.

There was no health centre in the village. For the treatment they went to untrained quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional medicine men. But if the condition became critical, they were referred to North Bengal Medical College or Matigara Primary Health Centre. But it was almost impossible for them to go there for treatment due to long distance. They were of opinion that that if they go there, the work for the day will be lost because only their labour could provide a fold of rice to them. Even they reported that the government doctors did not pay much attention to the patients. Even in many cases they could not enjoy the facility of getting adequate medicines with free of cost both from Matigara Primary Health Centre and North Bengal Medical College. In fact, they could not pay for proper treatment with necessary tests. Even none of them could purchase all the doctors' prescribed medicines and as a result they had no other means but stopped treatment in the middle. So, due to lack of proper treatment and improper care often their ailments and diseases had turned into complex.

In the studied area all the working children were subjected to severe health hazards. Their parents could not provide better health and treatment to them on their little earnings. For the treatment of diseases and ailments they had to depend upon the local untrained quacks

and traditional medicine men but they could not always get a proper treatment from them. They were involved in stone based work. They worked hard without any adequate rest for all the day in the stone field. This untiring hard labour in the stone field made their body painful and often they made themselves injured with blood secretion and mostly their eyes were used to be injured with stone chips and iron implements. But due to lack of proper treatment and improper the injured place became swelled up with burning sensation. They were referred to Matigara Primary Health Centre and North Bengal Medical College only when the condition became complex. But it was out of their capacity to pay for treatment for long days with necessary diagnostic tests. Even in many cases they were not provided the required medicines free from the hospital. Due to unaffordable expense they could not complete the full course of doctors prescribed medicine and as a result, they had to stop treatment in the middle. Besides these, during crushing stones the dust emitted out from broken up stones which was repeatedly being inhaled through respiration that resulted in breathing problem found among them. Moreover, they had a burning sensation in their stomach due to extreme hunger. Their parents could not feed them to the fill. Though, they could eat meal twice a day but it was insufficient and less nutritious. They took meal with rice, pulses and little amount of vegetable curry. Due to financial constraint they could not afford to maintain a nutritious food diet as taking fish, meat, egg, milk and fruits was rarely possible factor which made them very weak. But for the compulsion of hunger the children with ill health had to do the continuous hard work in the stone field. The daylong hard manual work with insufficient and poor nutritious food made them weaker. They had to do the work for prolong hours in touch of river water for the collection of stones from the river. As a result, their dress got drenched but they did work in wet clothes throughout the day that made them very sick with fever, cold and cough, sneezing, nasal blockage and headache. Besides these, for drinking, bathing and other domestic purposes they had to use uncovered well and river water. But owing to lack of health consciousness and awareness they could not take any precautionary measures such as boiling and filtering resulted in they were weak by diarrhoea and dysentery. But they could not see the doctor at proper time. Moreover, their living environment was very much poor and unhygienic with waste disposals and human excreta due to lack of sanitation and drainage system. Their

dwelling houses were mostly *kachha* type and broken too. The houses were mostly composed of the single little room with muddy floor made of wattle walls, corrugated tin roofs and devoid of proper ventilation and there were no electric facility at their homes. Due to lack of electricity they faced poor light at night. During rainy season the rain entered into the room through leaky roof and cracked walls that made their houses damp and muddy and as a consequence, they were suffering from fever, cough and cold, nasal blockage, sneezing and headache. Due to lack room they were found to cook inside the room that made their rooms smoky resulted in their eyes went to red and started watering. Apart from these, due to busy working schedule throughout the day they could not maintain their good standard of personal hygiene as they were very much irregular in bathing, brushing up teeth, washing clothes, frequency of changing clothes etc. that might have a serious impact on their health. Many children with ill health had to do the continuous hard work in the stone field throughout the day and due to this fact they became ailing more. However, due to aforesaid factors the health of the studied children got affected badly.

References

- Gale Encyclopedia of US History: Health Care; <http://www.answers.com/topic/health-care>, retrieved 07.04.2012, at 10:30 p.m.
- Gomango, S.P. (2001), *Child Labour: A Precarious Future*, Delhi: Author Press.
- Hanlon, John, J. (1963), *Design for health: the teacher, the school and the community*, London: Elizabeth Mc House.
- Hasan, K.A., 1967; cited in Rizvi, S.N.H. (1991), *Medical Anthropology of the Juunsaris*, New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.
- Healthizen; <http://www.healthizen.com/blog/index.php/general/environmental-sanitation/>, retrieved 05.04.2012, at 9:40 p.m.
- Howard, Lee M. (1972), Three key dilemmas in international health, *Am. J. Public Health*, 62(1), 73-78.

Importance of Food; <http://suvan.hubpages.com/hub/Importance-of-Food>, retrieved 06.04.2012, at 11:25 p.m.

Katz, Rogert C. and S. Zlutnick (1975), *Behaviour therapy and health care: Principles and application*, Pergamon General Psychology Series, vol. 43, Pergamon Press.

Koos, Earl L. (1954), *The health of Regionville*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Performance/Quality Improvement: The Definition of Healthcare Quality and the Institute of Medicine; http://www.peerpt.com/website/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=10, retrieved 07.04.2012, at 10:30 p.m.

Personal Hygiene; <http://www.statefundca.com/safety/safetymeeting/Safety Meeting Article .aspx?ArticleID=82>, retrieved 06.04.2012, at 11:40 p.m.

Syndenstricker, 1921; cited in Rizvi, S.N.H. (1991), *Medical Anthropology of the Juunsaris*, New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.

Terris, M. (1975), Evolution of public health, and preventive medicine in the United States, *Am. J. Public Health*, 65(2), 161-169.

CHAPTER IX: CHILD WORKERS AND VIOLATION OF THEIR RIGHTS

Child is an important matter of the society. They are the future of a nation and important for the society. Therefore, they need to be grown up properly. There are 7 billion children in the world and 251 million in our country, India; but all of them are not living smoothly. In various ways, many of their grown up and development are being affected. The issues like poverty, illiteracy, poor health, torture, rape, trafficking, child work etc. have snatched away their right to live well. It is true that in almost all the countries of the world there are so many rights to protect and develop the children, but nevertheless their rights are continuously being violated in various ways. These are highlighted below:

What is Child Right?

The development, the culture and civilisation of the countries should be assessed not by the economic growth, but by the respect and protection given to the human rights of the individuals, particularly by the well-being of the children. Each and every child in every nation is entitled to a whole series of rights called child rights (Kaarthikeyan, 2005: 36-37 and 95-96).

The principles outlined in the international human rights framework apply both to children and adults. Children are mentioned explicitly in many of the human rights instruments; standards are specifically modified or adapted where the needs and concerns surrounding a right are distinct for children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child brings together the children's human rights articulated in other international instruments. This Convention articulates the rights more completely and provides a set of guiding principles that fundamentally shapes the way in which we view children. This compilation and clarification of children's human rights sets out the necessary environment and means to enable every human being to develop to their full potential. All children have the same rights. All rights are interconnected and of equal importance.

The Convention stresses these principles and refers to the responsibility of children to respect the rights of others, especially their parents. By the same token, children's understanding of the issues raised in the Convention will vary depending on the age of the child. Helping children to understand their rights does not mean parents should push them to make choices with consequences they are too young to handle (UNICEF: Convention on the Rights of the Child; http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_understanding.html). Children enjoy the same human rights accorded to all people. But, lacking the knowledge, experience or physical development of adults and the power to defend their own interests in an adult world, children also have distinct rights to protection by virtue of their age. One of these is protection from economic exploitation and from work that is dangerous to the health and morals of children or which hampers the child's development (Effective Abolition of Child Labour: ILO Conventions; http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138). The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity (Declaration of the Rights of the Child: Adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 1386 (XIV) of 10 December 1959).

The children have rights as human being and also need special care and protection. The fundamental rights of the children are:

- (i) The right to survival, which includes the right to life, the highest attainable standard of health, nutrition and standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
- (ii) The right to protection, which includes freedom from all forms of exploitation, abuse, inhuman or degrading treatment and neglect.
- (iii) The right to development, which includes the right to education, support for early childhood development and care, social security and the right to leisure, recreation and cultural activities; and

- (iv) The right to participation, which includes respect for the views of child's freedom of expression, access to appropriate information and freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Panigrahi, 2003: 39).

Though there are several rights to protect or save the interest of children but these are being violated in various ways which are discussed below –

Violation of Child Rights

Over 50 per cent of the children in India live in poverty, ailment and exploitation. The socio-economic condition of a society reflects in the living condition of its children, poverty, malnutrition, hunger and illiteracy are prevailing in the lower ranges and they comprise people below the poverty line, the disadvantaged sections and it is true that the basic rights to the child are mostly denied, these are the sections which form a larger majority in the world. Basic rights to the child are denied not because of any perverse social system or lack of bonds of love and affection from those who have brought them into this world, but due to hunger, poverty, malnutrition and large-scale unemployment (Saksena, 1999: 79-80). Child abuse (violation of child rights) is a huge issue for our community, as big as issue as that of protecting our environment. Child abuse is the misuse of power by adults over children that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health development (Tiwari, 2004, Vol.1: vii). Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or a combination of any or all of these. Abuse can also be neglect, which is when parents or guardians don't take care of the basic needs of the children who depend on them. Neglect occurs when a child or teen doesn't have adequate food, housing, clothes, medical care, or supervision. Emotional neglect happens when a parent doesn't provide enough emotional support or deliberately and consistently pays very little or no attention to a child. This doesn't mean that a parent doesn't give a kid something he or she wants, like a new computer or a cell phone, but refers to more basic needs like food, shelter, and love. Family violence can affect anyone. It can happen in any kind of family. Sometimes parents abuse each other, which can be hard for a child to witness. Some parents abuse their kids by using physical or verbal cruelty as a way of discipline (Lyness, Date reviewed: September 2013). Our children are our most valuable and

vulnerable resource. Children are wealth of our society and they are the future of any developing as well as developed country. But it is a pity that child abuse became an alarming condition in the present day civilization and in this perspective obviously it has a negative impact on the future development of a nation. Child abuse refers to “any child who receives non-accidental physical and psychological injury as a result of acts and omissions on the part of his parents or guardians or employers...” (Ahuja, 1992: 190). Worldwide, approximately 40 million children are subjected to child abuse each year (WHO, 2001). Suicide is the third leading cause of death in adolescents around the world (WHO, 2002). One study revealed that about 30 per cent of all severely disabled children relegated to special homes in the Ukraine died before they reached 18 years of age. UNICEF estimates that two million children died as a result of armed conflict during a recent 10 year period, and that another six million were injured or disabled (Human Rights Watch, 2001). In Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, over 6.5 million children annually are exposed to unwanted sexual materials over the internet; over 1.7 million of these report distress over exposure to these materials (Estes & Weiner, 2001). Each year, approximately one million more children around the world are introduced into commercial sexual exploitation (Casa Alianza, 2001). Sexual abuse statistics vary between countries and reports but are consistently alarming. One country's research indicates that up to 36 per cent of girls and 29 per cent of boys have suffered child sexual abuse; another study reveals up to 46 per cent of girls and 20 per cent of boys have experienced sexual coercion (The 57th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/child-abuse-statistics.html>). More than 50 per cent of children in India are sexually abused. A study conducted by Plan International also reveals physical punishment exists in Indian schools. India has almost 19 per cent of the world's children and more than one third of India's one billion-strong population is under 18 years of age. With 50 per cent of these children in need of care and protection, it clearly identifies there is a crisis. In a *Times of India* news story on October 26, Ashis Ray reports that 50 per cent of all children in India have been sexually abused. Plan International calculates that there is a minimum of \$1.4 billion lost every year in social benefits because of physical abuse in schools (Ray, Oct. 26, 2010). In India total 38172 incidences against children have been happed during 2012. Incidence and rate of crimes

committed against children in states and UTs of India during 2012 reveals that the highest percentage (15.8%) of crime has been happened in Uttar Pradesh followed by Madhya Pradesh (13.54%), Delhi (11.69%), Maharashtra (9.05%), Bihar (7.58%), Andhra Pradesh (5.96%), Chhattisgarh (4.93%), Rajasthan (4.73%), and West Bengal (4.47%). In case of cities in India the highest percentage (38.5%) of crime against children has been happened in Delhi (city) followed by Bengaluru (5.8%), Mumbai (5.5%), Pune (3.1%), Durg-Bhilainagar (2.8%), and Kolkata (2.4%), (Crime in India 2012 Statistics, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India). Child labour remains a major cause of child exploitation and abuse in the world, depriving millions of children worldwide of adequate education and good health. Many of these children are victims of the “worst forms” of child labour, which include slavery, bonded labour, drug trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic labour, armed conflict and all other physically and morally hazardous type of work. Today India is facing various complicated problems and child work is one of such problems which is a significant problem in India. India shows the higher prevalence of child work participation rates compare to other developing countries. According to 2001 Census of India, there are 1.26 crore working children in our country in the 5-14 age groups as compare to 1.13 crore in 1991. Child worker remains a major cause of child exploitation and abuse in the world, depriving millions of children worldwide of adequate education and good health (Tiwari, 2004, Vol. 2: 15). They never can protest against it. They have no capacity to form a union or go to law or court and even their inability to go to strikes and fight for right has clearly been reflected as they are the child just like a blooming flower in the garden. Children are the building block of a nation and if they are provided the appropriate kind of development then they can contribute to the nation in a big way when they grow old. So the child worker and child rights have become a key important issue at the present day. In this context, the present chapter mainly highlights the working children in respect to violation of their rights from various angles in the studied area.

Violation of Rights of the Working Children

The children are the asset of our society and thus, their grow-up and development should be in the proper way but these are not happened always properly. In this respect among

the 250 studied families there were 451 children of 5-14 years ages and among them 377 were the working children. However, the life of both the categories of children mostly had to pass through various problems and in this regard, particularly the grow-up and development of the working children was too much vulnerable. Their daylong working involvement as well as utter financial constraint in the family deprived them of all their fundamental needs and rights like opportunity of education, dress, proper shelter, security of proper nutritious food for their development. They could hardly manage the minimum adequate time for studies due to their busy working schedule for the whole day. Most of the parents were cruel as their anger found expression in bitter scolding and sound beating their children either for absence in work or raising eyes from work. Besides this, they had no proper shelter as they were mostly found to live in the broken houses of little rooms with *kachha* platform. The housing condition was not in favour of living. Considering to their food habit they could hardly accumulate the proper nutritious food in their daily diet and they took their meals not more than twice a day. Often they were found to work in hungry in the stone field. Their dress pattern simply indicated their inability as due to over working and rough use of dress their clean dress became dirty very soon but the habit of washing and the frequency of change of clothes were hardly noticed among them. Lack of ability to bear the expense of treatment with necessary tests and purchase of prescribed medicines, failing to take care of health, involvement of children in work throughout the day with serious ailments and malnutrition, etc. had a bad impact on their health. Always they had to face the socio-political insecurity. They did not get the support from government, local *panchayat* and people, and political parties. Most of the studied people were illegal migrants from Bangladesh. They were forced to come here due to poverty and several socio-political turmoil of Bangladesh. The overall situation forced them to detach from their close kins and neighbours that affected their solidarity and unity a lot. Roofless, resourceless, penniless, poverty, debarred from love and affection from the parents and close kins as well as the socio-political and economic insecurity were the prime factors that hindered the development and growig up of the children. However, the child abuse in the stone crushing society revealed an alarming condition. In this regard an important discussion is highlighted below one after another –

Child Rights in Economy: Every child has the right to enjoy free life, liberty, freedom from all forms of exploitation to get love, affection, care, security and supports as well as to get basic needs from their parents. But these are not happened always in our society. In this regard, the economic exploitation of children in our country has always been a matter of great concern. So many children are being exploited in their daily life mainly due to their working involvement. In this respect, poverty as well as parental inspiration and willingness are the prime responsible factor as because of their familial instability either to educate their children or cater for basic necessary requirements.

According to Article 32, children have right to be protected against economic exploitation and for performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (Saksena, 1999: 290). In this regard, the little children had to work in the stone field and in respect of child rights these issues are discussed below –

Case Study 1: Pratima Singha was a 13 years old girl, belonged to Rajbanshi community. She was born in Bangladesh. They came here nearly seven years ago. Both her parents got involved in stone based occupation. But feed to the fill was simply out of their capacity. To get a financial support both the parents motivated Pratima to do this work. Pratima had been working in the stone field for last four years. She did both stone crushing and stone collection activities. She could earned Rs. 100/- per week. She contributed her total earnings to the family. Pratima said that she had to do this job against her will because her parents were satisfied with her earnings. Pratima felt that her parents never loved her but they scolded her and even sometimes beat her soundly when she raised her eyes from work. So she had a fear of scolding and beating if she was absent in work. She was found crying her eyes out while describing this bitter experience. She could play only when her father went to market but indeed it was a seldom happening factor.

Case Study 2: Sujit Singha, was a 13 years old boy whose birth place was Bangladesh. They came here from Bangladesh about 7 years ago i.e. 2006. After migration both his parents were involved in stone based job as prime earning source. But their earnings

could not provide them a minimum support to run their family smoothly. Thus, finding no other ways they provoked Sujit to get involved in stone based work to augment their family earnings a bit. Sujit got involved in stone based job since he was 8 years old. He had to do work for the whole week without any adequate rest. He was scolded bitterly or even often he was beaten up by his parents if he was absent in work or raised his eyes from work. He generally came back home at the evening when the work was over for the day. Even the work was often continued after evening also. He had to work hard in the stone field and often he got injured with stone chips or iron implements but he was helpless because he was forced by his parents to do this work. He was found crying his eyes out when he described the fact. However, Sujit had to do this work against his will. But he was not satisfied with the earnings as compare to hard physical labour for all the day round. He did both stone crushing and stone collection activities and could hardly earn Rs. 120/- per week and he contributed to their family income by providing his total earnings because he had no right to spend it for himself.

Case Study 3: Soma Barman was an 11 years aged girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. They migrated here around 9 years ago i.e. 2004 from Bangladesh. The stone based economy was their only source of earning. Soma did stone crushing activity. The total family income was about Rs. 2100/- per month. According to her, it was very much labourious and hazardous job but nonetheless she had to do this work as her contribution to the family income was very essential for livelihood. She began to do this work nearly two years ago. She was not so interested to do this job. Soma told that if she got any better opportunity, she would not continue this work anymore. Her eyes filled with tears when she said “they are poor so they can’t hope for something better and nobody will come forward to extend their helping hand”. Soma worked hard for the whole day in inhuman working condition. She earned nearly Rs. 100/- per week and contributed to the family income by providing her total earnings. Due to heavy work load she could hardly manage the time to study at home, play games and also for other recreational purposes. She was encouraged by her mother to do this work. She spent most of the time in a day for work.

In the present study it was observed that the stone based occupation was the backbone of economy in the studied area because all the families were dependent upon it for living but the earnings was too little to run the family. Nevertheless, it was only way of making their living as they failed to get comparatively better job with satisfactory earnings. A major percentage of them were from Bangladesh and few from adjoining districts and states of the country. Their displacement not only made them homeless and landless but resourceless as well. They were not in a position to invest money in business or any other purpose and due to this fact they got involved in stone based work because this work could be done without any investment but manual labour only. The payment paid to them was too poor to meet their prime needs for living like adequate food, clothing, proper shelter, education, treatment and medicine. They were always found to struggle against poverty. They worked hard altogether throughout the day in the stone field that was a common feature in their daily life. Hence, poverty was one of the decisive factors due to which from the very beginning most of the children had to get involved in said occupation in order to contribute to their family income. The data reveals that a major percentage (78%) of studied families could earn not more than Rs. 2000/- per month (Table 7.2). They could not maintain their family with this little earnings and due to this fact they had to face a lot of problem in their daily life. They had a crying need to augment their earnings for living but finding no other means most of the parents provoked their children to get involved in stone based job. The aforesaid data made it clear that majority of the working children came from poverty-stricken families. Thus, it was simply unmanageable to most of the parents to provide all the necessary requirements to their children.

Generally most of the working children had to do work hard in the stone field for the whole day against their will because they were forced to do it by their parents. They were child, therefore, they had no ability to protest against it and seemingly they were exploited by their parents. Most of the parents desired to give birth more children as they had a notion that child work is the only way to get rid of financial constraint a bit. In most of the cases parents used their children as earning hand in the hope of getting a financial aid. In economic field majority of the parents behaved like employer to their children. It was reported that often the child workers were scolded bitterly and even also in some

cases were beaten up by their parents if they were absent in work or raised their eyes from work for a moment too. Ultimately, the violation of child rights had reached in extreme phases. Most of the working children did not express their interest doing this work because pursuant to them its remuneration was very poor as well as it was hazardous and hard manual work. They also opined that if they are provided suitable opportunity then they shall shift over in new one. They were more interested to continue education, to play games and to watch television or cinema but due to prolong working hours for daylong in the stone field they could not manage the adequate time to enjoy it. They supported their family by working hard in the stone field. Thus, they were deprived of all the facilities like opportunities of education, leisure and recreation, intellectual development, freedom from exploitation and so on.

Child Rights in Education: It is the common slogan that “every child has the right to education and education for all”. Education plays an important role for the development of a society. The future of a society depends on today’s children. On the basis of this fact, to make a healthy society a child needs special care and education. A child can be compared with clay pot that can be made in a desirable shape as we wish to do. Thus, it is in our hand that how can we make them. The parents should take the responsibility to send their children to school as we all know school plays an important role in the development of awareness especially not only in respect of peace and human rights but also many other related issues as well. The significant matter is that a large part of children in developing countries usually deprived of their rights of education as well as rights of childhood mainly owing to their working involvement. Education is remained fundamental right under Indian law. According to Article 28, every child has the right to get free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years. If a child gets proper education then he or she will be able to get aware of their basic needs and rights as well as can able to develop the knowledge, quality of judgement, awareness, value system and power of assessment which help to increase their potentiality in a great scale. In the stone crushing field the little children had to do the work which might have a serious impact on their education. However, in respect to rights in education, their educational situation is discussed below-

Case Study 1: Kabita Barman an 11 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. She was born in Bangladesh. They came here around seven years ago. After migration both her parents were involved in stone based occupation but they could not run their family on their little earnings. Kabita was provoked by her parents to get involved in the stone based job in order to contribute to the family income. She admitted that her working involvement adversely affected her studies. Kabita dropped out of school when she was in class IV. The regular schooling was hardly possible because of her working involvement for the whole day. She had no adequate books and note books and due to lack of these requirements she faced serious problems in her studies. Besides these, her parents could not provide private tuition to her. Due to absent of private tuition she could not finish all the home tasks provided by her class teachers. Owing to this fact she had a fear of scolding and also a fear of beating by her class teachers. Under these circumstances she lost the interest in going to school. She used to get up very early in the morning before the first ray of sunup and then helped her mother in necessary domestic chores. She used to go to the stone field around 9 a.m. At the noon she came back home for having lunch and very after she took rice meal to the stone field for her parents and returned home in the evening. She told that she had to drop out of school due to lack of time and lack of necessary educational materials as well as absent of private tuition. Kabita lived in *kachha* house made of wattle walls and corrugated tin roofs and there was no separate room or place for studies. Further, the electric facility in their house was absent. Due to this fact they had to face poor light at night, as a result Kabita could not study her lesson at night. Besides these, the mentionable matter is that she was first generation learner and due to this fact she did not get any guidance and cooperation from her parents for studies. Even, she could not manage the time for playing games with peer group. This busy working schedule and lack of educational requirements affected her studies seriously.

