

# 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*<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> *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*<sup>2</sup> 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,

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<sup>2</sup> *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*<sup>3</sup> (master) during their *brahmacharya*<sup>4</sup> (study-life) period. The famous story of *Krishna*<sup>5</sup> and *Sudama*<sup>6</sup> 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-

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

<sup>4</sup> *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.

<sup>5</sup> *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.

<sup>6</sup> *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 (66<sup>th</sup> 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 |

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|--|--|
| & 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) |
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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](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 61<sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> Round)   | 7.35 | 6.51  | 13.86 |
| 1999-2000(55 <sup>th</sup> Round)   | 5.37 | 4.76  | 10.13 |
| 2004-2005(61 <sup>st</sup> Round)   | 4.76 | 4.31  | 9.07  |
| 2009-2010 (66 <sup>th</sup> 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 (66<sup>th</sup> 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](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, dhabas<sup>7</sup>, 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

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<sup>7</sup> *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*'<sup>8</sup> 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.

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<sup>8</sup> *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.



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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*<sup>9</sup>, 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*<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

<sup>10</sup> ***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*<sup>11</sup> 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,

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<sup>11</sup> *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*<sup>12</sup> (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.

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<sup>12</sup> *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.

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