Case Study 2: Prabhu Barman, was a 13 years, old boy, belonged to Rajbanshi community. He was born in Bangladesh. They came here around nine years ago. Both his parents were involved in stone based occupation for maintaining their livelihood. But their earnings was too little to meet necessary livelihood requirements. Due to utter financial constraint both the parents motivated Prabhu to get involved in stone based

work. Prabhu had been working for last five years. He did both stone collection and stone crushing activities. He dropped out of school when he was in class III. Due to heavy work load he could hardly manage the time to go to school or study at home. Moreover, lack of educational requirements such as private tuition, sufficient book, note books, pen etc. were also responsible for his poor educational status. In this connection the parental illiteracy cannot be ignored. Even, he had to do several domestic chores like cleaning house and utensils, carrying water, going to shop and so on. His dwelling house was broken and *kachha* type with wattle walls and corrugated tin roofs. The house was composed of two little rooms. There was no electricity in the house that resulted in poor light at night. Due to poor light Prabhu faced problem in studies at night. Even sometimes he had to starve. Moreover, the family environment as well as social environment like alcoholism, intra-familial and inter-familial conflict were common to notice in the family and due to these facts Prabhu could not pay attention to his study. He was found crying his eyes out at the time of asking about his education.

Case Study 3: Sumita Barman was a 13 years unmarried girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. She was born in Bangladesh. They came here around five years ago. Stone based job was the only way of making their living. Both her parents were the only bread earner of the family but their earnings could not fulfill their basic necessary requirements for living. With this poor income they could hardly manage meal twice in a day and even sometimes they had to starve also. As a result, Sumita was provoked by her parents to help them in the stone field. She did several types of stone based activities such as stone collection and crushing and sand gathering. She had been doing this work for last four years. Sumita was busy with this job for all the day. She dropped out of school when she was in class IV. She was very much irregular in school attendance because during school time she worked in the stone field. Even sometimes she went out from the classes to join with her parents in the stone field. Moreover, her parents did not allow her to go to school regularly. In this connection parental illiteracy and lack of proper guidance could not be ignored. Her eyes filled with tears when she was telling about the lacking of educational materials. She faced lot of problems in her studies as she had not sufficient books and note books and even she did not get the private tuition facility. Moreover, she was scolded bitterly and even she was beaten up by her parents if she was absent in the stone

field. Indeed, her parents had an urgent need to meet daily necessities for living. Besides these, their living condition was very much poor and unhygienic. The dilapidated house made of wattle walls and corrugated tin roof. Sumita and her all family members had to live in the single room where there was no electric facility. Due to lack of electricity they had to face poor light at night. Due to poor light and insufficient room Sumita faced serious problem in her studies. She hardly get adequate rest but sleeping at night. Actually due to working involvement and also for lacking of educational requirements she could not continue her studies.

The scenario of education in the studied area reveals an unpleasant condition. Indeed they worked hard altogether for the whole day in the stone field. Due this fact a major section of working children could not manage adequate time for their schooling and even also to study at home. The matter of education was not at all important to them but doing work. Due to utter economic constraint their parents could not meet to the expense of necessary educational requirements such as adequate books, note books, private tuition and so on. Due to absent of private tuition the children could not complete all the home tasks provided by their respective class teachers. In fact, they could not understand the major part of their studies because of their irregular schooling. Moreover, many children often went out from the classes to join the work with their parents in the stone field as it was urgent for them because this poor earnings failed to give them a full fed. Even sometimes they had to starve too. Most of the children were first generation learner and owing to illiteracy of parents the children did not get any guidance and support from their parents. Most of the parents did not wish to send their children to school rather they preferred to involve them in stone based work. In the studied area a major section of working children could not manage adequate time for their schooling and even could not study at home too. The surprising matter was that the dropout as well as stagnation rate was high (rate) among the working children (Table 7.11). Many working children opined that they were rebuked bitterly and also beaten up soundly by their parents for their lacking of concentration to work or absent in work. They had to do work against their will. A woeful matter was that few of them approached me in tears and asked with deep sorrow – “please save us uncle” which hurt me so much and brought a tear to my eyes. A large number of working children expressed their eagerness to continue education. Some of

them seemed to realize a bit the importance of education in getting better opportunity in future but nevertheless they had nothing to do. They were feeling helplessness but every child has the right to secure and fulfilling life, freedom from fear and ignorance. A major section of child workers felt that if they do not work they have no value in the family. Even their parents believed that more children mean more earnings. Indeed, they were not so worried about the future of their children rather always thought that how they can run their family on this little earnings. Therefore, child work was likely to be a best solution to get rid of financial constraint a bit as they thought so. Apart from this working involvement, most of the working children had to do necessary domestic chores such as cooking, washing clothes, cleaning house and utensils, taking care of younger siblings etc. Moreover, the family atmosphere as well as social environment was not in favour of them. Most of the fathers became habituated with taking alcohol every day in the evening and made a chaos in the family. Besides these, the inter-familial and intra-familial conflict was common to notice in their daily life. As a whole, their educational environment was being seriously affected; even the children could not pay concentration to their lesson. Besides these, the busy working schedule for the whole day was a great obstruction to pay adequate attention to their studies. Indeed, the children had a fear of scolding and even sound beating by their parents either due to less work or absent in work. Due to these facts the dropout as well as stagnation rate was high among the working children. In this regard, the data reveals that around 34 per cent female and 30 per cent male working children had dropped out of school and a tendency for the same was found more in primary level rather than in secondary (Table 7.11 and 7.12). But most of the children had a keen interest in maintaining their regularity in schooling. They always thought that how they could afford to run their family in coming days. Under these circumstances they thought that child work was likely to be a best solution to get rid of poverty a bit. They had a crying need to meet daily necessary livelihood requirements and providing education to their children was the next choice to them. Besides these, the inter-familial and intra-familial conflict was common to notice in their daily life which affected their educational progress. As a whole, their educational environment got affected seriously. Their little earnings as well as lack of educational requirements and busy working schedule created a poor level of educational standard among them and

these children were deprived of their educational right that was a great barrier to their development.

Child Rights in Health: Health is fundamental right that every person has. According to Article 12, everyone has right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (Saksena, 1999: 250). Every member of a society has right to get proper health care facilities as well as healthy environment and in this context as a human being children have right to enjoy the same. Health is an important indicator to realize the socio-economic condition of a society or community. It is said that the future of a society depends upon the children. Thus, they must be provided healthy and hazardous free life for the well-being of a society, as we all know an unhealthy child will grow up into an unhealthy adult. So, the right to survival for every child is important to us covering the right to life, proper health care facilities, food-nutrition and standard of living required for their social, physical, mental, moral as well as spiritual development. But today, the violation of child rights is widely rampant in our society. In this context child work is a burning example of exploitation and violation of child rights which leads to their physical as well as psychological deformities. Early onset of working activity has a negative impact on their health. Working involvement of children in hazardous sectors is liable to ill-health and may also have permanent effects on their long term development. So in this perspective, the influence of work on health of working children is a matter of grave concern in the present day.

In the studied area the scenario of health profile of working children revealed an unpleasant condition. The stone based work was the only way of making their living but their payment was not enough for living. Due to this fact the parents and their children had to do the work hard altogether throughout the day in the stone field. Most of the children had to work on an average 6 to 7 hours in a day and sometimes even more than that, which might have resulted in their inability to get adequate rest and sleep. During stone crushing work often they made themselves injured either with stone chips or iron implements. The working atmosphere of Balasan River bed was very much polluted and unhygienic. They had to do the work all the year round paying no attention to biting cold of winter and scorching heat of summer. The hard manual work along with hazardous

working condition might have resulted in various ill-healths such as skin disease, cold and cough, fever, physical injuries, body pain, giddiness, headache etc. were common to notice among them throughout the year. Many children with ill health had to do the work hard for the whole day otherwise they had to starve. Often they worked hungry in the stone field and due to this fact they became ailing more. They had no other means but doing work because if they refused to do it, their family earnings got reduced. If the earnings became decreased, they could not afford meal twice a day. These children had a fear of sound beating and scolding by their parents if they were absent in work. Even they could not tell their parents if they felt hungry. The feed to the fill was a seldom happening factor and under these circumstances they never hoped to eat fish, meat, fruits, milk and other health drinks. They had to tolerate it without any protest. The hard manual work with insufficient and poor nutritious food made them weak that was common to notice among them.

It was noticed from many working children viz. Tulsi Roy, Rakhi Barman, Champalata Barman, Dipankar Barman, Debasish Barman, Swapna Singha, Anup Singha, Sangita Barman and many others that most of the days that they had to work hungry in the stone field. They could not afford to eat proper nutritious food and other health drinks. Due to this fact they became weak. It was also observed in the studied families that many of the working children were suffering from various diseases and ailments throughout the year viz. Anup Singha with serious respiratory problem, Sangita Barman with serious physical injuries and pain, Champalata Barman with skin disease, Tulsi Roy with dysentery and diarrhoea, Rakhi Barman with dysentery and so on. But owing to serious economic crisis none of them could see the doctor. Due to lack of proper treatment their diseases and ailments became chronic. In this regard a detail discussion has been done in Chapter-VIII. However, due to work with ill health they became weaker and often got injured and also felt acute physical pain owing to their daylong hard manual work. For the treatment they had to depend upon the untrained quacks and traditional medicine men. In fact they could not go to the private doctors as they were not in a position to avail the cost for that. Sagar Singha, aged 12 years; Sumitra Barman, aged 13 years; and Pradip Barman, aged 14 years, none of them could purchase all the doctors' prescribed medicines caused by poverty. As a result in many cases they had to stop treatment in the middle. Even, they

did not get adequate rest and proper nutritious food. For survival they had to do the work with ill health. According to Pradip Barman, Sumitra Barman and some other villagers the government doctor did not pay proper attention to the patients and usually neglected them. Even in most of the cases they could not enjoy the facility of getting necessary medicines with free of cost from nearest health centre and medical college. Ashalata Barman, Sagar Singha, Champalata Barman and many others were found to suffer from skin diseases, fever, cough and cold, nasal blockage, headache throughout the year due to work in touch of river water for prolong hours. They had to work throughout the year ignoring the fact of scorching heat of summer and biting cold of winter. They also felt serious physical pain in their whole body. Tulsi Roy, Dipankar Barman and many others were suffering from water borne diseases like dysentery due to drink polluted water both from uncovered well and from the river directly. Besides these, the psychological health of working children got disturbed very much from the very beginning. They had to do many things against their will because some pressures imposed upon them. In this regard, the working children like Prallad Barman, Sanjeeb Barman and others were the burning example because they were suffering from serious psychological complexity. In their family there was a frequent conflict between parents due to any small affairs. It was common to notice that the parents were aggressive in nature and the children were the worst sufferers due to aggressiveness characters of parents. As a consequence, the emotional as well as behavioural problems were developed among the children. They never got the love, care, affection, and guidance of their parents rather they were always provoked by their parents to do the work in the stone field. In fact various types of psychological problems were observed among them such as depression, thinking problems, attention problems, emotional disorder, aggressive behaviour and so on. In this regard, the working children like Babli Roy, Lalita Barman, Mithun Singha and Pinku Barman were suffering from serious psychological complexity caused by their poor socio-economic condition, family environment as well as neighbouring environment too. They could not meet all their necessary needs due to their poor family earnings. Even, sometimes they were found in crying their eyes out to get what they want like good food; well dress; school uniform; new shoes; sports materials viz. Cricket bat and ball, different playthings, foot ball, sport shoes etc.; educational requirements like sufficient books, note

books and private tuition etc., but their families could not afford to fulfill these requirements. As a result, too much anger on family was developed among them. Besides these, a regular conflict between their parents and often between families caused by any small affairs was observed during study and at the time of conflict parents used filthy words in presence of them. But it would be sounder when their fathers developed alcohol. As a result, they got these words by heart and it was found during study that Babli, Lalita, Mithun and Pinku also used those abusive words in course of conversation. However, this unpleasant home atmosphere had a negative impact upon them. The living environment was not simply in favour of them as it was very much unhygienic and polluted with waste disposal and human excreta. Most of them were found to live in the *kachha* and broken houses made by wattle walls with corrugated tin roofs and devoid of proper ventilation and composed of 1 to 2 little rooms with muddy floor. There were no drainage system in their houses and most of the families had no sanitation facility. All the families had to depend either on uncovered wells or on the river directly for the purpose of drinking and other necessary household works. Moreover, they did not use to take any precautionary measures like filtering, boiling etc. which might have caused the water-borne diseases that was common to notice among them.

The severe economic hardship was a major obstacle factor to meet the proper nutritious food. Mainly they took rice with pulses and little amount of vegetable curry in their daily diet and even they could hardly afford meal twice a day resulted in malnutrition as it was known from the local doctors that they were suffering from protein and vitamin deficiencies. But every child should be provided proper nutritious food for their physical as well as psychological development. Premature entry into such type hazardous work and malnutrition were supposed to be a great impediment to their normal growth. Besides these, most of the studied children could not maintain their personal hygiene mainly due to their heavy work load and also for the improper care of parents.

Absent of the health centre in the studied area deprived them from getting better medical facilities. Thus, finding no other alternatives they had to depend upon both the traditional medicine men and untrained quacks of local medicinal shops for the treatment of diseases and ailments. In case of serious condition, they were referred either to the Matigara

Primary Health Centre or North Bengal Medical College which were far away from the village. A major section of the parents of working children had a complaint against the government doctors that the doctors did not use to pay proper attention to the patients. Even they were dispossessed of getting required medicines with free of cost from the concerned health centre and hospitals and therefore, they had to purchase it from the market. However, due to lack of proper infrastructure and financial insecurity the working children and their families were deprived of getting better medical treatment. However, the health profile of the working children was very much poor in condition. It is said that child is a future wealth of a nation. So, it should not be forgotten that every child has the right to enjoy proper health care facilities and hazardous free life which are responsible for their overall development-as well as to grow up in a healthy way.

Child Rights in Family: According to Article 20 of convention on the right of the child by United Nations, “a child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interest cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the state” (Saksena, 1999: 285). It is said that today’s children are tomorrow’s citizen. The fate of nation to which they belong, is in their hand. The most crucial task developed upon each sensible and responsible parent, regarding his or her children, is to instil a strong sense of discipline, accountability, belongingness on self respect. For this the parents have to make themselves an ideal, embodying all these qualities (Bagulia, 2006: ix).

Family environment is an another important issue which may have a serious impact on child’s development including social, emotional or psychological part which is supposed to be a lifelong process as it may be carried on in adult life when they grow old. It is said that family is a primary institution in which a child learns his or her behaviour, attitudes, norms, customs, values and any other capabilities and habits related to their socio-cultural life. Family has a great contribution to the process of socialization of a child. Thus, it is a duty of every parent to protect their children against all forms of exploitation and nourish them through proper socialization process to create a healthy and peaceful society because our child is a vulnerable asset and future wealth of society. So, as a member of a society it is our duty to protect this wealth. But have we ever thought, whether we are

able to maintain it properly? Because there are so many children in our country are being exploited by their family members and in this context my studied families are a burning example.

Case Study 1: Sanjeeb Barman was a 13 years aged boy. He was involved in both stone crushing and stone collection activities. In his family he had father, mother and two younger sisters. Both of his parents were involved in stone based job as prime earning source. But their earnings could not meet to expense of necessary livelihood requirements. Sanjeeb was motivated by his parents to do this work. He had been doing this work for last five years. The concept of stone crushing job was gradually developed into his mind from the very beginning. He was first generation learner and due to this fact he could not hope to get the proper guidelines from his parents. His parents preferred more to send him to the stone field as their anger found expression in bitter scolding and sound beating either for absence in work or raising eyes from work. Indeed, the burden of economic responsibility of the family was imposed upon the Sanjeeb at the very beginning of life. However, to get rid of poverty his parents forced him to do the work. So, he had to go to the working field sacrificing all the recreations like participation in various sports and games, watching television, gossiping with peer group etc. As a consequence, the overall development of the children got affected badly and he was the worst sufferers from blossom into a healthy child. Moreover, their housing condition was not in favour of living. Their dwelling house was broken and *kachha* type of two littel rooms with muddy floor made of wattle walls, corrugated tin roofs and devoid of proper ventilation. In rainy season the insider atmosphere of the houses became dump and its floor became muddy and moisty. Thus, they had to face a lot of difficulties in living. Besides these, Sanjeeb failed to meet the basic necessities like food, dress, education etc. He could not eat to the fill and therefore, he had to do the work hungry in the stone field. Moreover, he had no well dress and warm clothes as well. As a result, during winter season he became weak by cold and found to work in the stone field while shivering. He had to suffer from lots of difficulties. Due to busy working schedule neither he could play games nor could manage adequate time for other recreations too. Even, he could not study at home due to lack of adequate time. He went off to school for maximum days in a week and often for the whole week too. The parents scolded him bitterly if he was absent

in work. Besides working involvement, Sanjeeb had to help his mother in necessary domestic chores. The family atmosphere was not in favour of living. His father became habituated with taking alcohol every day in the evening. There was a frequent conflict between his father and mother due to any small affairs in daily family life. The relationship between parents and other family members was based on economic performance. Indeed, the poor socio-cultural environment had a serious impact on his living. A regular quarrel, threatening, reproach, gambling etc all were happened in front of him every day and he was growing up under these circumstances.

Case Study 2: Kamala Roy was a 14 years old girl, belonged to Rajbanshi community. She was involved in stone based job. She did both stone collection and stone crushing activities in the stone field. Both of her parents were involved in stone based job. But their earnings could not provide them a minimum support to run their family. To meet the needs they provoked Kamala to do this work. Kamala had been working for last five years. She was busy with this work for the whole week. She was scolded bitterly and even beaten up by her parents if she was absent in the stone field which created a fear into her mind. She and her rest family members had to live in a broken and *kachha* house and it was composed of single little room. The room was damped and muddy because the outside rain water leaked into the room through roof and walls. But her parents could not bear the cost of repairing it. Owing to insufficient space in the room she could not sleep well at night as well as she could not maintain her privacy too. There was no electricity and sanitation facility in their house. Due to poor light at night she could not read and write well. Though, she could hardly eat rice meal twice a day but it was insufficient and poor nutritious. Even sometimes she had to starve and due to this fact she became sick. Her family could not afford to see the doctor with necessary diagnostic tests and also failed to meet the expense of purchasing all the doctors' prescribed medicines. Besides stone crushing job, she had to do necessary domestic chores which affected her study badly. The parents could not provide private tuition and other materials like sufficient books, note books, pen, pencil etc. to her and due to this fact she could not understand many parts of her studies especially english and mathematics. Owing to regular chaos and conflict in the family she could not pay attention to her studies. She had a fear of scolding by her class teachers because she could not solve all the home tasks. Even she had no

school dress too and she had a quarrel with parents over this matter. Due to busy working schedule Kamala became very irregular in school attendance. Under these circumstances, she lost interest in education and dropped out of school when she was in class- V. Moreover, she had no well and clean dress. Due to rough use of dress in the stone field it became dirty soon. She had to collect stone every day from the river resulted in her dress got drenched but could not change it. However, her family failed to ensure her proper shelter, food, dress, treatment and necessary educational requirements. Due to poverty her family could not celebrate many religious festivals and even there was not sufficient space at home for house deity and due to this fact she and her family were deprived of its enjoyment. Besides these, her parents were failed to sustain a good family environment because there was a frequent conflict between her parents in daily family life due to any affairs like poverty, alcoholism, treatment of children, food, education etc. In her family it was common to notice that the parents were aggressive in nature. She was rebuked if she did not do the work. Ultimately the rights of the child like Kamala in the family as well as in that society were being adversely affected and violated.

Case Study 3: Pradip Barman, a 14 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. He got involved in stone crushing and truck loading activities. Both of his parents were involved in stone based job. But their earnings was not enough for living. Pradip was motivated by his parents to do this work. He had been doing this work for last five years. From the very beginning his thinking pattern was around stone crushing work and gradually developed into his mind. He had the education up to class VI. Owing to busy working he could not manage adequate time for study at home. He was first generation learner and due to this fact he could not get the proper guidance and care from his parents. His parents could not provide private tuition, books, note books etc. to him. As a result, he faced problem in understanding several parts of his studies and particularly he had a big problem in english and mathematics. Due to daylong working involvement he could hardly attend the school. In fact, if he attended the school regularly then the earnings got reduced and if the earnings became reduced then he had to starve. Moreover, there was no proper and sufficient room as well as electricity in the house and this problem mainly faced by him because due to poor light and lack of space in the room he could not study well. Under these circumstances he had to drop out of school. He had a

fear of scolding and often beating too by his parents if he was absent in work. Besides these, they had no proper shelter to live. They had a broken house that had to be repaired immediately but due to utter economic constraint they could not repair it. In rainy season the insider atmosphere of the house became dump and its floor became muddy and moisty and as a result, he became weak by cold-cough and fever. They fetched water from neighbour's well for drinking, cooking, bathing and also for other domestic purposes, but it was always uncovered and as a result the water got polluted with tree leafs and various dust particles. They faced a lot of difficulties in living. They were deprived of enjoying various government facilities and opportunities like accessing food supplies at subsidiary rates, facilities of BPL (Below Poverty Level), educational facilities, getting citizenship, voter identity etc. due to absent of ration card, voter identity card as well as their birth certificate too. It created a tension in their family and they felt insecurity that could also be noticed among Pradip. Their family atmosphere as well as social environment was so problematic. His father was alcoholic and took alcohol every day in the evening and he became aggressive whenever he developed alcohol. His father used abusive words and broke all the household stuffs within the access and also beat his mother soundly. He used to create a chaos in the family and had a conflict with other family members. Often Pradip was threatened by his alcoholic father. His father never loved him; instead he had to be beaten up by his father. There was no love, affection and cooperation in the family. He earned money by doing stone based work; otherwise, he was not provided food, dress and other amenities. In his family the relationship was based on economic performance. Even, there was a regular clash between father and mother due to any small affairs in daily family life. Moreover, the inter-familial and intra-familial conflict was common to notice in their family. Ultimately their family life was being affected badly due to these reasons and his prime rights related to his progress, development, socialization, personality formation, food, shelter, dress, health, education, etc. were being violated continuously.

In the studied area a large number of families were found in poor fiscal state. The fulfillment of minimum daily necessary livelihood requirements seemed like a dream comes true. The children were not able to make themselves free from such type of social evil as they had to do this work for the whole day against their will to contribute to their

family earnings. The children had been doing this work from the very beginning of life. The concept of stone crushing job was gradually developed into their mind from the very beginning. In fact, they were provoked by their parents to do this work. Considering the fact, their hard physical labour could manage a fold of rice but not more than twice a day. Therefore, in the stone field the parents and their children were found to work altogether throughout the day.

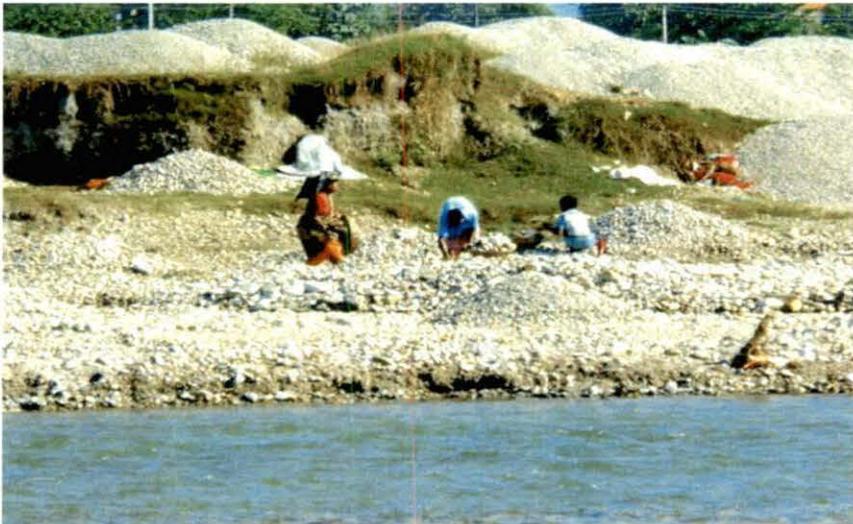


Figure 9.1: A little boy working with his parents in the stone field

The burden of economic responsibility of the family was imposed upon the children at the very beginning of life. Most of the children were first generation learner and due to this fact they were not guided properly for education by their parents. They were not provided private tuition which affected their studies badly. They had to be scolded if they were not present in work and even sometimes they had to take lunch meal to the stone field for their parents.



Figure 9.2: A little girl bringing the food, water and betel leaf for her parents, working in the stone field

They could not always meet the necessary educational requirements like sufficient books, note books, pen, pencil etc. They had to tolerate all these matters silently. However, many of them were physically weak. Though they could manage a fold of rice twice a day but it was insufficient and less nutritive. In fact, eating fish, meat, fruits, milk and other health drinks was a seldom happening factor. The parents could not give them a full feed. Even sometimes they had to starve and owing to this fact they became sick. Many of them were found to weep bitterly feeling extremely hungry. For the compulsion of hunger they had to go to the work. The hard physical labour with lack of sufficient and proper nutritious food made them weaker that was common to notice among them. They had no proper shelter to live. The dwelling houses were *kachha* type and many of them were broken too. Their houses were made of wattle walls with muddy floor and corrugated tin roofs. There were no sufficient space and no proper ventilation in their houses that made their rooms congested and suffocating. Due to lack of space in the room they could not live comfortably and could not sleep well at night and also could not maintain their privacy. In many cases all the members had to stay altogether in the little room with great difficulty resulted in they could not pay attention to their studies. But none of them had adequate money either to make it extend or to build another room in their houses.



Figure 9.3: House type

There was no electricity and sanitation facility in their houses. Due to poor light at night they faced serious problem during study. However, the condition of roofs of most of the houses was very bad in condition. The most obvious way that moisture entered their homes was through rain that was falling on their leaky roof. In rainy season the insider atmosphere of the houses became damp and its floor became muddy and moisty that resulted in serious ill health like a chronic cough and cold, frequent sneezing and headaches, breathing problem etc. They had an urgent need to repair their houses but they could not meet the expense of it. They had no well and clean dress. In fact, due to over working and rough use of dress it became dirty soon but the habit of washing and the frequency of changing clothes were hardly noticed among them. Many of them had to collect stone and sand every day from the river and due to this fact their dress got drenched but they could not changed it as they had no alternative. Even, they had no proper warm clothes too and due to this fact during winter season they became weak by cold and found to work in the stone crushing field while shivering. Many of them had no school dress as well and owing to this fact they had to be scolded by their teachers. However, the educational profile of working children was very much poor and unpleasant. Due to illiteracy and working engagement for all the day the parents failed to take proper care of education of their children and also could not understand the need of education in a child's life. Many children neither could maintain regular schooling nor

could study at home caused by their busy working schedule throughout the day. Apart from these, due to utter economic hardship their parents could not meet the expense of educational requirements. As a result, they had no adequate books, note books, school bag and dress, pen, pencil etc. and due to this fact they faced several problems in their studies. Besides these, their parents could not afford to provide private tuition facility to their children. Owing to absence of private tuition they could not finish all the home tasks given by their class teachers and due to this fact they had a fear of scolding and even a fear of beating too by their class teachers. Under these circumstances, they lost the interest of schooling. As a result, many of them dropped out of school. Even many children often went out from the classes to join with their parents in the stone crushing field. They were scolded and even beaten up by their parents if they were absent in the work. In fact, they were in a crying need to have a full meal. Many of them were found to cry for suffering from agony of hunger. Often, they could not pay attention to their studies due to feel extreme hunger. Even, their parents always made them busy at home in necessary domestic chores. They became very tired but could not take rest. Due to untiring hard labour they used to suffer from serious physical pain at everyday night and owing to this fact they lost their keenness on studies. Besides, the regular physical and emotional tortures of alcoholic fathers, regular conflict, scuffle, abuses etc. made them impatient and as a result they could not pay attention to their studies. As a whole, they lost all their interest, concentration and eagerness to their studies. However, their health condition was not at all good. They were weak by various physical ailments and diseases throughout the year. In fact, starvation, insufficient and less nutritive food, and hard physical labour for all the day made them weak very much. Their parents could not give them a full feed. Even, they had to starve many times and often feeling extremely hungry their. As a result, they became weaker. However, often they made themselves injured with stone chips and iron implements. But the injured place became swelled with burning sensation due to lack of proper treatment and improper care over it. Besides, they had to suffer from acute physical pain for all the year round caused by their extremely labourious job in the stone crushing field. However, their dwelling house was very much damp and moisture and it was true that sometimes they had to collect stones from the river for all the day resulted in chronic cold and cough, fever, frequent sneezing,

headache etc. which were noticed among them almost throughout the year. Even, also their continuous work in shivering cold of winter at Balasan River basin might be responsible for it. Further, many of them had a chronic headache, giddiness and along with other physical sickness for the reason that they worked unfed in burning heat of summer at Balasan River basin.



Figure 9.4: A child crushing stones

Apart from these, many of them were suffering from dysentery and other stomach problem caused by their polluted drinking water and unhygienic food habit. In the stone crushing field it was also observed during study that the dust emitted out from the broken up stones which was being inhaled through respiration while crushing stones and due to this fact some of them were suffering from breathing problem that might have a probability to turn into chronic asthma in near future. Even few of them had also an experience of snake bite during stone collection from the river. Besides, many of them had an uncomfortable feeling on their skin that made them want to scratch caused by their unhygienic and dusty working atmosphere, unclean bathing and also for their unhygienic living. Many of the children with sickness and malnutrition had to do the work hard in the stone field for all the year round. But for the treatment they went to untrained quacks and traditional medicine men. In fact, their parents could pay for proper treatment with necessary tests. Even none of them could purchase all the prescribed medicines too and

as a result, they had no other means but stop treatment in the middle. So, due to lack of proper treatment and improper care over it often their ailments and diseases had turned into complex and for this they had to suffer from serious difficulties. Even, during day time they did not use to get the opportunity of taking rest too because of their continuous untiring labour from the morning to evening and as a result they were deprived of all their amusements viz. playing games, gossiping with friends, watching television etc. Often, shrinking at work they went to play and for this reason they had to be rebuked badly and also beaten up by their parents. So, for the fear of punishment they could not go to play despite their willing. Ultimately, they had to endure silently their serious mental agony. However, they were being deprived of enjoying necessary governmental facilities caused by the absence of voter identity card and ration card. Even many children had no birth certificate because their name had not been registered in birth certificate. Due to lacking of these documents they had to face a problem of insecurity and its impact was upon the children too. Ultimately, their families were failed to ensure them proper shelter, food, dress and necessary educational requirements. They worked hungry in the stone field because they had to do the work until lunch break without having food. However, the conditions of their houses were not in favour of living. They had no proper shelter to live. There was no electricity and sanitation facility in their houses. Due to poor light they faced serious problems at night. Their dwelling house was mostly broken and *kachha* type and composed of one to two little rooms with muddy floor made of wattle walls, corrugated tin roofs and devoid of proper ventilation. In rainy season the insider atmosphere of the houses became dump and its floor became muddy and moisty. They faced a lot of difficulties in living. Apart from the working involvement, they had to help their mother in necessary domestic chores. In their family it was common to notice that the sign of love, sympathy, affection, humanity as well as kindness were absent as their relationship mostly based on economic performance. The children had a fear of scolding and often beating too by their parents if they were absent in work. Due to poverty as well as poor educational background the parents could not take proper care and guidance of their children. Besides these, the drinking habits of fathers as well as the inter-familial and intra-familial conflicts were also liable to make their families inhabitable that was a sign of bad family environment. There was a frequent conflict between husband and wife

due to any small affairs in daily family life. Many of them had no ration card and voter identity card and as a consequence they were deprived of various government facilities that used to create a tension in their families. In fact it increased insecurity and identity crisis among the children. In many cases the community festivals would not be celebrated due to poverty, migration and displacement too. As a result, their enjoyment and merriment got hampered. Even due to poverty and disturbance in family life they could not worship their household deities. Thus, their socio-religious life got affected seriously that had a negative impact on the development of children. Ultimately, their family environment was being affected badly and as a whole due to these reasons the children were deprived of food, shelter, dress, education, health, socialization, enculturation, mental development, personality formation and so on in the family.

Political Rights of the Working Children: According to Article 3 of International Covenant on Economic, Social and cultural Rights, the State Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all Civil and Political rights set forth in the present Covenant. Besides these, according to Article 25, “every citizen shall have the right to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors” (Saksena,1999: 258 & 267). But the violation of such type of right was so rampant in the studied area as major section of the families had not the ration card which was a great hurdle to enjoy necessary facilities such as to access food supplies at subsidiary rates provided by the government and besides this, it was one of the important document which supports them at the time of application for voter cards.

The data reveals that most of the studied families (61.20%) were completely deprived of enjoying all sorts of ration facilities as they had not ration card; and again 60.80 per cent of the studied families were dispossessed of their right to vote as they did not have the voter identity card. Even a large number of parents did not registrar the birth of their children for their lack of proper knowledge and awareness, low level of educational standard and also for their home-based deliveries and due to this fact they faced serious problems. For instance, many children faced a serious problem during school admission

due to absence of birth certificate. Even their name had not been registered in the ration card that may create another serious problem in near future when they cross the threshold of 18 years age. As pursuant to Indian Constitution, the voting power is provided to a person when he crosses the said age. Therefore, those children whose names were not registered in birth certificate may completely be debarred of their right to vote in near future in accordance with government's rules and regulations. The problem of nationality arose and created identity crisis. It is the key of all rights but without identity how they will claim; and how they will get required facilities of government. Without help of government facilities how the poverty will be eradicated. This crisis made depressed them about the nationality. Even many of the working children felt the identity crisis. They thought they had no value as they were treated as illegal migrant. To speak in a word, the violation of such right is bound to cause serious problems in future. As a whole, many of them were debarred from socio-political rights which made them psychologically depressed and ill and obviously it had a negative impact on their growing up as well as progress and development and in this regard we may not ignore the truth that identity crisis may lead the several unrests.

Violation of Child Rights and its Impact on their Psychological Development: Human rights are very much essential for the development of the human personality and for the promotion of establishment of human living condition. It is necessary for the human happiness, progress and development. Whereas psychology is the science of adaptation, its determinants, modalities and motivations and of the mental and emotional phenomena that accompany the vicissitudes of adaptation. Psychology attempts to describe the minutiae of adaptation and to explain sequences of varying orders which are not apparent to common sense. From the use of cultural pattern two systems were devised which provided a descriptive relationship between culture and personality. The first held that personality was a mirror image of culture. The second considered that there were certain inherent and persistent tendencies common to all mankind which were modified by culture (Kardiner, 1945: XV & 5). The socio-cultural factors play a very important role in moulding and shaping the personality of a person. Concerning mental health, Margaret Mead, a well known anthropologist has stressed more on the socialization and child-rearing practices. Culture becomes merely environment for the individual psyche and can

be made as much or as little of as this psyche pleases. As a child a person is drastically trained to observe his own acts and to judge them in the light of what people will say; his observer-self is vulnerable. To deliver himself up to the ecstasy of his soul, he eliminates this vulnerable self. He ceases to feel that 'he is doing it'. He then feels himself trained in his soul in the same way that the novice in fencing feels himself trained to stand without fear of falling on the four-foot pillar (Mead, 1901: 23&157). In all societies, the personality formation primarily depends on family situation. Family is a primary institution in which a child learns behaviour, attitudes, norms, values and customs which continues generation after generation. It is generally accepted that the first few years of the individual's life are crucial for the establishment of the highly generalized value-attitudes systems which form the deeper levels of personality content (Linton, 1947: 91).

Anthropological attention to children and childhoods has had a long but uneven history, both within the discipline and in inter disciplinary endeavours. For example, during some periods, such as the height of "Culture and Personality" studies in psychological anthropology, child socialization patterns were a core explanation for adult personality and cultural patterns. The emerging anthropology of children and childhood must be necessary take into account the rights of children as set forth in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, in UNICEF n.d.). A child below 15 years is not physically and emotionally matured and fit to enter the world of work. If the children in the 5-14 years age group are being forced to work rather than being sent to school on account of social, economic and cultural compulsions, such a process is bound to result in retardation and impoverishment for their evolution and growth, and this is to such a degree that when they cross the threshold of childhood they will be bereft of physical strength and energy to be productive and adult members of society (Bagulia, 2006: 64).

In the present study, it was observed that the way of living of the studied families was closely related to stone based economy as it was a prime source of earning for eking out a living. They spent their maximum time in a day in the working field and the surprising matter is that the children were not free from the involvement in said economic sector. They had to get involved in stone based work from the very beginning of life that might have an adverse impact on their emotional as well as psychological health. Their early

onset of work was mainly on account of their utter economic hardship. They had to do hard physical work throughout the day but they were paid very little remuneration as compare to work amount. In economic field the struggle and competition were found to be increased. The ultimate result was the inability of parents to look after the family on their own earnings. Therefore, most of the children had to provide a financial aid to their parents by doing work for all the day in the stone field which kept them separate from schooling as they could not manage adequate time to go to school or study at home though they had a keen interest in continuing education. Besides these, the other barrier of achievement of the same was their involvement in domestic chores.

Table 9.1: Distribution of Child Workers on the basis of Participation in Recreation

Participation In recreation								
Male			Female			Male + Female		
Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
21	165	186	17	174	191	38	339	377
11.19	88.71	100.00	8.90	91.10	100.00	10.88	89.12	100.00

The data reveals that most of the (89.12%) working children could not participate in recreation (Table 9.1). They were dispossessed of enjoying free life, leisure and recreation for the said reasons. Most of the parents were aggressive in nature. Sending children to school was simply against their will rather they preferred to send them to the stone field. They were always in thought that how they can earn adequate money for living. Even most of the working children were rebuked by their parents for their absent in work. They had to do this work against their will that might have an immense influence on their mental as well as physical health. Some of the working children opined that “what god will is for good, it is our fate, who will undo what is ordained by fate?”. But upon God, they are innocent.

Many of them were suffering from malnutrition. They could only manage a fold of rice but not more than twice a day. The hard physical labour with insufficient and less nutritive food might have resulted in malnutrition. The hard manual work with hazardous

working condition might have caused numerous ill-healths and also lead high risk of physical injuries that might have a negative impact on their mental health too. Moreover, the alcoholism of fathers was liable to spend some money daily from their little earnings. Often mothers were beaten up by their husbands while reacted against it, because they got aggressive when they were drunk and due to this fact their family peace got affected badly. A child may loss his/her childhood when he/she lives with an alcoholic father. Apart from these, the gambling, lottery, inter-familial and intra-familial conflicts seriously told upon their socialization and emotional health of the children.



Figure 9.5: A little child observing the gambling practices of adults



Figure 9.6: Adults trying their luck through lottery and a little boy observing it

However, the children were the worst sufferers due to the aggressiveness characters of their fathers and also for their poor family environment. As a consequence, the emotional as well as behavioural development of the children got affected badly. From early childhood their psychological feelings became very complex. They were on the way to loss their traditional value system mainly caused by their incessant hard struggle against poverty. The jealousy, inhumanity, unkindness, conflict and competition were noticed in their daily life. Even many children did not get the feelings of love, care, affection, kindness as well as guidance of their parents, rather they were always provoked by their parents to do the work. Due to illiteracy the parents could not feel the necessity of education in a child's life. Most of the parents thought that more children means more earnings and that's why they were longing to give birth more children. A major section of working children was suffering from frustration which was found to be more frequent perhaps due to lack of integration between work and school.

Ultimately, the studied children were completely deprived of their childhood enjoyment. They were emotionally and situationally helpless and powerless as they had no capacity to protest against such type of exploitation. Hence, they were growing up without learning of proper value systems of life as well as of the society too. The socialization as well as enculturation process with a great impact of socio-economic hardship and cultural factors such as conflict, abusive behaviour, ignorance etc. and child rearing practices might have a negative impact on their psychological development. So, the violation of child rights is a misuse of power by adults over children which impairs a child psychological, physical and emotional health development.

The impairment of socio-emotional climate of the home was primarily due to the poverty which affected the children's psychological well being atrociously. As a result, various types of psychological problems were likely to be observed among the studied children such as depression, thinking problem, attention problem, emotional disorder and aggressive behaviour. Every child needs love, care and affection which can only be given by their parents. It is in the hand of parents to make a happy and stable family life. The mental as well as emotional problem of the studied children was blamed on parents whose practices were failed to provide an emotional security to their children. The

continuous depression of parents might have resulted in a psychological problem among the studied children. The utter economic hardship had adversely told upon the children mediated by psychological distress of parents which was continuing day by day, and as a result of which, in future we may expect same behaviour and attitudes from these children that can be seen from generation after generation through enculturation process.

“Peace can only last where human rights are respected”

– (Dalai Lama, cited in Kaarthikeyan, 2005: 101)

Human right is an important issue in perspective of present day human civilization. Right and peace seemed like a twin concept interrelated to one another. Indeed, a society will become peaceful only when the rights are maintained properly by its members. But unfortunately an abnormal situation was likely to be noticed in the studied area and in this respect only their utter financial constraint can be blamed as prime responsible factor. In the aforesaid discussion an attempt has been made to focus especially on the violation of child rights from various angles which were widely rampant in the studied area mainly owing to their poverty and day long working involvement as well.

In the present study, it was observed that the life of the people was immensely connected with stone based work. They spent their maximum time of the day in the stone field. In this regard the little children were also found to be involved in this work from the very beginning. The children had to do the hard work in inhuman working condition because the remuneration paid to them was based on amounts of work. In the economic field the struggle and competition was common to observe among them. The ultimate result was the inability of parents to run the family with their own earnings. Therefore, the children had to contribute to their family income. In most of the cases in spite of willing they could not eat meal more than twice a day. Even, their families failed to give them a full feed too. In many cases they had to do the work in hungry. Due to daylong working involvement the children could not manage adequate time to go to school or study at home though they had a keen interest of continuing education. Besides this, due to poverty the parents could not meet the expense of educational materials such as books, note books, private tuition, school uniform and so on. Taking day off of the class they

had to do the work for survival. In many cases they could continue their study no more after primary level. The minimum overall educational requirements like books, note books, tuition, food, reading room, peaceful environment, parental care etc. were almost absent. Their educational requirements were almost lacking and insecure also. Due to this fact children had to face lot of problems in their studies. The parents were unable to think about the future of their children rather they always thought how to survive? The children had to do the work against their will because they had a fear of scolding and often beating soundly by their parents that might have an immense impact on their mental as well as physical health. The hazardous hard manual work in unhygienic working environment might have resulted in numerous ill-health and also lead high risk of physical injuries that created a fear into their mind which might have affected their emotional as well as psychological health badly. Many of them became ill but nonetheless they had to go to the working field. They failed to get a minimum food like fish, meat, egg, fruits, milk etc. from their families that could have made them healthy and strong and it may be said that food security was lacking. They had not the financial capacity for better treatment and even it was almost impossible for their parents to continue treatment with necessary tests. Their parents failed to provide health facilities to them. Many families were not able to live in a proper house. Due to poverty they could not make a proper house of two to three rooms or more than that. Even, they could not afford to repair their houses or make another room. In fact, they could not provide a proper shelter to their children. Ultimately, their families were failed to ensure them proper shelter, food, dress, health facilities and necessary educational requirements. It is the fact that the securities of food, shelter, dress, education, health etc. were extremely lacking and insecure among the studied families of Purba Rangia and the studied children were the prime victims of it. In their family it was common to notice that the love, sympathy, affection, humanity as well as kindness were absent in their families as their relationship mostly based on economic performance. In every family it was common to notice that there was a frequent conflict between husband and wife due to any small affairs in daily family life. Besides these, the drinking habits of fathers as well as the inter-familial and intra-familial conflict were also liable to make their families inhabitable that was a sign of bad family environment which affected the little children very much. Ultimately, their family environment was being

affected badly due to these reasons. In most of the families it was common to notice that the parents were aggressive in nature and the children were the worst sufferers due to their aggressive characters. As a consequence, the psychological development of the children got affected very much. The feelings of love, affection, kindness, care etc. were almost absent among the parents rather they were always provoked by their parents to do the work in the stone field. In fact various types of psychological problems could be observed among the working children such as depression, problem of thinking and attention, emotional disorder and aggressive behaviour and so on. The social security of the studied children as well as the people was hampered continuously and even in many cases it was lacking also. They failed to claim as a citizen of India as most of them had no citizenship card. In fact they had not any such document like voter card, ration card to make prove their citizenship and they were treated as illegal migrants. They had to face a serious problem of identity crisis which was a great hindrance in the development of socio-cultural life of the studied families and their children. Due to displacement and migration they became poorer from poor. Their life became uncertain and also their solidarity and unity became lost, as a result, they became helpless. The whole system threatened their socio-political security. Due to migration and poverty they could not celebrate all their community festivals. Even many of them became very much irregular to worship their household deity mainly due to their poverty and hard struggle from morning to evening. Many of them had particular religious place and even a common ground for festival within their earlier village territory but these facilities were not available in the studied village. As a consequence, their religious life got affected badly and many of their festivals became stopped. They lost all their enjoyment and merriment and also the normal enjoyment of children got affected badly. Due to poverty and crisis in every aspect of their life the children could not participate in sports and games because they had to busy with stone based work during day time. In this way the working children were deprived of participation in sports, games etc. and ultimately the importance of it was reducing among them. The studied families were compelled to obstruct the enjoyment of children and also prevented their children in making this progress.

They were debarred from all the basic needs and others too for various reasons. For survival the studied children got obstructed in their all necessary requirements. In many

cases they became sick while working in the stone crushing field which was caused by their hard labour in extremely hungry. They had a burning sensation in the stomach due to hunger. Their families could give them meal twice in a day with great difficulty but not full fed and it was also less nutritious. They had a strong desire of eating meat, fish, milk and fruits etc. but could not meet to their desire. Their eyes had a wild hungry look in them. They went to work for compulsion of hunger. Their families could not provide the security of food to them. They had a serious problem of shelter. Their dwelling houses were *kachha* and unhygienic. Many of their houses were broken but failed to repair it. Leaky roof and cracked wall that made their houses damp and in many cases it also damaged their beddings, cloths, books, note books, documents etc. Thus, the security of shelter of the studied families was very much uncertain and problematic. However, the studied children had no sufficient and proper dress. All the dresses became dirty and tattered due to rough use of it in the stone crushing field. They had no proper warm clothes and due to this fact during winter they had to work in the stone field while shivering with cold. Besides these, they did not get any assurance for continuing education from their parents rather got scolding and sound beating. They were growing up through a negligence, non cooperation, and improper guidance. Due to heavy workload many of them had to drop out of school and rest of them became very irregular in school attendance. Even, they did not get any support and inspiration from other family members and neighbours. Besides, they had to give more concentration on how to eat full fed as they used to feel uneasiness in the stomach due to hunger. Thus, for the compulsion they went to work. The condition of their health was very poor. They were weak by various diseases and ailments for all the year round. But their families could not afford to expense of proper treatment with necessary diagnostic tests and prescribed medicines. Due to lack of proper care and treatment sometimes their diseases and ailments became more critical. Besides, the studied families were facing several problems in many cases. Basically most of them were illegal migrants as they had no ration card, voter identity and also the birth certificate of children. As a result of lacking of these documents they could not enjoy various opportunities and facilities from the government. It increased a tension among the studied families and their children. However, due to get hampered of religious life the opportunity of enjoyment and merriment became decreased

in many cases. The children could get pleasure from sports and games but due to busy working schedule they could not do the same and failed to enjoy from it. The children could not share their interests and enjoyments with their parents, which affected their psychological development as well as grown up. Thus, the studied children were deprived of all the rights to be grown up of a child which have been written as fundamental right in Indian constitution. Thus, it can be said that their families as well as their society could not provide primary security of living well and healthy to them and as a result, their development and progress got obstructed badly. However, it was the fact that most of the securities i.e. social security, economic security, political security, health security, food security, educational security, shelter security, citizenship/identity security etc. were very much lacking and were adversely affected and even in some cases it was fully absent. Thus the basic human securities were in the crisis. In this regard, the working children were suffering very much in all respects as their basic human securities like food, dress, shelter, education, health, psychological development etc. were suffering a lot.

It is postulated that every parents loves their children by heart. But it is a pity that a large number of parents in the studied families failed to cater for minimum basic livelihood requirements to their children. Due to poverty they had to involve their children in work to augment their earnings. They had to fight incessantly against poverty to accumulate a fold of rice. Ultimately, they were going through a tough condition which was just like after meat comes mustard. Who will understand such horrible situation. Who will go forward to take share their burden of agony. Nobody will do it because our present society is too much self centric. We observe only their external situation. Have we ever thought why the parents did not well behave to their children. Who is responsible for such plight state. Our present social systems as well as unequal distribution of nation are responsible for it. It would be possible to make a healthy society only when the equality of this distribution would be possible to maintain at minimum level.

References

- Ahuja, R. (1992), *Social Problems in India*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- Lyness, D., Abuse, Date reviewed: September 2013; http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/families/family_abuse.html, retrieved 24.02.2011, at 6.15 p.m.
- Bagulia, A. M. (2006), *Child and Crime*, New Delhi: SBS Publishers & Distributors Pvt. Ltd.
- Casa Alianza, (2001), Report on trafficking of children in Central America and Mexico; <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/child-abuse-statistics.html>, retrieved 24.02.2011, at 7.15 p.m.
- Crime in India 2012 Statistics, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India; <http://ncrb.gov.in/CD-CII2012/Statistics2012.pdf>, retrieved 28.01.2012, at 11.30 a.m.
- Declaration of the Rights of the Child: Adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 1386 (XIV) of 10 December 1959; <https://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/child.asp>, retrieved 27.01.2014, at 11.20 p.m.
- Effective Abolition of Child Labour: ILO Conventions; http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138, retrieved 27.01. 2014, at 10.45 p.m.
- Estes, R.J. and N.A. Weiner (2001), *The commercial sexual exploitation of children in the US, Canada and Mexico*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania.
- Human Rights Watch, 2001; <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/child-abuse-statistics.html>, retrieved 24.02.2011, at 8.30 p.m.
- Karthikeyan, D. R. (2005), *Human Rights: Problems and Solutions*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

- Kardiner, A. (1945), *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Linton, R. (1947), *The Cultural Background of Personality*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Mead, M. (1901), Ruth Benedict, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Panigrahi, M. (2003), Plight of child labour, *Indian Anthropologists*, 33 (2): 39.
- Ray, A. (Oct. 26, 2010), More than 50% Indian Kids Face Sex Abuse, *Times of India*; <https://suite.io/karen-stephenson/4dwm2ff>, retrieved 25.02.20, at 6.30 p.m.
- Saksena, K.P. (1999), *Human Rights: Fifty Years of India's Independence*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- The 57th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/child-abuse-statistics.html>, retrieved 24.02.2011, at 7.30 p.m.
- Tiwari, J. (2004), *Child Abuse and Human Rights*, Vol. 1 & 2, Delhi: Chawla Offset Press.
- UNICEF: Convention on the Rights of the Child; http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_understanding.html, retrieved 27.01.2014, at 10.30 p.m.

CHAPTER X: CHILD WORKERS AND THEIR PROBLEMS

Sending children to work may seem a rational approach to poverty but employment of children has profound repercussions. ILO research shows that child labour is almost universally recognised as being undesirable, harmful for the children themselves and harmful for the future of their nation. When a child joins the work force at a young age, he is deprived of the opportunity to educate himself and acquiring qualifications which help him in getting a better job in future. It is, therefore, very likely that a child who has been at work from an early age will spend his whole life at the bottom of the social ladder. Thus, child labour has become a mode of perpetuating an unjust social system and of ensuring the continued availability of subservient, unskilled, illiterate labourers who do not have the bargaining power to question the system that marginalises them and deprives them of their right to lead a decent life. Many of the jobs that children do are harmful for their physical development. The child labour increases adult unemployment and reduces their income and thus, forces adults to send their children to work to supplement the family income (Gomango, 2001: 139 and 146). Child labour problem is not the minor problem in Siliguri town of Darjeeling district of West Bengal. A large number of children 5-14 age group are engaged in different types of works. Most of them are rag pickers and remaining children are engaged in hotels, restaurants, garages, small manufacturing companies etc. These children are migrants belonging to various communities and linguistic groups. They live in different slums in Siliguri town. Their socio-economic and living condition is very precarious. They always suffer from malnutrition, anaemia and many other diseases. They are fully ignorant about community health. Alcoholism is the main problem among the slum dwellers. According to 1981 census, 11.03 per thousand persons were child labours in Darjeeling district. Out of 5 lacks people of Siliguri town, 1, 60,192 lived below poverty line. Child labourers mainly came from these families who were engaged in different hazardous works for livelihood (Mukherjee, 2003).

There are so many working children in various hazardous economic sectors in our country, those had to enter the work from the very beginning. They are always devoted to work sacrificing all the enjoyment of life. They never got the light of education in life but scolding and neglect. Moreover, they are completely deprived of love, affection and sympathy of the parents. They spend their life like a helpless child. But what is their sin for which they have to face these problems? In fact, their great sin is to be born in extreme poverty. In this context, the present chapter mainly highlights the various problematic issues of working children in the studied area to feel their plight states better. These are –

Food and Drinking Water

Food and water are necessary for life. The term food indicates not only solid food but the nutritional aspects of drinking water as well. Food and water are essential elements that all human beings must have access to in order to live. Access to "the minimum essential food which is sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe" as well as "sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water" are considered human rights. Children have the right to nutritious food and clean drinking water, as well as to be free of suffering from disease and malnutrition caused by inaccessibility of the above (Food & Water; http://www.hrea.org/index.php?doc_id=404). In this concern, the above situation of the studied children are stated below –

Case Study 1: Amit Singha a 12 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. In his family he had his grandmother, parents and one younger sister. All the family members worked together in the stone field and earned not more than Rs. 1800/- per month. He worked in hungry because after having little breakfast with tea and pup rice he went to the stone field and had to do a continuous hard work until lunch break. He had his lunch with rice, pulses and little amount of vegetables. Due to busy working schedule he became very irregular in taking lunch. Often he had the lunch meal directly in the open river bed and sometimes he took the meal without washing his hand. He usually returned home in the evening when the work was over for the day. He took the dinner very soon after returning home but mostly the same menu was on the dinner. Their earnings was not enough to accumulate proper nutritious food and even they could not eat rice more than

twice a day. The remuneration paid to them was too little that they failed to purchase or hardly managed meat, fish, egg, fruit, milk and other health drinks. Amit and his rest family members could not meet this essential need. He could not purchase what he wants. But how could he purchase? His parents had not enough money to run their family and as a result, Amit had to contribute his total earnings to his family. His eyes filled with tears when he was telling this fact. In the context of sources of water, they had to depend upon the uncovered well which was setup by the government and also used the river water for drinking and other domestic purposes while in the stone field. But they did not take any precautionary measures like boiling or filtering. It might have resulted in water borne diseases that was noticed in him.

Case Study 2: Purnima Barman, 12 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had her father, mother and two brothers. They got involved in stone based job for living. But the remuneration paid to them was not enough for maintaining livelihood as their three members' monthly income was Rs. 1700/- only which was very difficult to run their family. Purnima spent maximum time of the day in the working field. She was the early riser. After morning fresh and having little breakfast with tea and biscuits or pup rice she went to the stone field. Then, she had to continue this work until lunch break. She took lunch directly in the stone field. In her lunch she took rice, pulses and vegetable curry and mostly the same menu was on the dinner. Even they could not manage rice meal more than twice a day. To accumulate proper nutritious food like animal protein and necessary health drinks i.e. fruit, milk etc. was simply out of their capacity. Sometimes she had a desire to eat different foods but she could not eat because parents took her total earnings and even her family had not the capacity to purchase what she had longing to eat. However, in case of drinking water, Purnima and her family used both uncovered well and the river water and these were also used for bathing, cooking and other domestic purposes. But due to lack of health consciousness and awareness and also for busy working schedule they could not take any precautionary measures like filtering or boiling before using this water. This malpractice might have resulted in water borne disease as she was suffering from dysentery and stomach problem.

In the studied families it was observed that in their daily diet they took rice, pulses and little amount of vegetable curry but not more than twice a day. Owing to utter financial constraint, taking nutritious foods like fish, meat, egg, milk, fruits and other health drinks was a seldom happening factor. Even it was almost unaffordable to most of the families to manage their rice meal thrice a day and in this respect, the data reveals that around 61 per cent of total working children could afford eat rice not more than twice a day (Table 8.13). The hard manual work with less nutritious food might have caused a high prevalence of malnutrition among the working children which was a great hindrance to their normal growth. The another mentionable matter which was common to observe in the studied area, that a major section of people used the polluted river water for drinking, bathing, and even for other domestic purposes too especially during working hours that might have resulted in their numerous ill-health. The data reveals that around 82 per cent, 79 per cent, 64 per cent and 57 per cent of the total studied families used water both from uncovered well and river for their bathing, drinking, domestication and other purposes respectively (Table 8.10). Due to lack of proper health consciousness and awareness, they did not take any precautionary measures like boiling or filtering of water etc. that caused various types of water-borne diseases which were found among them. In this regard, the data reveals that around 28 per cent of total working children were suffering from dysentery and few of them were suffering from diarrhoea too.

Shelter

‘We do not need mass housing but housing for masses’ - Mahatma Gandhi

The human right to adequate housing is the right of every woman, man, youth and child to acquire and sustain a secure home and community in which to live in peace and dignity. Right to shelter is certainly an essential right for every child (Right to Shelter, Friday, 24 February 2012). In this context, the situation of the shelter of studied families is discussed below –

Case Study 1: Maloti Barman, was 13 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had her father, mother, grandmother and a younger sister. All the family members got involved in stone based work and altogether they could earn Rs.

1700/- per month. Their living condition was very much poor and unhygienic. They had not own homestead land. They made their house on vested land as they had not any capacity to purchase a plot of homestead land. They lived in the *kachha* house of one little room with *kachha* floor and it was made of wattle walls and corrugated tin roof. There was not any separate kitchen or store room in their house. Even with this poor income they could not make any new veranda or extension for cooking. As a result the five members of the family had to share a single small room house for all purposes, i.e. cooking, sleeping, rest etc. Due to this fact they had to face problem to maintain privacy. She and her sister read in class VII and class IV respectively but due to lack of insufficient space in the room their education was hampered. There was no electricity and sanitation facility in their house and as a result due to lack of electricity their education was also hampered. The insider atmosphere of the house was damp and its floor became muddy and moisty especially during rainy season. As a result, they had to suffer from cough and cold, sneezing, nasal blockage, headache etc. throughout the year. Due to the absence of latrine facility in the house Maloti and her rest family members used to sit in the backside of the house and during working hours they used the open river bed for defecation. However, they had to suffer from various diseases and ailments due to poor and unhygienic living.

Case Study 2: Kanai Barman, was a 14 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. In his family he had his father, mother, and two younger sisters. They worked in the stone field altogether and could earn Rs. 1900/- per month. They had no proper shelter. Due to financial problem they could not purchase homestead land. So they had no other option but making house on the river bed. Their dwelling house was broken and *kachha* type which was composed of the single little room with *kachha* floor. The house was made of wattle walls and corrugated tin roofs and devoid of proper ventilation. There was no separate kitchen in the house and they were found to cook inside the room. Even, there was no electricity, drainage system and sanitation facility in their house. They faced serious problems due to poor light at night. Owing to lack of room they could not maintain their privacy and due to same reason their education was also hampered. Particularly his two sisters were the students of class V and VI respectively. They faced a lot of problems to finish their homework. Due to poor light they could not read and write

well at night. Owing to absence of latrine they had to use either the backside of the house or the open river bed for nature's call. Apart from this, in rainy season the rain was falling on leaky roof and due to this fact the insider atmosphere of the house became damp and its floor became muddy and moisty. Due to this unhygienic living they were suffering from various ill healths like cough and cold, sneezing, headache etc. The condition of their house was not in favour of living. Due to poor housing Kanai and his family had to face a lot of difficulties in living.

In the studied families the quality of housing revealed an unpleasant condition. Due to poor and unhygienic living condition the working children and their families faced serious problems. They had not own homestead land and with this poor income they were unable to purchase a plot of land for making house and in fact it was simply out of their capacity. Therefore, finding no other means they made their houses on the river bed that was the vested land.

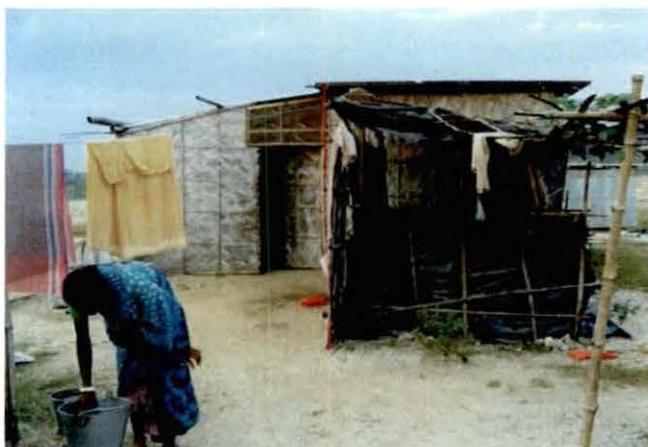


Figure 10.1: Dwelling house

Their dwelling houses were mostly *kachha* type made of wattle walls, corrugated tin roof, *kachha* floor and devoid of proper ventilation. In this connection the data reveals that around 84 per cent of the total houses were *kachha* type (Table 8.6). It was common to observe that during summer season the insider atmosphere of the house was very much suffocating, and during rainy season the floor became muddy and moisty. As a result, they had to suffer from fever, cough and cold, nasal blockage, sneezing, headache etc. for

the whole year. Besides these, another highlighting issue was their number of room that was very less in number with small size. The data reveals that around 91 per cent of the houses were composed of 1-2 small rooms (Table 8.8). Under these circumstances, all members of the family had to share a single little room. Owing to this fact they failed to maintain their privacy. Apart from this, due to lack of insufficient space in the room their education was hampered. There was no separate kitchen in most of the houses and therefore, they had to cook inside the room. Due to utter financial constraint they could not make any new veranda or extension for cooking and failed to thatch the roof properly. Further, due to same many of them had to live in the broken house and could not repair at proper time. As a result, during rainy season rain came into their houses which might have caused of several ailments and diseases. Even, there was no electricity, drainage system and sanitation facility in their houses. They faced serious problems due to poor light at night and particularly it affected the students very much as they failed to continue their home works at night because they could not read and write well in poor light. Due to the absence of latrine they used the backside of the house or the open river bed for defecation. They had to face a lot of difficulties in living. Due to this unhygienic living they had to suffer from various ill healths like fever, cough and cold, sneezing, nasal blockage, headache etc. Indeed, the unhygienic living conditions might have told upon their social, physical and mental health as well.

Health Situation

According to World Health Organization (WHO), “health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being and ability to function and not merely the absence of illness or infirmity”(Terris, 1975: 161). Health is wealth so runs the proverb. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being (World Health organization, August 2007). Children have the right to health care, clean and safe environment so they can be as healthy as possible. In this regard the health situation of the studied children are stated below –

Case Study 1: Radhika Barman, aged 13 years, Hindu girl, belonged to Rajbanshi community. In her family she had her father, mother and a younger sister. She got

involved in stone based work and altogether they could earn not more than Rs. 1600/- per month. She did both stone collection and crushing activities throughout the day in the stone field. She often felt severe physical pain in her whole body due to hard labourious job throughout the year paying no attention to scorching heat of summer and biting cold of winter. Even she could not sleep well at night due to serious physical pain. Moreover, often she made herself injured either with stone chips or iron implements while working in the stone field. She was found crying her eyes out while showing her injurious eyes that became swelled with burning sensation due to improper care over it. Besides these, she had to suffer from fever, cold and cough almost throughout the year because she had to work for long in touch of river water while collecting stones from the river. Radhika and her family had to depend upon both the quack of local medicinal shop and traditional medicine man because there was no health centre in their village. They used to go either to the Matigara Primary Health Centre or North Bengal Medical College only when the condition had turned into the critical stage. But the proper medical check up for long time was hardly possible to them because due to utter financial constraint they could not pay for it. She told that due to financial constraint her treatment could not be continued and the course of prescribed medicines had to be stopped in the middle. Her eyes filled with tears while describing the fact. Her parents could not give her a full feed and also could not feed her proper nutritious food like meat, egg, fish, milk, fruit etc. As a result, she used to feel uneasiness in the stomach due to hunger. In daily diet she could eat rice meal with pulses and little amount of vegetables but it was not more than twice a day. She woke up very early in the morning with the ray of sun up and went to the stone field after having little breakfast with tea and pup rice and took lunch directly in the stone field. She worked in hungry because she had to do a continuous work until lunch break without having food. She was suffering from dysentery due to drink polluted water without filtering. She returned home in the evening when the work was over for the day. Very soon after returning home they made brisk preparations for dinner. Due to busy working schedule Radhika could not maintain a good standard of personal hygiene. Due to day long working involvement and rough use of dress, her clean dress became dirty very soon but she could not manage time for washing it. She could not maintain her regular bathing. The use of shampoo and soap could rarely be seen while bathing and even sometimes she

used to take bath in the polluted river. As a result, she was suffering from skin disease throughout the year as she had an uncomfortable feeling on her skin that made her want to scratch. Often she forgot to brush her teeth and due to this fact she had a serious teeth ache. Usually, she took food without washing her hand and even, she had to eat stale food too and as a result often she was attacked with loose motion and other stomach troubles. She was mostly found to work in wet cloth because she had to collect stone from the river and owing to this fact her dress got drenched resulted in she was weak by cough-cold throughout the year. However, she was suffering from malnutrition due to lack of sufficient nutritious food like animal protein, milk, fruits and other health drinks. She was very sick and weak.

Case Study 2: Prallad Barman, 14 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. In his family he had his father, mother and an elder brother. All the four family members were involved in stone based work and earned Rs. 2500/- per month with great difficulty. He did both stone collection and stone crushing activities. He worked for the whole day in polluted and unhygienic stone field paying no attention to burning heat of summer and freezing cold of winter. He had to suffer from fever, cold and cough almost throughout the year because he worked for long in touch of river water as he had to collect stones from the river. Due to daylong hard manual labour he often felt severe physical pain in his whole body. Often he made himself injured with stone chips and iron implements. He was very much attacked by running nose, sneezing, headache, cough-cold, and fever during rainy season; during winter he got weaker by acute physical pain; and the burning heat of summer along with extreme hunger made him weak very much. For the treatment of diseases and ailments they had to depend upon the untrained quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional medicine men as there was no health centre in their village. But due to poor income the proper medical check up for long-time was not possible and even they could not purchase all the prescribed medicines too. Often the treatment had to be stopped in the middle because of their incapability to bear the expense of it. He had to wake up very early in the morning with the ray of first light. He went to the stone field after morning fresh and having little breakfast with tea and pup rice and then he had to do the work continuously the work until lunch break but feed to the fill was a seldom happening factor. In their daily diet they took rice, pulses and little amount of vegetable

curry. Though his parents could feed him nutritious food like meat, egg, fish, fruit etc. but it was seldom possible. Due to hard manual work and lack of proper nutritious food like animal protein and other health drinks he was suffering from malnutrition. Apart from these, he could not maintain regular bathing and hardly used shampoo or any other cleaning agents while bathing. In fact, he became habituated with taking bath in polluted river and often in well. His unclean bathing might have caused skin problem as he had an uncomfortable feeling on his skin that made him want to scratch. He could not take care of his teeth properly because often he forgot to brush his teeth. Lack of sanitation, lack of proper care, inattention of parents, and due to day long hard manual work it was really impossible for him to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene. His poor socio-cultural habits like eating food without washing hand, to drink river water, going to river for nature's call, eating meal in dusty stone field etc. also made him sick. Apart from these, he was suffering from breathing problem because in the stone field the dust emitted out from the broken up stones which was being inhaled through respiration while crushing stones. The working involvement might have a great impact on his health.

However, it was the fact that the studied people and particularly the working children had to face a lot of problems in respect to health and treatment. In this regard, it may be summarised that due to utter financial constraint, it was simply out of their capacity to accumulate nutritious foods like meat, fish, egg, milk, fruits and other health drinks. They could afford rice meal twice a day with pulses and a vegetable curry whereas egg or fish curry or meat rarely to be cooked and taking other nutritious foods like fruits, milk or other nutritious foods were mere dream to them. Due to hard manual with less nutritious food might have resulted in high prevalence of malnutrition among the working children. Besides these, they used polluted river water for their bathing, washing cloths and even for drinking as well especially during working hours that might have resulted in their numerous ill-health. They did not take any precautionary measures like boiling or filtering that might have resulted in water-borne diseases found among them. In this context it was found that a number of working children were suffering from dysentery and few of them were suffering from Diarrhoea too. The working atmosphere in Balasan river basin was very much unhygienic, dusty and polluted in terms of dirty or harmful substances to land, air, water etc. Not only that, even they had to work hard throughout

the year ignoring the fact of scorching burn light of summer and shivering cold of winter. Obviously it was a great problem to them but nevertheless they had to continue it as in fact their hard manual labour for the whole day was the only means that could ensure them a fold of rice twice in a day. Such type of working environment might have caused various health hazards found among them throughout the year. Moreover, they had to face another serious problem in terms of their poor living environment. The lack of drainage system and poor sanitation made their environment unhygienic and polluted. Most of the families could not afford to enjoy the sanitation facility and due to this fact, finding no other alternatives they had to use the open field for nature's call and the children often around their houses that was either in the village lanes or at the back of the houses. The surrounding environment of the houses was very much polluted with waste disposal and human excreta which might have told upon their health seriously. The data manifests that around three-fourth of the studied families were deprived of enjoying sanitation facility (Table 8.5). As a consequence, the water-borne diseases and other infectious were common in the studied area. The personal hygiene of working children revealed an unpleasant condition. In this regard, their busy working schedule was a great hindrance to proper maintenance of personal hygiene. Due to working involvement for the whole day, they could not take bath regularly and using soap and shampoo or other clinical agents could rarely be seen while bathing. Even they were very much irregular in brushing up teeth and washing cloths because often they used to forget it. On the other hand, due to poor income the working children and their families could not eat nutritious food. They were suffering from various diseases and ailments such as dysentery, diarrhoea, skin disease, fever, cold and cough, jaundice, asthma, physical injuries, body pain, headache, weakness, ear and eye problem, breathing problem, loose motion and so on. It was mentioned that the average monthly income of a family was Rs. 2000/-. With this poor income the studied children and their families failed to enjoy better treatment and also failed to meet the full course of medicine prescribed by doctors. The inaccessibility of proper medical facilities in the studied area was another great difficulty in the treatment of diseases and ailments faced. Due to poverty and lack of medical facilities, the working children and their families did not get the better medical treatment. Their dependency on both untrained quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional

medicine men was common to notice to get remedy from diseases and ailments. They could hardly meet to the proper treatment with adequate medicines and necessary diagnostic tests. The data reveals that 82.49 per cent of the total working children had to depend upon both traditional medicine men and quacks (Table 8.16). But in many cases their diseases and ailments had turned into serious complex due to improper treatment. The another heart rending problem of the working children was that during working hours often they made themselves injured either with stone chips or iron implements and mostly their eyes and hands got injured while crushing stones. In this regard, the data reveals that out of total working children, 86 males (46.24%) and 89 females (46.60%) got injured while in the stone field (Table 8.3 and 8.4).

It was common to notice that due to utter financial constraints they could not accumulate the proper nutritious food and health drinks. In their daily diet they took rice with pulses and little amount of vegetables. But they could not afford meal more than twice a day and that was mainly rice, pulses and vegetable curry. Meanwhile, egg, fish, meat, milk or fruits were mere dream to them. Even they failed to provide nutritious food to the sick children. The feed to the fill was simply unmanageable for them. Many of the times they had to work with half feed which might have resulted in malnutrition and other diseases.

However, it was the fact that the working children in the studied area were suffering from various ailments and diseases. The working environment was very much unhygienic and hazardous. They were very busy at work in the stone field for all the year round paying no attention to scorching heat of summer and freezing cold of winter and even many of them had to collect stones and sands from the river. They had a high risk to get injured at every moment of work in the stone field and it was common to notice that due to lack of concentration to work they made themselves injured with stone cheaps or iron implements. Due to long touch with water many of them had an uncomfortable feeling on their skin that made them want to scratch. The hard manual work and hazardous working condition resulted in various ill-healths like physical injuries, body pain, cough-cold, fever, headache, giddiness, skin disease etc. were noticed among the studied children throughout the year. Due to busy working schedule during day time, lacking care of parents and other elder members of the family and also the lack of proper knowledge and

awareness the studied children could not maintain their good standard of personal hygiene. Many of the working children could not take bath regularly and even the usages of oil, soap, shampoo or any other cleaning agents for removal of accumulate dirt could rarely be seen at the time of bathing. Their unclean bathing might have resulted in various skin troubles found among them. Many of them had no extra dress to wear and the dress became dirty soon caused by over working and rough use of it. Besides, many of the studied children often forgot to brush up their teeth and due to this fact the food particles often remained between their teeth that made their teeth weak and damage. As a result, many of the studied children had to suffer from serious toothache throughout the year. However, due to various reasons the working children failed to maintain their personal hygiene. The surrounding environment of the houses was not in favour of living as it was very much polluted with waste disposal and human excreta and in this regard the lack of sanitation could not be ignored. Their dwelling houses were broken and *kachha* type that was made of wattle wall, corrugated tin roof, poor ventilation, and *kachha* platform. The rain-water was falling on leaky roof and cracked walls that made their houses damp and the floors became muddy and as a result they became weak by cough-cold, sneezing, running nose, headache, fever etc. There were no electricity in their houses resulted in poor light at night and as a result the children faced problem of reading books due to poor light at night. Due to absent of separate kitchen they used to cook inside the room. They used earthen oven or cooking pit. To bake food, the fire was built, and the food is placed in the oven and covered. In this regard, decaying wood, branch of trees, papers and plastic materials etc. were to be used as fuel that emitted a lot of smoke and their rooms became smoky. The smoky environment caused their eyes to go red and start watering and as a result the children could not read the books and also could not write well. Besides these, all the families fetched water from uncovered well and also used the river water for drinking and other necessary household works. But they did not take any precautionary measures like filtering, boiling etc. before using this water that might have caused the water-borne diseases found among them.

The studied children were found to be sick and diseased throughout the year. For the treatment they had to depend upon both the untrained quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional medicine men as there was no health centre in their village. They were

referred to Matigara Primary Health Centre or North Bengal Medical College only when the condition had turned into serious complex. But due to poor income they could not see the doctors and the proper medical check up for long time with prescribed medicines was out of their capacity. As a result, in many cases they had to stop treatment in the middle.

They always thought about tomorrow's work after returning home at the end of the day from the working field which kept them in a psychological pressure and on the very next day in the early morning with the ray of first light they used to go to their working field that was their daily working schedule. The maintenance of personal hygiene was beyond their thought. In this regard, the lack of health consciousness and awareness and their malpractice as well were the responsible factor. Even the noticeable matter was that the other elder members of the family could never maintain it at all and as far as the socialisation process is concerned it must be developed among the children. From the socio-cultural perspective, it is said that a child acts like clay and holds its shape as we wish to make it. The childhood is such a stage in which the imitation of socio-cultural practices can be observed beautifully among the children. Thus, as their parents or other elder members do, so they learn and as a consequence the studied children were not in a position to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene. Ultimately the working children in the studied area had to suffer from serious health hazards.

Educational Situation

Education in the beginning will shape the future of a child. It is certainly an important factor in a child's growth. It is like the sunlight which along with water and proper care of a gardener helps a seed to grow (Astrologer, 2011). Education plays an important role for the development of a nation and helps the children to become a part of nation's builder when they cross the threshold of childhood. Children have the right to education which helps develop their personality and abilities to the full. The elementary education is a fundamental right of every child. In this regard the educational situation of the studied children are discussed below –

Case Study 1: Raju Singha, aged 14 years, was a Rajbanshi boy. Both of his parents got involved in stone based job as prime earning source and earned Rs. 1600/- per month.

But their earnings could not provide them a minimum support to run their family. Finding no other ways they provoked Raju to get involved in stone based work to augment their family earnings. Raju got involved in stone based job since he was five years old boy. Even sometimes his two younger brothers Shyam and Mukul, 12 years and 10 years respectively also did this work to support their family income. Raju did both stone collection and truck loading activities. He had to work for the whole week without any adequate rest. He dropped out of school while he was in class IV. His only remorse was that he always used to try to attend the class regularly but it was hardly possible because of his daylong working involvement as well as his parents did not like to send him to school regularly. He was scolded bitterly or even often he was beaten up by his parents if he was absent in work or raise his eyes from work. His daily working schedule started like this- he used to get up at around 7 a.m. After morning fresh and having tea and pup rice he went to stone field. The work was often continued after evening also. Even sometimes he used to go out from the class to join in work in the stone field. Prolong working schedule did not let him continue his studies. Moreover, the dwelling house was not in favour of living. Their dwelling house was *kachha* type and composed of two little size rooms. There was not sufficient space in the house for his studies. He was the first generation learner and due this fact the parents could not guide him. He had no adequate books and note books and due to lack of these requirements he faced serious problems in his studies. Besides these, due to poor income his parents could not provide him private tuition. Due to absent of private tuition he could not finish all the home works. Owing to this fact he had a fear of scolding and also a fear of beating by his class teachers. Under these circumstances, he lost the interest of schooling. Moreover, his parents did not allow him to go to school regularly but sending him to work. He did not get any support, encouragement and cooperation from his parents for education. Besides these, all the neighbouring people worked in the stone field and Raju also motivated by them to go the stone field. Even, due to hard manual work and lack of sufficient and nutritious food he became weak and as a result he could not concentrate to his studies. Due to poor health he did not get any interest to study the lesson and ultimate dropped out. His two brothers Shyam and Mukul went to school but they failed to attend regularly and further due to lack of educational requirements their education was also affected very much and that

was due to same reasons which was happened with Raju. Ultimately his two younger brothers were also losing the interest of education. Apart from this, their dwelling house was broken. The rainy water was falling on the leaky roof and damaged their books, notebooks and many other things as a result they had to face a problem of reading those books and their notebooks became disabled for writing too. Besides, there was no electricity in their house and due to poor light they could not read and write well at night. Even their education got obstructed very much due to lack of private tuition and proper guidance. They felt uneasiness in the stomach owing to hunger and due to this fact they could not pay concentration to their studies. They had no school uniform and due to which they had to be scolded by their school teachers. They could not understand their lessons as they had no guide and as a result they lost their interest of education. Besides, their physical weakness and sickness made disinclination towards education among them.

Case Study 2: Ashalata Barman, 13 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. Both her parents were involved in stone based job. But the remuneration paid to them was not sufficient to run their family. Ashalata got involved in this job when she was 9 years old. She had a younger brother, Manik and sister, Maloti. They also provided a financial support to their parents. As a whole they hardly earned Rs. 2300/- per month. Ashalata did both stone collection and stone crushing activities. She had to work for the whole day without any adequate rest. She dropped out of school when she was in class IV. Her only remorse was that she always used to try to attend the class regularly but it was hardly possible because of her busy working schedule. Besides, her parents did not allow her to go to school regularly rather they used to like more to send her to the stone field. Her daily schedule of work started like this- she used to get up at around 6 a.m. After morning fresh and having tea with pup rice she went to the stone field. Even the work was often continued after evening also. Even she went out from the classes to join the work in the stone field. Besides these, there was no adequate place in the house for her studies. Due to illiteracy the parents could not guide her properly. Even, her parents did not allow her to go to school regularly. Her eyes filled with tears while she was telling about the lacking of educational requirements. She faced lot of problems in her studies as she had not sufficient books and note books and even she did not get the private tuition facility. Due to absent of private tuition she could not complete all the

home tasks given by her class teachers. Owing to this fact she had a fear of scolding and beating by her class teachers. As a result, she lost the interest of going to school. She was scolded bitterly and even was beaten up by her parents if she was absent in the stone field. She had an urgent need to meet daily necessities for living rather than education. Actually the working involvement along with lack of required educational facilities she could not continue her studies. Apart from these, all the local people worked in the stone field and therefore, Ashalata also motivated by these people to do this stone based job. Due to financial constraint their parents could not arrange rice and vegetable meals more than twice a day and even she did not get sufficient food. Therefore, she worked in hungry in the stone field. The daylong hard manual work with insufficient and less nutritious food resulted in malnutrition as she was weak by it. Owing to weakness she could not concentrate to education. She lost the interest of education due to her poor health. Her younger brother, Manik and younger sister, Maloti aged 11 years and 9 years respectively. Manik was reading in class V and Maloti in class III. But the parents neither could guide them nor even encouraged them. Even they had no private tuition due to poor family earnings. As a result, in many cases they could not understand their studies and lost interest. They had expression of pain in their tender eyes. In fact, the untiring labour in the stone field made their body painful resulted in they could not study their lessons. Due to lack of room all the family members had to live altogether in a single room and even due to lack of sufficient space there was no sitting place too. As a result of which, Manik and Maloti could not pay attention to their studies. Besides these, the alcoholism of father and a quarrel between their parents became a daily matter and as a consequence, the educational atmosphere at home became lost. The local socio-cultural environment i.e. same working involvement, poverty, alcoholism, quarrel, gambling etc. hampered their studies very much. The parents could not give them a full feed. They could eat rice meal not more than twice in a day and it was mostly rice, pulses and vegetable curry. Eating nutritious food like fish, meat, egg, fruit, milk etc. was rarely possible. As a result, their normal growth became obstructed and they became very weak that made lost the interest of education. They had to do work in poor health and hungry in the stone field. Even they had to assist their parents in domestic chores too and due to this fact their study got hampered. They had a burning sensation in the stomach due to hunger

that hindered them in paying attention to their studies. Ultimately all the situations were unfavourable in their educational progress. Apart from poverty, their socio-cultural systems and local environment never encouraged in their education, even hampered their education very much and as a result within very early they started to loss their interest of education.

Many children in the studied area had to get involved in stone based job at very early age to augment their family earnings as their parents needed extra earnings. Many of the children in the studied area were first generation learner. Most of their parents either belonged to illiterate or belonged to primary level of education and as a result of which the children could not hope to get proper guidelines for education from their parents. Owing to the busy working schedule for the whole day it was simply out of their capacity of the parents to take care of the studies of their children. In the studied area, the major problem of the child workers was their lacking of minimum necessary educational requirements. So many factors such as poverty, working involvement, poor educational background of parents, lack of proper guidance, home atmosphere, poor shelter, social environment and so on were responsible for their poor state of education. The parents were not in a position to provide proper guidance for education to their children. Owing to illiteracy or having poor educational background they could never understand the importance of education in making a bright future of their children. Moreover, on account of utter financial scarcity as well as lowest level of educational background most of the parents did not allow their children to continue education. The reality was that majority of the working children were provoked by their parents to get involved in work. A major percentage of studied children had to do the stone based work for all the day which hampered their school education badly as during school time mostly they were busy with stone collection and crushing, sand gathering and truck loading activities. In this connection the data reveals that around 86 per cent of total working children could not attend the class regularly due to their busy working schedule (Table 7.10). The poor income level of the family was a great hindrance in getting private tuition or coaching or any other guidelines at home. Therefore, the dropout as well as stagnation rate was high among the working children and in this respect the data reveals that around 63 per cent of the total working children dropped out of school while the stagnation was taken place in

school education that was around 73 per cent of total working children (Table 7.11). They had no proper shelter. The houses were mostly damp and there were no sufficient place for accommodation, education and privacy too. Due to lack of sufficient place they faced serious problem to study. Even, they had no adequate books and note books. Besides these, the parents could not provide them private tuition facility. Due to absent of private tuition they could not finish all the home tasks of their classes. Due to this fact they had a fear of scolding and beating by their class teachers. As a result, they lost their interest of going to school. In fact, they had an urgent need to accumulate a fold of rice but the attainment of education was a secondary matter to them. However, they could arrange food not more than twice a day and even sometimes they had to starve. In fact, due to hard manual work and lack of sufficient and nutritious food they became weak and as a result they could not pay attention to their studies. Due to poor health condition they lost their interest in education. Even they were not encouraged by their parents or family members or from society for continuing education. They were dispossessed of getting the light of education to make a bright future. As we all know, next to family, school is such type of platform which can play an important role in socialisation process from where a child can learn norms, values, customs, behavioural pattern and many other important things of their life. But in the studied area the ill-fate of working children was that neither they could learn it from school nor from family properly. Besides these, the social environment was also a great hindrance to their educational progress as well as proper socialisation process. The alcoholism, gambling, inter-familial and intra-familial conflicts were common to observe among the adults which might have an impact on the practices of non-enrolment, dropout, absenteeism or irregular participation in school as well as on their socio-cultural life seriously. Under these circumstances, it was almost impossible for the children to get an appropriate educational environment. However, the social environment was not in favour of them to grow up in a healthy way.

Family Environment and other Problems

The family environment has a great impact on child's social, emotional or psychological development. In the studied families it was common to notice that almost all the family members including children worked hard altogether for the whole day in the stone field.

But considering the fact that, their daylong hard manual labour only could manage a fold of rice but not more than twice a day. In their families the relationship was based on economic performance where the love, sympathy, affection, humanity, kindness were absent. Indeed, due to poverty and poor educational background the parents could not take proper care and guidance of their children. Besides these, drinking habit of father created a serious problem in the family. It is such type of family disease where the user is not only impaired but the other members of the family are also affected. However, this problem was common to notice in the studied families, where most of the fathers of working children became habituated with taking alcohol everyday in the evening. The alcoholism of fathers created chaos in the family because when their fathers became drunk, the other family members reacted against it with fear, despair, confusion and blame. They got aggressive when they were drunk. It seemed like happening of sorrow upon sorrow. This made a bad educational environment of the children and lost their family peace; and their relationships got affected badly and also told upon their mental as well as emotional health. Under these circumstances, most of the children were feeling both emotionally and situationally helplessness. It admits of no doubt such type of problem can rob a child from his childhood. Moreover, the inter-familial and intra-familial conflicts were also liable to make their families inhabitable that created a bad environment.

They got displaced from Bangladesh due to partition, socio-political turmoil, etc. which made them roofless, shelterless, resourceless and incomeless. They came to the stone field and worked hard altogether (able members) for all the day but earned very little as compare to work amount, while the average monthly income was Rs. 2000/- for their average 5 members family. With this poor income they had to manage all the expenses of their family members which include food, shelter, education, treatment and so on. It was very tough for them to provide rice meals thrice a day. Most of the family could provide not more than twice a day and that mainly rice, pulses and vegetables. The nutritious food like fish, egg, meat, fruit, milk etc. could rarely accumulate. Often they had to starve and they lost appetite owing to starvation. They could not eat to the fill as they had not full meal that made their stomach incapable of eating much. They used to feel uneasiness in their stomach due to hunger. They came here in roof less and resourceless condition. They were not in a position to purchase a plot of homestead land. However, with this

poor income they had to maintain their minimum livelihood. They had to choose the vested land of river bed to make their minimum house but their houses became broken soon. It was the fact that particularly in rainy season that became damp which was almost impossible to live. On the other hand, most of their houses (56.80%) were composed of the single room while the remaining (43.20%) had the more than that (Table 8.8). Many of the families accommodated their average 5 family members in the single room houses. It was the fact that they had not separate kitchen and store room. It was noteworthy to mention that around 84 per cent families lived in *kachha* houses that made of wattle walls, *kachha* platform and thatched by corrugated tin. Many of the houses were broken and as a result during rainy season the rain water was falling on the leaky roof that made their houses damp and floor became muddy. Even they could not repair their broken house at proper time due to financial constraint. Most of the houses were congested and the privacy was not maintained. It was the fact that within a single room most of the families had to take rest, cook, sleep and so on. The students faced a lot of problems as most of them had not any separate room for study. Due to lack of space in the house the kin members avoided to come here. Even owing to same many of them failed to manage the place for their house deities. To maintain the minimum health they need minimum food. But it was the fact that with this poor income most of them (61.27%) hardly could manage meals twice a day and that was mainly rice, pulses and vegetable curry. Even many of them had to starve too. They could rarely manage egg, fish, meat, milk, fruits and other health drinks. The problem of malnutrition was common among them and it was reported from the doctors too. It was the fact that most of them were very weak and it was very serious for the working children. They had to work throughout the year paying no attention to the severity of summer, rainy and winter. During summer the temperature of the stone field became very hot. They were burnt by the sun and their clothes became wet from sweating. During winter they were weak by very cold and they had to do work in the stone field while shivering. But in rainy season their clothes got drenched due to continuous heavy rain and they had to do work in wet clothes and due to continuous hard work their clothes became dirty soon. As a result, they had to suffer from cough-cold, sneezing, running nose, headache, skin trouble etc. throughout the year. They took food on the river bed without washing hands and they had not a full meal. Often they had to work in extreme hungry. They fetched drinking water from uncovered well

and also used river water directly while in the stone field. As a consequence, most of them had a serious stomach problem and dysentery. Due to lack of sanitation and drainage system their living environment became polluted very much. The untiring hard work made their body painful and they had to suffer from pain a lot. Besides, often they got serious injured with stone cheaps and iron implements. The breathing problem was noticed among them during study because in the stone field during crushing stones the dust emitted out from the broken up stones which was repeatedly being inhaled through respiration. For the compulsion of hunger they had to go to the work. The untiring labour in extreme hungry made them very weak and sick. The children with sickness had to do the work for all the day. They had to suffer from the pain of various ailments and diseases for all the year round. But due to extreme poverty they could not meet the expense of treatment. They could not afford to see the doctors and also could not purchase all the prescribed medicines and even failed to maintain its full course too. They had no well and proper dress and with this poor income their parents failed to provide it to them. Even many of them had no school uniform and the parents could not provide it always to their children. The dress became dirty and tattered quickly due to rough use of it but due to their cultural habits and poverty these dirty clothes would not be washed regularly and properly. Besides, the parents were unable to provide proper warm clothes to their children and also could not purchase a new dress in puja-festivals for their children. Regular quarrels were happened in the studied families due to various reasons like no food, no proper shelter, lack of room and lack of sufficient space in the room, no dress, lacking of guidance, motivation to do the work, failed to provide proper nutritious food etc. and these all were also the great obstacle factors for their progress of education. Many of them could not eat to the fill and they lost appetite for not getting food sufficiently that made them weak very much. These weak children lost the interest of education. For the agony of hunger these school student had to go to the working field. Due to poor income the parents could not provide necessary books, notebooks, pen, pencil etc. and also could not provide the private tuition to their children. Thus, their educational progress got obstructed very much. The people started to settle here from 25 to 30 years ago and it was mainly after the independence of Bangladesh and yet it is continuing. During independence and post independence of Bangladesh several communal violence and political turmoil were taken place which hampered the life and

livelihoods of many of the studied families. Due to these facts many had lost their all properties in various ways and it was the fact that many became shelterless and propertyless. In this situation many of the people were forced to come in this area and among them many came in this Balasan River bed for settling and earning and yet it is continuing. It was the fact that many of the studied people had not the ration card, voter identity card, birth certificate etc. Due to this fact, they were being debarred from various government facilities and were facing the problem of identity crisis as they were treated by others as 'identity less' or 'refugees'. These matters created so many problems in their family. They failed to meet various Government helps and schemes like Indira Awas Yojna, treatment facility, ration facility, and other securities of living. Due to this fact they had a serious tension and some of them could not hide their tension. They had a question to ask that how long would they live as identity less? And what will happen to their children? As a result, their socio-cultural life got hampered very much. From the very beginning the children observed and learned the above mentioned facts which affected their normal progress and development; as culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. Children were the worst sufferer due to effect of poor socio-economic and cultural environment of the families. However, all these situations as well as agents moulded their socialization process and created various psychological problems.

In the studied area, it was common to notice that most of the children were deprived of their basic needs and rights. Even they did not get love, affection, sympathy, kindness as well as proper care of their parents. In most of the cases mother took their little baby to the working field and due to this fact from the very beginning their mental setup were grown up with the effect of working environment and also by stones, sands and other stone crushing implements. And a fondness of the same was gradually developed into their mind and they became accustomed with the concerned environment. They observed in their daily life that in the stone field so many people were doing different types of activities such as stone collection and sand gathering, stone crushing, truck loading and so on. Gradually they began to learn the work.



Figure 10.2: A little girl observing her mother crushing stones



Figure 10.3: A little girl crushing stones and her very little brother observing it



Figure 10.4: A child crushing stones and his little sister observing it



Figure 10.5: Little children participating in their favourite sport with stones

Most of the children did not get any co-operation from their parents to fulfill their minimum needs and even they did not get proper guidance and awareness from neighbours, relatives and other elder members of the family. The children had no other ways but following their livelihood pattern. Owing to same socio-economic and cultural practices their peer groups were also going through a same situation and the studied working children were not excluded from it. Personal grooming and appearance was another serious problem faced by the working children in the studied area. Their hair colour, condition of teeth, dress, and health were the important indicator for physical appearance. In this connection, the irregular maintenance of personal hygiene and over working in a day were the main responsible factors for creating such problem.

Most of the working children in the studied area were suffering from psychological complexities. They had to get involved in the work from the very beginning of life that might have an adverse impact on their emotional as well as mental health. All the families had to work hard for the whole day in the stone field to accumulate a handful of rice. In economic field the struggle and competition were found to be developed among them. Due to daylong working involvement most of the children could not manage adequate time for playing games, watching television or cinema, and other enjoyment. The data reveals that most of the (89.12%) working children could not participate in recreation (Table 9.1). They were dispossessed of enjoying free life, leisure and recreation. Moreover, the relationship between parents and their children was based on

economic performance. Most of the parents were aggressive in nature. Even most of the working children were scolded and often beaten up by their parents for absent in work. They had to do this work against their will that might have an adverse impact on their mental health. The drinking habit of father had a bad impact on child psychology. Most of the fathers spent some rupees from their little earnings for taking alcohol daily. Often mothers were beaten up by their husbands when they reacted to it. Their husband became aggressive when they were drunk which was responsible to create a bad family environment and children were the worst sufferers because of aggressive characters of father. As a result, their emotional as well as behavioural problems were developed among their children. The continuous depression of parents might be responsible for developing a psychological problem among the studied children. Besides these, inter-familial and intra-familial conflicts had seriously affected the emotional health of the children. The confusion, fear and despair were developed into their mind. Moreover, from an early childhood their psychological feelings had turned into serious complexities and frustration.

The studied families had a serious economic problem. During independence and post independence of Bangladesh they got displaced due to partition and socio-political turmoil and due to this fact they became roofless, shelterless, resourceless and incomeless. Under these circumstances, they were forced to migrate in Balasan River basin for permanent settlement and earning. They worked hard for all the day but they earned very little as compare to their work amount. The average monthly income was Rs. 2000/-. Due to poor earnings they could not meet the adequate needs of living. Therefore, they used their children as a source of earning. The children were sent to work to get rid of poverty. In their daily diet they could hardly manage rice, pulses and little amount of vegetables but not more than twice a day. Due to poor income, they could rarely eat fish, meat, egg, milk, fruits and other health drinks. They could not eat to the feel and they had a burning sensation in their stomach due to hunger. However, the daylong hard manual work with less nutritious food made them weak very much. Even often they had to do work in extreme hungry. The studied children became weak by malnutrition. Besides, they fetched water from uncovered well and also used the river water without any

filtering for drinking and other purposes too and as a result they had to suffer from serious stomach problems and other water-borne diseases throughout the year.

They had not own homestead land and they made their houses on the river bed that was the vested land. Their dwelling houses were mostly *kachha* type and it was ill ventilated and broken too. The outside rain water leaked into their rooms through walls and roofs that made the houses damp and the floors became muddy and also damaged many household objects as well as books, notebooks too. During summer season the insider atmosphere of the houses was very much suffocating. As a consequence, they had to suffer from cough and cold, running nose, nasal blockage, sneezing, headache, fever etc. All the family members had to share the single little room. Due to this fact they could not maintain their privacy and also could not pay attention to their studies and even their kin members generally tried to avoid visiting their homes. Even, there was no electricity, drainage system and sanitation facility in their houses. They could not read and write well due to poor light at night. Due to the absence of latrine they used either the backside of the house or the open river bed for nature's call. Owing to this poor and unhygienic living they were weak by various ill healths.

They had no well and sufficient dress. Due to poor income the parents could not always provide a new dress to them and many of them had no school uniform as well. Even during *puja* festivals they were not provided any new clothe too. The clothes became tattered and dirty soon due to rough use of it but they could rarely wash it. They had no proper warm clothes and owing to this fact during winter they had to work in freezing cold while shivering.

The working children in the studied area were suffering from various diseases and ailments throughout the year. The working environment was very much poor and unhygienic. They had to do work for all the year round ignoring the fact of burning heat of summer and biting cold of winter. The hard work throughout the day in hazardous working condition made them very sick as they were suffering from skin problem, cold and cough, fever, breathing problem, physical injuries, body pain, giddiness, headache etc. Due to busy working schedule they could not maintain their good standard of

personal hygiene. Their unclean bathing might have resulted in various skin troubles. Apart from these, they had to depend upon uncovered wells for drinking and other necessary household works and they also used the river water while in the stone field. Due to lack of health consciousness and awareness they did not take any precautionary measures like filtering, boiling etc. before using this water which might have caused the water-borne diseases like stomach problem, dysentery etc. In their daily diet they could manage rice, pulses and little amount of vegetable curry. But they could afford to eat meal not more than twice a day. Owing to little earnings, they could not accumulate fish, meat, egg, fruit, milk and other health drinks. The parents could not give them a full feed and as a result they lost appetite. The insufficient food with hard manual labour might have resulted in malnutrition. They had to depend upon both the untrained quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional medicine men because there was no health centre in their village. Due to poverty they could not meet the expense of proper medical check up for long time and also could not purchase all the doctors prescribed medicines, as a result they had to stop treatment in the middle. Moreover, in the studied area the health profile of working children revealed an unpleasant condition.

Most of the working children in the studied area were first generation learner and due to this fact they did not get proper guidance from their parents. They had no proper shelter and there were no sufficient space and electricity in their houses. As a result, they could not pay attention to their studies and also could not read the books well. They had no adequate books, note books, pen, pencil, private tuition etc. Due to lack of private tuition they could not solve all the home tasks those were provided by their class teachers. Owing to this fact they had a fear of scolding and beating by their class teachers. As a result, they lost their interest of schooling and became very irregular. The daylong hard labour in the stone field with lack of sufficient and nutritious food they became very weak. As a consequence, they could not pay concentration to their studies.

They got displaced mainly due to communal violence and political turmoil resulted in their life and livelihoods got affected badly. They lost their all properties that made them shelterless, roofless and resourceless. Under these circumstances, they were forced to migrate in Balasan River basin for permanent settlement and involvement in stone based

work and yet it is happening. But due to this fact many of them had not the ration card and voter identity card etc. As a result, they could not meet to enjoy the government facilities and they were also treated by others as 'identity less' or 'refugees'. As a consequence, they were facing the problem of identity crisis that created a tension in their family.

The development of the studied children got obstructed by their bad family environment. The relationship among the members was based on economic performance. They had to do work hard altogether for all the day in the stone field. In the studied families the love, affection, sympathy, humanity, kindness were almost absent. Due to extreme poverty, busy working schedule, and poor educational background the parents could not take proper care of their children. The alcoholism of fathers created a tension in their families. They got aggressive and made chaos in the family when they were drunk. As a result, the peaceful family environment got affected seriously that had a bad impact on mental as well as emotional health of the children and the children could not pay attention to their studies. Besides these, the continuous depression of their parents might have a great impact on the development of psychological problem among the studied children. They worked hard altogether for the whole day but their payment was very little as compare to their work amount. Their average monthly earnings was Rs. 2000/- for their average five members family. They had to run their family with great difficulty and they could not manage all the expenses of necessary requirements like food, shelter, dress, education, treatment etc. They could hardly manage food not more than twice a day and it was poor nutritious. In their daily diet they could eat rice, pulses and vegetable curry but could rarely manage fish, egg, meat, fruit, milk etc. Even they had not the full meal and often they had to starve, as a result they had a burning sensation in their stomach due to hunger. They had a serious problem of shelter. Due to lack of sufficient room and space in the room all the members had to share the single little room. As a result, they could not maintain their privacy and the children also faced problem in their studies. Moreover, their family life got disturbed very much and the children were the worst sufferers due to their poor family environment.

“Child is father of man” – thus goes the wordsworthing saying. In fact the future of every society or nation as a whole rests on the shoulders of children. Unfortunately, due to various reasons like illiteracy, poverty and other socio-economic constraints children are deprived of their rights and they met abuse, misuse and exploitation. In developing countries and backward society this problem is acute (Bagulia, 2006: cover page). However, the forgoing discussion about various types of problems of working children has attempted to show the raised problems along with the concerned causal factors in wider perspective. Besides these, there might be a probability to have some tiny problems which could not seem to come in the light of our outlook as they were facing lot of difficulties. Perhaps most of us would not like to show our interest to realize their plight state that proved a proverb like “one cannot really feel for another”. But it seems true that their scalding tears may be come down as a curse in our child’s life. Upon God, they are innocent. A major section of them were suffering from acute malnutrition as they could not afford eat rice to the fill and though they had an expectation to eat meal twice a day but often it became unbearable to most of their parents. Even, often they had to starve. Therefore, for the compulsion of hunger the children went to work. Even most of studied children had no such idea of taking meal thrice a day but at the same time another section of children in our society are given more rather than their expectation. The surprising matter is that both of them are growing up in our society. Hence, I have a question to ask that why there should be a huge discrimination? Many of us may express the fact that it is a decree of God, so who will undo what is ordained by fate? Obviously it is true but we can afford to reverse it if we are willing to do it as I know that nothing succeeds like a serious effort. So we should come forward to extend our helping hand to save their life and make them free from such type of social evil.

References

- Astrologer, A. (2011), Learning: How Important is education in your child's life?; http://www.indiaparenting.com/boards/showmessage.cgi?messageid=119&table_name=dis_learning, retrieved 05.10.2012, at 6.30 p.m.
- Bagulia, A. M. (2006), *Child and Crime*, New Delhi: SBS Publishers & Distributors Pvt. Ltd.
- Food & Water; http://www.hrea.org/index.php?doc_id=404, retrieved 05.10.2012, at 10.30 p.m.
- Gomango, S.P.(2001), *Child Labour: A Precarious Future*, Delhi: Author press.
- Mukherjee, M. (2003), *Socio-Economic Background of Child Labour in Siliguri City of West Bengal*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of North Bengal.
- Right to Shelter, Friday, 24 February 2012; cited in <http://clclegalaidsociety.blogspot.in/2012/02/right-to-shelter.html>, retrieved 05.10.2012, at 11 p.m.
- Terris, M. (1975), Evolution of public health, and preventive medicine in the United States, *Am. J. Public Health*, 65(2), 161-169.
- World Health organization, The right to health, August 2007; <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs323/en/index.html>, retrieved 5.10.2012, at 11.35 p.m.

CHAPTER XI: GENERAL OBSERVATION

Children are the most valuable gift to humanity. They are the most precious asset and valuable members of the society. The fate of a nation to which they belong, is in their hand. It is said that children are the future wealth of society and childhood is a significant and impressionable period of development of human beings because it holds the potential for the future progress of our society. The environment where the children are born and brought up needs to be conducive to their social, physical, intellectual, emotional as well as psychological health. Every society links its future with the present condition of its children. However, many of the children unduly minimize their present welfare or their future earning capabilities through their participation in work from a very early age of their life. It is a heinous practice and it is widely prevalent all over the world particularly in the developing countries. In this regard, Indian society is not an exception. Understandably, it is regarded as a social and economic problem, as it has become a serious burning issue in India, which has enormous dimensions. Occurrence of child work can largely be attributed to socio-economic structure of Indian society. Owing to certain forces and situations children are compelled to work from the very beginning of their childhood, which is harmful for them and society at large. Families below the poverty line force their children to get involved in work for augmenting the family income. Under acute financial distress, children take up jobs which are mostly exploitative. And in many cases, children are being abused due to their work involvement. They work hard throughout the day in hotels, restaurants, canteens, tea stalls, shops and way-side establishments, garages, mining and quarrying, construction and in many other sectors under inhuman and exploitative situations just for their survival. In many cases, to meet the basic needs like, food, shelter, dress, health, education and so on they have to confront a serious crisis. It robs off the opportunity of proper education, health and other facilities from their next generation. It seriously affects the childhood, growing up as well as the overall development of the children in all aspects and in many cases their right to life becomes difficult.

Primarily they have a big challenge to survive and due to this fact they are forced to participate in the struggle for survival by any means. Obviously these aforesaid all situations hamper their overall development. In this context, from various regions some people came to Balasan River basin area close to Siliguri town for survival as they were facing various problems like economic, socio-political and religious crises, etc. in their earlier places which were affecting their life and livelihood seriously. After migration, for maintaining their daily livelihood as well as for survival they got involved in stone based work. Among these people, major being the immigrant from Bangladesh and the rest from adjacent districts of this state, West Bengal and also from several neighboring states of the country too.

The immigrants from Bangladesh came here mainly due to economic, socio-religious crises and socio-political turmoil which caused communal violence and the rest of the people came from adjoining districts and states of the country, India mainly in search of work for livelihood. In their everyday life, they were going through lots of problems like severe poverty, insecurities in- food, shelter, dress, health, education, basic human rights etc. In this situation, their prime challenge was to survive by any means and as a result for survival it became mandatory for most of them to get involved in stone based work without any sex discrimination sacrificing many things. They had to work day long under various difficulties but they earned very little. With this poor income they could not meet what they need like proper shelter, food, dress, health, education, other livelihood amenities, enjoyment, etc. To augment the income and for maintaining the very minimum requirements of the family members they had no other option but involvement of children in the work. With their parents and adult family members the children had to work hard daylong. In this regard, particularly the children had to face many difficulties. They had no proper shelter to reside; many of them did not get the full meal and had to starve in many cases. Most of them had no proper and necessary dress and often they had to stay without wearing dress; necessary educational infrastructure was almost lacking; required treatment and necessary nutritious food for health were mere dream to them. They could not play games and failed to enjoy their childhood. Both the socio-cultural and natural environment was not in favour of their overall growing up and development. Moreover, the concerned children were exploited very much and also debarred from right to live in

various ways. This entails a detailed research. To examine the issue the present research work has been done on the children who work in the stone crushing field which is located in Balasan River basin near Siliguri town, Darjeeling district, West Bengal. This research study has been conducted to know which circumstances and factors were responsible for their involvement in the stone based work, their background, the type of work and nature of working involvement of children, the socio-economic conditions including food, shelter, dress, educational and health situation, their growing up including socialization, enculturation etc. and also to examine the problems of child workers and the violation of their rights. To conduct this study the village, Purba Rangia was selected which is situated in Balasan River basin under Matigara Gram Panchayat, near Siliguri town of Darjeeling district, West Bengal. The total population of the village is 1434. Among them majority (92.82%) belong to Rajbanshi community while the rest of the population belong to Brahmin, Kshatriya, Teli, Kapali, Jugi, Namashudra, Biswakarma; Santal and Muslims. Most of the people (95.35% of total working population) of this village are involved in stone based occupation. For this study, all the 250 (100%) child workers' families are taken and among them total 377(100%) child workers are found of which the males are 186 (49.43%) and females are 191(50.66%).

Both primary and secondary data were collected for this research work. The secondary data were collected from secondary sources whereas the primary data were collected from the field by using necessary anthropological methods.

This study was conducted near Siliguri Town of Darjeeling District. This town is known as the gateway of North East India and it is the transit point for air, road and rail traffic to the North East Indian states, neighbouring countries of Nepal Bhutan, Bangladesh, China and some context Myanmar too. It is an important trade center of West Bengal. The town Siliguri is also famous for various other reasons. Apart from having a socio-political importance, this area is famous for its well transport and communication; trade and commerce, industries including Tea, Transport, Tourism and Timber etc. Besides, this place is also famous for its nice weather, bio-diversities and blessed with natural scenic beauties, forests, rivers, wild animals and various natural resources.

Rapid urbanization is taking place in Siliguri due to multifarious reasons. Due to socio-political turmoil, economic insecurity and various other reasons people have been coming to this area since long from Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and North East India and also from adjacent district and states of India. Plenty of these people have migrated to Siliguri in search of work. According to Census of India, the population of this city has increased from 6067 to 1,772,374 in between 1931 and 2011. The population of city agglomeration has 1,901,489 in 2011. Census 2011 reveals that its area has also been expanded to 117.54 sq. km. from 15.54 sq. km in 1950. Presently the town Siliguri is over flowing with huge number of immigrants. It has now become the second largest urban centre of West Bengal. Majority of the people of this region belong to Bengali linguistic group. While there are people from other linguistic groups like Nepali, Behari, Punjabi, Marwari, Assamese etc. also live here. Among the Bengalis the frequency of the Rajbanshi is highest; whose primary occupation is agriculture. The studied village is not an exception in this regard.

The studied people came to the Balasan River basin near Siliguri town for earning. They had nothing as they were resourceless, shelterless, refugees mostly. They were not in a position to provide required food, shelter, dress, health facilities, educational requirements and other necessary amenities to the family members. Due to several difficulties having left all, these people were forced to come here only for survival. They were in a big trouble. They began to try with their best to survive by any means. Under these circumstances, these people settled down in Balasan River basin as the lands were available for free of cost. The river also provided the scope of earning through continuous supplying of various raw materials like stones, boulders, sand which have a great demand for urban construction and so on. For survival they engaged themselves in this work where the children were not excluded, because they had no other way.

The source of economy of the studied people revolve around stone crushing, truck loading and collection of sand and stones from the river. For this there is no requirement of monetary investment apart from the manual labour which they needed to provide. However, many children of the studied families had to do this job with their elder family members in the stone field sacrificing their childhood. They do several kinds of stone

based activities like stone collection, sand gathering, stone crushing and truck loading. They work in the Balasan River basin for all the year round ignoring the fact of burning heat of summer and freezing cold of winter but they earn very little as compared to their work amount. Their average monthly income is very poor (family income Rs. 2000/-; individual income Rs. 400/-). As a result they fail to manage their living with this little earning. In fact, their total family income is very poor excluding children's contribution to the family earnings and with this income it is not possible to fulfill the requirements of living like required food, clothing, proper shelter, treatment, education, and so on. They have an urgent need to enhance their earnings for maintaining their livelihood. But finding no other alternatives, most of the parents involve their children in stone based work. Owing to acute poverty the children do this work from an early age. Furthermore, absence of parents or guardians largely affects the children and under this situation in many cases the children are forced to take the responsibility on their own shoulder to run their families. In this concern, the children of few families lost their father and mother too. Apart from this, in few families it was observed that the fathers left their family permanently and established a new family by remarriage in other places. Under these circumstances, the children are forced to share the economic responsibility of the family. It is the fact that many of the studied children are not satisfied because their parents are not in a position to fulfill their personal needs. In few cases it is observed that the children earn money to satisfy their personal needs i.e. their favourite food items like fruits, chocolate, ice-cream etc.; sports materials like bat, ball, wicket, foot ball, sports shoes, various toys and so on; dresses like well shirt, pant, T-shirt, various female dresses and woolen garments etc.; purchasing sandals, shoes etc.; leisure and recreation i.e. purchasing sport requirements for what they like to play, watching cinema and theatre, etc.; personal hygiene like purchasing necessary cleaning agents such as soap, shampoo etc. for body cleanliness, surf and soap for washing dirty clothes and so on. Their parents fail to meet the expense of the above needs. Therefore, finding no other means to meet their needs they get involved themselves in stone based occupation. In the studied area, it is observed that some of the working children are motivated by their friends, neighbours and other elder persons of the family to get involved in stone based work and obviously it is another responsible factor for the involvement of children in this work. In the stone

field, the children are mostly involved in both stone collection and stone crushing activities while very few of them are engaged in truck loading activity as it is very much hard labourious. They have to do the work in the stone field for an average seven hours in a day. They wake up very early in the morning and then go to the working field and return home in the evening when the work is over for the day. They work throughout all the seasons in the Balasan River basin where the working environment is very much hazardous and unhygienic. In summer, the temperature become extremely high and they have to do the work in extreme heat of the sun. It has been noted during study that often they become ill due to continuous hard work in burning heat of summer. In winter the temperature of Balasan River basin becomes very low but they have to do the work continuously in this freezing cold of winter. Even, many of them have no proper warm clothes and owing to this fact during winter they work in the biting cold while shivering that make them very sick. Moreover, during rainy season there is continuous heavy rain in Balasan River basin but they have to do the work in the rain and even they have to collect stones from the river and owing to these facts their clothes get drenched but they have to work in wet clothes throughout the day that make them very sick. They have no end of misery because they have to work in ill health. Many of them have to work against their will because they work sacrificing their childhood, enjoyments and merriments. It is the fact that if they do not work then their families will face a big problem in maintaining livelihood. The average monthly income of the children is very poor (around Rs. 400/- only) which they provide to their parents that to enhance their family earnings a bit that is very much essential for their survival.

Food is essential for survival and for getting the studied people have to do a continuous hard work from morning to evening in all the seasons. The food is necessary for their continuous hard labour in the stone field. In this regard, almost all of them can manage their meal not more than twice a day and it is mainly rice, little amount of vegetables and pulses. Nutritious food like fish, meat, egg, fruit, milk etc. are necessary for growth and development of the children but it is mere dream to them. Even the sick children do not get it. Moreover, the children cannot purchase food from the market because their earnings belonged to their parents. They mainly eat meal on lunch and dinner time but it is insufficient and less nutritious. Their parents cannot give them a full feed. In the very

early morning before going to the stone field they take tea with biscuits or pup rice as their breakfast but in many times it is also hardly possible by some of them because it is really hard to them to manage it with their little earnings. They suffer a lot because in many times they have to starve and have a burning sensation in their stomach due to extreme hunger but nonetheless they have to do the work hungry in the stone field for prolonged hours (averagely seven hours in a day) that make them very weak. Even the place where they eat is also harmful for their health and development as due to busy working schedule they take their lunch in the unhygienic working field.

They fetch drinking water from wells but the noticeable matter is that these wells are always uncovered, unsafe which are unhygienic too. Especially in the working field, they use the river water for the purpose of drinking. But they do not take any precautionary measures like boiling, filtering, etc. It is the fact that they have not the capacity to bear the expense for fuel which is a great hindrance to boil the water. Nonetheless, they purify it by cloth but they cannot think so mainly due to their lack of knowledge and awareness. Lacking of required food, unfiltered drinking water etc. may have a bad effect on their health. Further, they face difficulties due to lack of citizenship and lack of the necessary education as they cannot enjoy the food and other necessary facilities from the government scheme. The food crisis is very acute among them and especially it has adversely affected the growth and development of the children.

All the people in the studied area are migrants. It is the fact that they came here in roofless and resourceless situation. In this situation, the River Balasan provides its basin with free of cost for making the house to these roofless and helpless people which is like the gift of God to them. All the family members altogether with their hard labour could make a little home on it. But in most of the cases, the condition of these houses is very poor. Most of the houses are composed of single little room. Very few families can enjoy three or more rooms. Many of them have no separate kitchen room. They cook inside the room and for cooking they use earth oven or cooking pit that emits huge smoke and their rooms become smoky. The smoky environment caused their eyes to go red and start watering and due to this fact children could not read the books and also could not write well. It is the fact that owing to extreme poverty they could not make any new veranda or

extension for cooking. Their houses are mostly broken and *kachha* type and these are made of wattle walls, corrugated tin roof, muddy floor and devoid of proper ventilation. During study, it is common to notice that during summer season the insider atmosphere of the houses is very much suffocating. The outside rain water leak into their rooms through roofs and walls which damage their many household stuffs and also affects their health badly as they are suffering from fever, cough and cold, running nose, nasal blockage, sneezing and headache. But they are not able to repair it. Due to absent of voter identity card and ration card they cannot enjoy the government scheme too. Further, there is no electricity in their houses and due to poor light they cannot read and write well at night and also face a problem in doing household works. Owing to lack of room all the family members have to share the single room. As a consequence, they cannot maintain their privacy. Owing to lack of insufficient space in the room their education gets hampered badly. Many of them have to live in the broken house and cannot repair it at the proper time. Apart from these, there is no sanitation facility in their houses. Due to lack of sanitation they use the open field for nature's call and the children often around their houses that are either in the village lanes or at the back of the houses. Owing poor and unhygienic living condition the studied children and their families face lots of difficulties and they become weak by various ill health. Moreover, unhygienic living conditions might have told upon their social and mental health as well.

Besides food and shelter, dress is also very essential for living. In this regard, if the dress of the studied people is observed then it is seen that many of them have one or two sets of dress and these are very poor in condition. It has been observed that they wear dirty and tattered clothes to work every day. Even, besides the work place, when they are at home or outside home, their dresses are very low quality. It has also been many of them mostly stay without wearing any shirt and it happens with the children. Particularly the number of dress of the children is less and many of them are dirty and tattered. They have to wait for any big festival in the hope of getting a dress but due to utter economic constraint it is hardly possible. Their clothes become dirty very soon due to rough use of it in dirty and polluted working environment. But owing to poverty and lack of time they neither can purchase detergent or any such cleaning agents nor can wash it. It has been seen that the most of the parents cannot provide a new well dress in any *puja* festival, marriage

ceremony etc. to their children and due to this fact their children wear those dirty clothes on these occasions. Owing to this fact, the children are too deeply hurt. In this regard, it is really a problematic matter to the teenage daughters and women because they are also not provided required clothes. Apart from these, it has also been observed that among the school going children, many of them have no school dress and though few of them can enjoy it but these are very old and dirty. Many of them are scolded by their teachers for not having the school uniform which become a sorrowful matter to them. Further, it has been known that due to lack of dress and also for sound scolding by the teachers many of them have a fear to attend the class that's why the rate of irregular schooling became increased. Gradually they have lost the interest in education and as a result, many of them have failed in the examination and ultimately dropped out of school. It lies in the fact that on the one hand the dress hampers their prestige and on the other hand it has a negative impact on their education. But the main cause of these problems is obviously their poverty which failed to provide the required dress to them. It is true that owing to lack of dress they face various difficulties. In the working field, they have to work in wet clothes and due to lack of clothing their wet clothes are dried up by with their body heat as they have no other option. Obviously they have some socio-cultural habits but it is impossible to change due to the poor economic situation; and because of this fact, their social, educational and health development are getting obstructed more. The above situation adversely affected their mind and they feel psychologically disturbed.

Like the above, health is also a very important aspect for survival of human beings. In this context, it has been observed that the studied people are living in the river basin and most of their houses are not in favour of living as these are mostly broken and *kachha* type and due to absence of sanitation and drainage system the surrounding environment are very much poor and unhygienic. For drinking water, their dependency on both the uncovered wells and river water can be noticed. They do not have enough food to eat and as a result they work in extreme hungry and even due to lack of dress they have to work in the wet clothe. Moreover, the uses of abusive words, loose talking, chaos, conflict between the families or within the family due to any small affairs have become a daily matter and it become serious when their fathers develop alcohol. They have to live under these situations and as a result, they have to suffer from various physical as well as

mental problems. Apart from these, due to illegal migration many of them failed to become a legal citizen. They are living with fear always that causes mental health problems among the children. During study it has also been observed that during work, often they made themselves injured with stone chips and iron implements and moreover, they are the sufferer of various hazardous diseases due to involvement in this work. It is true that they are suffering from various ailments and diseases owing to various reasons. But for the compulsion of hunger they have to do the work in ill health. There is no health centre in the studied area. For treatment of diseases and ailments they have to depend upon the untrained quacks of local medicine shops and traditional medicine men but in many cases they do not get proper treatment from them. It is the fact that owing to the utter economic constraint they cannot complete the full course of doctors' prescribed medicines. The patients are mostly referred to Matigara Primary Health Centre or North Bengal Medical College only when the condition becomes very serious. But owing to extreme poverty the treatment have to be stopped in the middle. For the treatment of diseases and ailments, many of their parents have to take a loan from local *samiti* (cooperative society) or from their local *sardars* of the stone field. Many of them are already indebted to local *samiti* and also to their local *sardars* of the stone field and still could not repay it that's why they are not given loan further. Due to incomplete treatment many of their injurious places become infected and turned into complex. It has been seen that there is negligence in the treatment of children because no treatment is done by the proper doctor and followed by a complete course and proper medicine. It is the fact that their economic capacity, shelter, food, education, citizenship or identity, natural and social environment are not in favour to make them cure. Thus, one of the important aspects i.e. health of the studied children is very much neglected.

Education is the cradle of the society. It has an important role in child's life because it provides a right direction of thoughts. Education plays an increasingly important role to improve child skills which help them to get success in any field and also helps to be self dependent. In this context, if the situation of the studied people is observed, most of them are illiterate and among the literates most of them are confined into primary level of education. Among the studied population the children are mostly literate but their education is confined into primary level. The number of children at secondary or above

level of education is very few. Even among the children those who are educated most of them cannot not read and write well because for many of them it is nothing but a luxury to go to school. In fact, they have a prime need to get involved in money making job. It is the fact that many of them have lost the interest in education and ultimately dropped out of school. It seems mandatory for the little children to take part in work. It is seen that almost all the school going children of the studied people are busy with stone based work for maximum time in a day. Otherwise, they have a probability to be deprived of minimum food too. During school time they have to work in the stone field and as a result they cannot understand the studied lessons of earlier classes at school. The educational level of their parents is either very poor or illiterate and even they are disturbed for various reasons. They are unable to provide proper guidance for education to their children. The children mainly face a big problem to understand the language English and mathematics also. But most of the parents had not the capacity to provide private-tuition to their school-going children. Though, few parents are able to provide private tuition to their children but it is for the short time because it is hardly possible for them to bear the expense of it. Even, many children do not get the other requirements like books, notebooks, pen, pencil, school bag etc. Moreover, the dwelling houses are mostly broken and the rainy water entered the room through cracked walls and leaky roof which damaged their study materials like books, notebooks etc. that became disable for reading and writing. Further, due to lack of electrification in their houses they face problem of poor light at night and as a result they cannot read and write well at night. Owing to lack of room and insufficient space in the room all the family members have to live in the single room and due to this fact the children cannot pay concentration to their studies. During study, it has been observed that they cooked inside the room and for this purpose they use earthen oven or cooking pit that make their rooms smoky which also affects their education badly as they cannot read and write well. Apart from these, many times they have to starve and under this situation they cannot pay attention to their studies. Continuous hard manual work with insufficient and less nutritious food makes them very weak and due to this fact they are losing interest in education. The mentionable matter is that the untiring hard labour makes their body painful and as a result their interest of education has become lost gradually. Besides these, the socio-cultural environment and

practices like alcoholism, gambling, regular conflict and chaos make them upset which affects their concentration to their studies. Apart from these, many of the studied children have to assist their parents in household works and in this regard, especially the female children are forced to do it. They have to do several domestic chores like washing cloth, sweeping floor, cleaning the house and utensils, carrying water, going to shop, taking care of younger siblings and so on that keep them separate from their studies. In this regard, many of the parents think that the foremost duty of every female is to do the necessary domestic chores because after marriage they have to do it. Therefore, it is more important for them to learn and practice it instead of schooling. According to them, if the females become educated then their husband will be benefitted more. Even, few of them opined that economically they are not in a position to make their children suitable for getting service through providing proper education. Therefore, in studied families the non-enrolment and dropout rate are more among the females than males. Besides these, another great problem is their lack of citizenship which has created a social and mental problem among them and it has a negative impact on the education of the children. This socio-psychological pressure has affected their studies badly. All the aforesaid situations are the great hindrance to the progress of their education. It can be said that this poor educational environment has a harmful effect on their studies. It is the fact that they are not in a position to continue their studies and even what they have, is not enough for progressing their education. Moreover, hunger, poor shelter, lack of dress, existing socio-cultural environment and poor health etc. have largely affected their overall educational progress.

It is seen that most of them are illegal Hindu migrants from Bangladesh. Though they have been living for long days but many of them do not have any related documents like voter identity card, ration card etc. As a result, they are deprived of getting required facilities those are expected to enjoy as an Indian citizen. It has been observed that they cannot enjoy the ration facility such as to access food supplies at subsidiary rates. Besides these, they do not get the necessary health and treatment facilities for Below the Poverty Line (BPL) card holders. Even they cannot enjoy the stipend facility for their studies. They are dispossessed of getting the required administrative facilities too that are expected to enjoy as a citizen. Ultimately due to lack of document of citizenship they are

scared of their illegal living because they always think that if due to this fact the Indian Government uproots them from their illegally occupied land then where they will go. However, it is true that the lack of citizenship or the related rights have a serious negative impact on these studied people and particularly the children are the worst sufferer of it. Moreover, they failed to provide securities of food, shelter, dress, health and treatment, education etc. to their children. Even, they are deprived of enjoying these facilities from the government too. Specially many of these studied children cannot meet to all the government supports in education and as a result, their studies get hampered seriously. Owing to lack of right to citizenship they did not get any help from the government to construct or repair their houses. As a result, many children had to live in broken and damped houses and due to this fact in many cases they became ill. It has also been seen that owing to lack of space in the room they lost interest in education and even in many cases they also left their study. Due to aforesaid facts an anxiety has been noticed among them and in many cases it causes their mental tension. The severe mental agony as well as the continuous discussion over these matters in these families affects the studied children badly that also make them ill physically and mentally. Because they think that “we have no value to the people of this country”. They are suffering from inferior complexity and it is likely to be expected.

The studied people have to do a continuous hard work but nonetheless they hardly meet the primary needs of the family such as food, proper shelter, dress, health and treatment, education etc. Even the physical and socio-cultural environment is not healthy. The children never can enjoy freely like eating food, study books, wearing clothes, playing sports and games etc. and all the family members have the same situation. Due to failure of fulfillment of needs of the families they have an anxiety, tension, fury, frustration, mental pressure and agony etc. Apart from these, due to lack of citizenship and its related rights etc. they could not control themselves in many cases and as a result, the intra-familial and inter-familial conflicts are common to notice among them. Many adult male members drink alcohol to get rid of this mental agony, but it become the cause of chaos and conflict in their families. Because they get aggressive and then start hassling and rebuking when they are drunk and it has a negative impact upon the women and children. To get rid of poverty as well as for getting pleasure they play gambling, lottery etc. and

for this purpose they spend a major part of their earnings. As a result it becomes more difficult to them to meet the needs of living. As a consequence, the frustration and anger get increased more among them. Besides the said difficulties, they are deprived of many government facilities for not having the citizenship and other related rights which make them more frustrated. Many studied people had the better condition in earlier. They could celebrate various festivals and could enjoy on different occasions in their daily life. Besides hospitality, they used to participate in various sports and games that always made them happy and they led a peaceful life under a particular social system. But due to various reasons they migrated here leaving many things and among them kinsmen, social order as well as social system is mentionable. But owing to migration and struggle for survival in a new environment they are forced to come out from many of their earlier social systems. In this stone crushing society the crisis of food, shelter, dress, health and education within the family or outside the family became a sore in their family life as well as in their social life too. It is the fact that the required materials for living a healthy life are very much lacking among them. Rather, they are leading an unsystematic life where they fail to meet basic survival needs. As a result, conflict, chaos, despair, theft, hassle, gambling, illicit sexual relation etc. have been increased badly in their society and children are the worst sufferer of it that is very much harmful for them.

In the context of the overall environment including socialization, enculturation and growing up of children, it has been observed that a continuous pressure and despair are common in this stone crushing society. The children have not the full meal and even they have no proper house or place for taking rest. They do not get the required dress. Necessary health services are very poor in condition. In many cases, they cannot enjoy the minimum treatment facilities and a proper care of their health is not taken almost. In most of the cases, their educational matter is very much neglected. They fail to participate in games and sports freely and also can not enjoy freely rather these little children have to do a continuous hard work against their will in the stone field ignoring the fact of all adverse situations. They are rebuked if they do not work and in many cases they are abused and beaten up too. Even, they do the work in the stone field sacrificing all their enjoyments and merriments, schooling and also ignoring the fact of their sickness and physical weakness. As a result, this stone based work and its necessary implements have

encroached their thinking in all around. The thought of other things is almost impossible for them and it will become very difficult for them to live their life at that minimum level too if they are outside of this thought. The intra and inter-familial conflict or uses of filthy language, drinking habit of the elder male members, torturing women and children, gambling, illegal sexual relation etc. are common in their society which have become an integral part of their daily life. They think that it is normal to observe these matters in their daily life and have adjusted themselves with it. As a result, their enculturation is occurring in this way. Family, peer groups, school, local environment etc. are the important agents of socialization but they learn hassle, conflict, chaos, filthy language, illiteracy, alcoholism, gambling and such other bad habits from these agents.

They have always a frustrated and disorganized life. This everyday observation and imitation deeply affects their practical life. For being illegal migrant the deprivation and exploitation in several fields and various behaviours of the local people and administration etc. make a frustration among them. It is true that after birth they are growing up under various crises, conflict, psychological pressure and frustration. The actual flourishing of child's mind which is expected to happen but it is not possible in any situation in the family or in society. It is the fact that children need to grow up in a healthy and proper way to make a healthy society, but it is not possible in case of these working children. Rather in lieu of mild or gentle nature, these working children have become furious, hungry, depressed, sick and illiterate. In the context of socialization, this stone based society is completely different. They have only aimed to live their life by any means and for this living most of them are forced to come here leaving everything and get involved in this work. It is not possible for them to make the necessary infrastructure for a healthy society. It is the main thing to live by any means sacrificing their ethics and ideology. Thus, the children naturally have entered into this work and environment unconsciously and getting habituated in the same way.

It is the fact that there are several laws and various other schemes to protect children from various forms of exploitation. Specially to stop child labour various initiatives are being taken. But nevertheless, there are many child workers or child labourers in a country like India who are forced to do the work due to several reasons. With the social

stratification and caste hierarchy especially the division of labour also involved with the social system in India. In the present study, all the child workers belong to a lower caste or lower social strata. The opportunities related to the essential needs for survival like freedom, justice, equality, food, dress, shelter, education, health, love, affection etc. are not given to the children.

Due to socio-political reason India was divided into two separate nations, India and Pakistan and then Bangladesh was separated from Pakistan. Due to socio-political turmoil and economic insecurity most of the studied people were forced to come here from this separate country, Bangladesh leaving their land, home and economic resources. In this context, their economy, familial structure, kinship behavioural pattern, religious rituals, norms, customs etc. have seriously been affected and these are more critical in the studied village, Purba Rangia as they lost most of their resources in earlier. The studied people faced various socio-economic and political problems in earlier due to many reasons. Even they were facing severe problem to survive. In this regard, the studied area is a better option for survival in all respects and thus they came here for maintaining their livelihood as well as survival as they had not any other better alternative place. For their survival, they had nothing but physical power at that moment. Therefore, primarily they were forced to come there where they got minimum earning scope. Studied people had to choose the Purba Rangia village as a suitable place which is located on Balasan River Basin nearby Siliguri town. They are forced to come here in moneyless, shelterless and resourceless situation. Because, as a primary need for survival with the opportunity of making a house at free of cost on the vested land of Balasan River basin, they got the scope of earning through stone and sand collection from the river, stone crushing and related stone based work. In fact only the physical labor is essential for this work and they had it only. But due to poor earnings they fail to fulfill the necessary needs of their family and especially of their children. In the struggle for survival they have no alternative but involving their children in work. As a result, the children have also to do this work most of the time in a day and throughout all the seasons.

A child should have good health, but these studied child workers do not get this opportunity. Because, to become healthy the food, proper shelter, dress, health and

treatment, educational facilities etc. are very much required. But these children often have to starve and most of the time they work hungry in the stone field. They never get nutritious food and many of them are weak by malnutrition. They have no proper shelter and in most of the cases their houses are broken, suffocated and moisturized where the environment is unhygienic which is neither in favour of their resting nor study. Besides food, dress, shelter and social environment, the health facilities including treatment is necessary for good health. But it is impossible for them to go for treatment hampering their work and even to bear the expense for continuing treatment would not be possible on their little earnings. Proper education is very necessary to be an ideal citizen. But they are not in a position to get even a minimum infrastructure too for continuing education and also for taking higher education. In this regard, besides books, notebooks etc., family and social environment, private-tuition, guidance for education, dress etc. are needed for them. But in many cases they have to get involved in work leaving their studies. Because if they do not work, they will not get food and if they do not get food, they cannot survive. In many cases, these children have not necessary dress and owing to this fact they have to face trouble during winter and rainy seasons.

It is the fact that food, dress, shelter, health, education, proper social environment etc. are necessary to grow up in a healthy way as well as to be an ideal citizen but they are deprived of it in various ways. They never get exactly what is necessary. Ultimately, these studied child workers are not only deprived but they are growing up within an unhealthy environment. Apart from these, citizenship and related rights are the big problem to them. Basically most of them have not the document of citizenship like voter identity card, ration card and such other documents and as a result, besides the deprivation of people belonging to various stages in society, they are also deprived of many government facilities. Due to lack of this right as a citizen a serious despondency is found among them. The studied child workers have nothing of those that a child should deserve to be grown up in a healthy way or to be an ideal citizen rather they are growing up through malnutrition, illiteracy, conflict, hassles, crisis, tension, anxiety, psychological pressure and frustration. It is harmful not only for the children but also an obstruction in making a healthy society.

In summary, it may be said that primarily the children of poor income families get engaged along with elder family members in the stone based work as it is very imperative for their survival. The children are always busy with work in the stone field during day time and have to do this work through the year mainly in order to get rid of economic instability of the family. Even, they work sacrificing their schooling, play-games, enjoyments and merriments etc. which are very essential for their growing up and development.

They have a serious economic problem. All the studied adult family members including children work hard altogether for the whole day in the stone field but their payment is very little. With this little earning they fail to manage all the expenses of necessary requirements like food, shelter, dress, treatment, education etc. They have not the full meal and work hungrily in the stone field. Even in many cases they are to starve and as a result, feel uneasiness in their stomach due to extreme hunger. However, due to daylong hard manual labour with less nutritious food they become weak very much which caused malnutrition. They have serious problem of shelter. Due to lack of room and insufficient space in the room they fail to maintain their privacy and the children also face serious problem in their studies. Further, most of the houses are broken too. The outside rain water leaked into their rooms through roofs and walls which damage their study materials and affect their health badly. They have no well and sufficient dress. Due to poor income the parents fail to provide a new dress to them and even many of them have no school uniform too. Due to hazardous working environment, unhygienic and poor living condition, lack of required food and food habit, unfiltered drinking water and various mal practices etc. the children are found to be sick and diseased throughout the year. For treatment of diseases they depend upon the untrained quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional medicine men. Owing to poverty they cannot go to the doctors always for treatment and also for the same they fail to bear the expense of proper medical checkup for long time with necessary diagnostic tests and prescribed medicines. Due to poor earnings in many cases they bring to an end of treatment in the middle. All the studied children are interested in education and most of the working children are students also. But they have not adequate books, note books, pen, pencil, private tuition etc. which largely affected their education. Due to busy working schedule during day time they

become very irregular in school attendance and they are found to lose interest in their studies. Many children in the studied area are first generation learner and as a result, the children do not get proper guidance for education from their parents. Further, owing to lack of proper shelter and little space in the room they fail to pay attention to their studies and also cannot write and read the books due to lack of electricity. As a consequence, many of them fail in the exam and ultimately have to drop out of school. It is the fact that working involvement is very essential for them rather than education and as a result, it is not be possible by them to continue education no more after primary level.

From the very little the studied children observe this work as well as environment in their daily life and as a result, from the very beginning their mental setup are developed by the effect of working environment and stone crushing materials and gradually they learn this work and become accustomed with such environment. They have no other way but following their livelihood pattern. In this way they are growing up. In the studied families the relationship among father, mother and their children is mostly based on economic performance where the love, affection, sympathy etc. are almost absent. There is a frequent conflict between husband and wife due to any small affairs in daily family life. Under these circumstances most of the children feel both emotionally and situationally helplessness. The confusion, fear and despair are developed into their mind. From an early childhood their psychological feelings have turned into serious complexities and frustration that robbed them from their childhood. The regular conflict and chaos due to any small affairs or uses of filthy language, alcoholism of the elder male members, gambling, torturing women and children, illicit sexual relation etc. become an integral part of their daily life. Under these circumstances their socialization as well as enculturation has been taking place and gradually they become accustomed with this socio-cultural environment. Besides these, peer groups, neighboring people and environment etc. are the significant agents of socialization but these children learn quarrel, conflict, chaos, hassle, dirty language, alcoholism, gambling etc. bad habits and practices from them. As a result, emotional as well as behavioural problems are developed among the children. Even their socio-religious life also gets affected seriously that has a negative impact on the progress of children. Many of them have no any document of citizenship like ration card, voter identity card etc. and as a consequence,

they are deprived of enjoying necessary government facilities and even do not get any help and cooperation from the government administration too that are expected to enjoy as a citizen. However, the lack of citizenship or the related rights used to create a tension in their families and it increased insecurity and identity crisis among the children. It is true that all the situations are not in favour of their progress and development which is just opposite to become an ideal citizen. The securities of food, shelter, dress, health and treatment, education, etc. are very much lacking and insecure and the studied children are the prime victims of it. Their life become uncertain and their solidarity and unity become lost which make them helpless. They are debarred from all the rights to be grown up of a child. The time to become a good citizen never appeared among them because their childhood was in a crisis and they are the victims of socio-economic and political inequality. It is the fact that the studied families are failed to ensure the right to food, proper shelter, dress, health and treatment facilities and necessary educational requirements to their children; and ultimately the matter of child rights is a mere dream to them as practically they are totally debarred from it. In reality, the children work against their will under hazardous environment and due to familial pressure they have no other means but involvement in this work.

Moreover, lastly it can be said that though this study has been done in a little area but it came to know to a certain extent that why the children are forced to do work and which are affected for working involvement. Ultimately it can be remarked that their involvement in the work was very essential for survival because they had no other option. It is true that many of their dreams will not probably become true ever, but at least they can be able to survive with utmost difficulty too through this child labour. It may be illegal but which laws will ensure their food and other requirements like shelter, dress, health and treatment, education etc. To create a healthy and prosperous society it is primarily necessary to make a child as an ideal citizen. Hope this action will be taken very soon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahmed, S.I. (2003), Socio-psychological approach to the study of mental health problems, *The Journal of the Anthropological Survey of India*, 52 (3): 24.
- Ahuja, R. (1992), *Social Problems in India*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- Ahuja, R. (2001), *Research Methods*, New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Arimpoor, J. (1994), 'Profile of the Child Worker', *Social Action*, Volume- 44: 59-63.
- Astrologer, A. (2011), Learning: How Important is education in your child's life?; http://www.indiaparenting.com/boards/showmessage.cgi?messageid=119&table_name=dis_learning, retrieved 05.10.2012, at 6.30 p.m.
- Bagulia, A. M. (2006), *Child and Crime*, New Delhi: SBS Publishers & Distributors Pvt. Ltd.
- Bisht, N.S. & T.S. Bankoti (2004), *Encyclopaedic Ethnography of the Himalayan Tribes*, Volume- 4 (R-Z), Pg. 1334-1345. Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House.
- Bottomore, T.B. (1962, Forth Impression 1979), *Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature*, Bombay: Blackie & Son (India) Ltd.
- Casa Alianza, (2001), Report on trafficking of children in Central America and Mexico; <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/child-abuse-statistics.html>, retrieved 24.02.2011, at 7.15 p.m.
- Census of India 2001, *Data Highlights: The Scheduled Caste*, Office of the Registrar General, West Bengal, India.
- Census of India 2001, *Economic Tables, Table B-1 Scheduled Castes and B-1 Scheduled Tribes, States and Union territories*, Volume- I, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India.

Census of India 2001, *Primary Census Abstract: West Bengal*, Series 20, Volume- I & II, Directorate of Census Operations, Government of India.

Census of India 2001, *Provisional Populations Totals: India*, Office of the Registrar General, India.

Census of India 2011, New Delhi: Government of India.

Chakravarty, D. and I. Chakravarty (2011), *Girl Children, Family and Dirty Work: Paid Domestic Service in the Indian State of West Bengal*, No.1, Centre for Economic and Social Studies in Hyderabad, Vidya Sagar College, Calcutta University, Kolkata.

Chandra, K. S. (1997), Problems and Issues on Child Labour in India, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 34.

Chaudhuri, D.P. (1997), Child labour in India in the Asian perspective – 1951-1956, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 20.

Child Rights and You; www.cry.org , Pg. 2-19, retrieved 7.11.2009, at 11.25 a.m.

Cox, Peter R. (1950), *Demography*, London: Cambridge University Press.

Crawford, 2000; www.cry.org, Pg. 7, retrieved 7.11.2009, at 11.25 a.m.

Crime in India 2012 Statistics, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India; <http://ncrb.gov.in/CD-CII2012/Statistics 2012.pdf>, retrieved 28.01.2012, at 11.30 a.m.

Dak, T.M. (2002), *Child Labour in India*, Delhi: Serials Publications.

Declaration of the Rights of the Child: Adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 1386 (XIV) of 10 December 1959; <https://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/child.asp>, retrieved 27.01.2014, at 11.20 p.m.

Durkheim, E. (1922), *Education et sociologie*, Paris: Felix Alcan.

Effective Abolition of Child Labour: ILO Conventions; http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138, retrieved 27.01. 2014, at 10.45 p.m.

Estes, R.J. and N.A. Weiner (2001), *The commercial sexual exploitation of children in the US, Canada and Mexico*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania.

Firth, R. (1961, first published 1951, 3rd, ed.), *Elements of Social Organization*, London: Watts and Co.

Food & Water; http://www.hrea.org/index.php?doc_id=404, retrieved 05.10.2012, at 10.30 p.m.

Franco, M. et al. (October 27th 2009), *Social state of the World*, Catalonia: Escola Politècnica Superior de Castelldefels.

Gale Encyclopedia of US History: Health Care; cited in <http://www.answers.com/topic/health-care>, retrieved 07.04.2012, at 10:30 p.m.

Goddard and White, 1982; cited in www.cry.org, Pg. 8; retrieved 7.11.2009, at 11.25 a.m.

Gomango, S.P.(2001), *Child Labour: A Precarious Future*, Delhi: Author press.

Hanlon, John, J. (1963), *Design for health: the teacher, the school and the community*, London: Elizabeth Mc House.

Hasan, K.A. (1967), *The cultural frontiers of health in village India*, Bombay: Manaktalas.

Healthizen; <http://www.healthizen.com/blog/index.php/general/environmental-sanitation/>, retrieved 05.04.2012, at 9:40 p.m.

Howard, Lee M. (1972), Three key dilemmas in international health, *Am. J. Public Health*, 62(1), 73-78.

<http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Siliguri#History>, retrieved 25.08.2014, at 7.30 p.m.

Human Rights Watch, 2001; <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/child-abuse-statistics.html>, retrieved 24.02.2011, at 8.30 p.m.

Importance of Food; <http://suven.hubpages.com/hub/Importance-of-Food>; retrieved 06.04.2012, at 11:25 p.m.

INDUS, Child Labour Project, 2007, Child Labour Facts and Figures: An analysis of Census 2001, ILO and Government of India; http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf.

Indya Tour, 2014; <http://www.indyatour.com/india/westbengal/darjeeling/siliguri.php>, retrieved 24.09.2014, at 11.25 a.m.

ITUC- International Trade Union Confederation, June 2008: Child Labour; <http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/guideCLENFinal.pdf>, retrieved 21.9.12, at 10.50 p.m.

Karthikeyan, D. R. (2005), *Human Rights: Problems and Solutions*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

Kak, S. (2004), 'Magnitude and Profile of Child Labour in the 1990s– Evidence from the NSSO data', *Social Scientist*, 32 (1-2): 52-63.

Kaldate, S. (1997), Restoring Childhood Rights to Child Labour, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 66-68.

Kardiner, A. (1945), *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Katz, Rogert C. and S. Zlutnick (1975), *Behaviour therapy and health care: Principles and application*, Pergamon General Psychology Series, vol. 43, Pergamon Press.

Koos, Earl L. (1954), *The health of Regionville*, New York: Columbia University Press.

- Kothari, C.R. (1985, reprinted 1995), *Research Methodology – Methods and Techniques*, New Delhi: Wishwa Prakashan.
- Lal, G. (1997), Child Labour in India: An overview, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 57-65.
- Lama, I. L. (nee), (2003), *Study on the Geomorphology in the Balasan Basin, Darjeeling*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Geography, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling.
- Langer, M.B. and J.E. Korbin (2007), Challenges and Opportunities in the Anthropology of Childhoods: An Introduction to “Children, Childhoods, and Childhood Studies”, *American Anthropologists*, 109 (2): 241-242 & 245.
- Lee, A.M. (1946, reprinted 1953), *Principles of Sociology*, New York: Barnes and Noble Inc.
- Linton, R. (1947), *The Cultural Background of Personality*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Lyness, D., Abuse, Date reviewed: September 2013; http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/families/family_abuse.html, retrieved 24.02.2011, at 6.15 p.m.
- Magnitude of Child Labour in India: An Analysis of Official Sources of Data (Draft); http://www.vvgnli.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/Magnitude_of_Child_Labour_in_India_An_Analysis_of_Official_Sources_of_Data_Draft_0.pdf, retrieved 22.06.2010, at 2.35 p.m.
- Mead, M. (1901), *Ruth Benedict*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Mittal, M. (1994), *Child Labour in Unorganised Sector*, New Delhi: Anmol Publication Pvt. Ltd.
- Mukherjee, M. (2003), *Socio-Economic Background of Child Labour in Siliguri City of West Bengal*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of North Bengal.

- MultiTree: A Digital Library of Language Relationships; <http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/LLDescription.cfm?code=rjb>; retrieved 23.09.2009, at 2.30 p.m.
- National Panchayat Portal, Gram Panchayat Schedule, 2011, Sponsored by Department of Panchayati Raj.
- O'Malley, L.S.S. (1907, reprinted 2001), *Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling*, New Delhi: Logos Press.
- Panigrahi, D.K. (1997), Child labour in India: A point of view, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 50-56.
- Panigrahi, M. (2003), Plight of Child Labour, *Indian Anthropologists*, 33 (2): 38-39.
- Pascual Gisbert, S.J. (1957, Reprinted 2001), *Fundamentals of Sociology*, Kolkata: Orient Longman Ltd.
- Patil, B.R. (1997), Eliminating Child Labour: Some national and international initiatives, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 170-174.
- Performance/Quality Improvement: The Definition of Healthcare Quality and the Institute of Medicine; http://www.peerpt.com/website/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=10, retrieved 07.04.2012, at 10:30 p.m.
- Personal Hygiene; http://www.statefundca.com/safety/safetymeeting/Safety_Meeting_Article.aspx?ArticleID=82, retrieved 06.04.2012, at 11:40 p.m.
- Punalekar, S.P. (1997), Labouring Children: On Social Roots of Child Exploitation, *Social Change*, 27 (3-4): 147-148.
- Punecha, L.B. (2006), *Child Labour: A Social Evil*, New Delhi: Alfa Publications.
- Ray, A. (Oct. 26, 2010), More than 50% Indian Kids Face Sex Abuse, Times of India; <https://suite.io/karen-stephenson/4dwm2ff>, retrieved 25.02.20, at 6.30 p.m.

- Right to Shelter, Friday, 24 February 2012; <http://clclegalaidsociety.blogspot.in/2012/02/right-to-shelter.html>, retrieved 05.10.2012, at 11 p.m.
- Rizvi, S.N.H. (1991), *Medical Anthropology of the Juunsaris*, New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.
- Saksena, K.P. (1999), *Human Rights: Fifty Years of India's Independence*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- Sanyal, C. C. (1965), *The Rajbanshi of North Bengal*, Calcutta: Asiatic Society.
- Shandilya, T. K., N. Kumar and N. Kumar (2006), *Child Labour Eradication: Problems, Awareness and Measures*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Sharma, B.K. & V. Mittar (1990), *Child Labour and Urban Informal Sector*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications.
- Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority, 2012; <http://www.sjda.org/location.php>, retrieved 24.09.2014, at 10.30 a.m.
- Siliguri Municipal Corporation Report, 2001.
- Sinha, S.K. (1991), *Child Labour in Calcutta: A Sociological Study*, Calcutta: Naya Prokash.
- Sinha, V.C. and E. Zacharia, (1984, Reprinted 2009), *Elements of Demography*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private Limited.
- Slotkin, J.S. (1950), *Social anthropology: the science of human society and culture*, New York: Macmillan.
- South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (2006), *Introducing Human Rights: An Overview Including Issues of Gender Justice, Environmental, and Consumer Law*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Srinivas, M.N. (1969), *India's villages*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.

- Syndenstricker, 1921; cited in Rizvi, S.N.H. (1991), *Medical Anthropology of the Juunsaris*, New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.
- Terris, M. (1975), Evolution of public health, and preventive medicine in the United States, *Am. J. Public Health*, 65(2), 161-169.
- The 57th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/child-abuse-statistics.html>, retrieved 24.02.2011, at 7.30 p.m.
- Thomson, E. (Feb 2007), What is Demography?; <http://www.suda.su.se/docs/What%20is%20Demography.pdf>, retrieved 19.05.2013, at 2.35 p.m.
- Tiwari, J. (2004), *Child Abuse and Human Rights*, Vol. 1 & 2, Delhi: Chawla Offset Press.
- UNICEF: Convention on the Rights of the Child; http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_understanding.html, retrieved 27.01.2014, at 10.30 p.m.
- Unit Level Records of NSS; <http://labour.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Divisions/childlabour/NSSOEstimateofChildLabourinMajorIndianStates.pdf>, retrieved 22.12.2014, at 2.35 a.m.
- Upadhyay, V.S. and G. Pandey. (1993, Reprint 2002), *History of Anthropological Thought*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Vidyarthi, L.P. and B. K. Rai, (1976, Reprinted 1985), *The Tribal Culture of India*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- What is Wrong with Child Labour?; <http://civilserviceindia.blogspot.in/2010/11/what-is-wrong-with-child-labour.html>, retrieved 13.10.2012, at 2.30 p.m.
- Who is a Juvenile?; http://dpju.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=11, retrieved 12.09.2013, at 04.20 p.m.
- World Health organization, The right to health, August 2007; <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs323/en/index.html>, retrieved 5.10.2012, at 11.35 p.m.

GLOSSARY

Anganwadi: Government sponsored child-care and mother-care centre in India.

Astam Prahar: Devine meditation for day and night.

Astami: It is the second day of Durga puja.

Bandhan: A co-operative society locally known as *bandhan*.

Basumati thakurani: The earth-deity.

Belcha: It was made up of both iron and wood. This implement was used to uplift the stones and sand in the basket and trucks.

Bengali calendar: This Bengali calendar has twelve months i.e. Baisakh (April), Jaistha (May), Ashar (June), Shraban (July), Bhadra (August), Ashwin (September), Krartick (October), Aghrayan (November), Poush (December), Magh (January), Falgun (February), Chaitra (March).

Bhai tika: On the fifth or last day of *Tihar*, brothers take *tika* (holy mark) from sisters. It is believed that brothers become safe from death and other evils after taking *tika* and garlands from their sisters during *Tihar*.

Bhut: Ghost

Bidi: It is a type of cheap cigarette made of unprocessed tobacco wrapped in leaves.

Bigha: A measure of land in India, varying from 1/3 to 1 acre (1/8 to 2/5 hectare).

Bisahari: The deity of the snakes.

Bisto thakur: The water God.

Brahmacharya: Study life.

Buhari: Daughter-in-law.

Burma thakur: The Hindu God who is the protector from fire.

Challan book: It is used for tax and VAT collection through royalty office of the stone field.

Chalna: Seive.

Chikan: Lucknow's most famous textile decoration style.

Chira: Flattened rice.

Dahi: Curd.

Dalit: It is a designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchable.

Dasai: It is known as *Durga Puja* and this is the greatest festival in Hindu society.

Devis: Goddesses.

Devta: God.

Dhaba: Roadside restaurant.

Dhami: The traditional magico-religious healer mainly found in the villages of Indian.

Dharam thakur: The fertility God and a healer of disease.

Dorje: A representation of a thunderbolt in the form of a short double trident or scepter.

Dulai Chandi: One of the auspicious forms of Goddesses *Chandi*.

Durga Puja: The worship of Goddesses *Durga*.

Durga: According to Hindu mythology *Durga* is the most powerful Goddess who is the remover of all obstacles.

Gaini: This iron made implement was used to crush the stones.

Ghat malik: The lease holder who can appoint a number of staff in the Royalty Office for tax collection in the stone field.

Ghyu: A class of clarified butter.

Gotra: Clan.

Gram devta: Village deity.

Gram Panchayat: Local government bodies at the village or small town level in India.

Guru kul: The abode or the family of one's guru.

Guru: Sanskrit term for "teacher" or "master", especially in Indian religions.

Had: Bone or agnatic kin.

Hari: It appears as 650th name of Lord Vishnu in Hinduism.

Hat: Weekly market.

Indra: The god of rain and thunderstorms.

Jadutona: White or black magic.

Jal para: Sanctified water provided by traditional healer.

Jesus Ashram: It provides fellowship where peoples' lives are transformed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jhankri: In the villages of India jhankri is the traditional magico-religious healer.

Jharni: It was made up of both wood and iron wires. This implement was used to isolate the stones from sand.

Jogaune: Avoidance

Jogin: Girl saint

Kachha: A *kachha* is a building made of natural materials like mud, bamboo, grass, thatch or sticks.

Kali: The Hindu Goddesses associated with empowerment.

KB box: It was made up of wood. This implement was used to measure the amount of stones and also used to load the stones to the trucks.

Khappar: Man's skull

Knata: It was made up of both iron and wood. This implement was used during stone collection from waist level water.

Krishna: Eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu in Hinduism.

Kul devta: Family deity.

Langautis: Loincloths.

Laxmi puja: The worship of Goddesses Laxmi.

Laxmi thakurani: The Hindu Goddess of wealth, prosperity, fortune, and the embodiment of beauty.

Mahakal Thakur: God of mountains and forests.

Mahakuma: Sub-division.

Mandir: Temple.

Mantheni System: An agreement between *sardar* and truck owner in the stone field.

Mantra-tantra: Incantations and spells.

Marua: Dry crop.

Masan Kali: Images of Goddesses *Kali* who is worshipped on different occasions for the purpose of purification of the houses.

Matul: It was made up of both iron and wood. This implement was used to crush the stones.

Munsi: The person who looks after the works of the labourers in the stone field.

Muri: Puffed rice.

Nata: Relationship.

Nawami: It is the third and final day of *Durga puja*.

Nawami: Ninth day.

Oelty: It was made up of both wood and iron wires. This implement was used to isolate the stones from sand.

Paetains: A piece of cloth wrapped around to cover breasts and lower torso till knees.

Panta bhat: Stalled rice.

Pawan thakur: The Hindu God who is the protector from storms.

Pawani: Traditionally, the Rajbanshi people celebrate their own festival such as the *Pawani*.

Preths: Demons.

Pucca road: A road covered with blacktop.

Puja: Worship.

Rath Yatra: A ceremonial procession centred around a chariot carrying a holy image, specifically the procession of the Hindu God *Jagannatha*.

Reja: Daily wage labour.

Sakhra: The God *Indra* also known as *Sakhra* in *Vedas*.

Samiti: Co-operative society.

Sarva Shiksha Abiyan: Government of India's flagship programme aimed at the universalisation of elementary education in a time bound manner.

Sarbamangala: This deity is worshipped for the wellbeing of family.

Sardar: Leader.

Shakta: Worshipper of mother Goddess.

Shiva thakur: The most powerful God of the Hindu pantheon and one of the God heads in the Hindu Trinity.

Sindur: Vermilion.

Sishu siksha kendra: A mission of the Government of India and its objective is to bring all the children between 5-9 years under primary education.

Sudama: Close friend of Hindu deity Krishna in sage Sandipani's hermitage.

Tarai: It is a belt of marshy grasslands, savannas, and forests.

Tel para: Sanctified oil provided by the traditional healer.

Thakur: Deity.

Than: Altar.

Thar: Clan

Thika: Iron made implement which is used during stone collection from knee or waist level water.

Tihar: The festival of lights, where many candles are lit both inside and outside the houses to make it bright at night.

Tika: Holy mark.

Tukuri: It was made up of bamboo split. This implement was used to carry the stones and sand from one place to another and also used to measure the amount of stones.

Vaishnav: According to Hindu mythology the *Vaisnavs* are the worshipper of Lord Krishna.

Vedas: The *Vedas* are considered the earliest literary record of Indo-Aryan civilization, and the most sacred books of India.

Vishnu: The Hindu Goddess of peace.

Zari: A type of gold thread used decoratively on Indian clothing.