

Crusading for Children in India's Informal Economy

For the last decade or two, an interesting debate has been in progress over the definition of child labour and child work and the contribution of children's work in the informal economy. Those who have argued for a narrow definition have been motivated in part by the desire to reduce the size of the problem and thus make it more manageable. But this conceptual sleight-of-hand flies in the face of common sense and results in making the work of millions of children invisible to public policy and public action. This paper argues that the distinction at the conceptual level between child labour and child work is essentially flawed. It revisits some of the empirical questions around this distinction and concludes that such a distinction be abandoned both at the level of theory and practice.

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Defining Child Labour and Child Work

Child labour is conventionally defined to include all 'economically active' children in the age group 5-14 years.

A person is treated as economically active or gainfully employed if s/he does work on a regular basis and receives remuneration for it. The ILO defines 'child labour' as "work that deprives children of their childhood and their dignity, which hampers their access to education and the acquisition of skills, and which is performed under deplorable conditions harmful to their health and their development."¹ Child work, on the other hand, includes all paid and unpaid work for the household or for the market, whether it is full-time or part-time. Participation in household activities on a regular basis and for several hours in a day to relieve adults for wage employment is also included in this definition. The ILO argues that it is not concerned with children helping in family farms or doing household chores.

The World Bank, in a similar vein, argues that child work that does not involve an exploitative relationship should be distinguished from child labour. It further argues that in some instances, work done by children within the family may even contribute to the development of the child. "Not all child labour is harmful. Many working children who are within a stable and nurturing environment with their parents or under protection of a guardian can benefit in terms of socialisation and from informal education and training."²

An article written by G K Lietaen in the *Economic and Political Weekly* in December 2002 questions those of us who have promoted the idea that there should be no differentiation between child labour and child work and that all categories of children who are out of school should be considered either child labourers or potential child labourers. We have been accused of confused thinking and overly exaggerating the plight of child labourers or as Lietaen says, "painting India as a huge child labour camp".³ He is much more comfortable with the descriptions of Alec Fyfe who is quoted as saying:

There is little doubt that many children welcome the opportunity to work, seeing in it the rite de passage to adulthood. Work can be a gradual initiation into adulthood and a positive element in the child's development. Light work, properly structured and phased, is not child labour. Work which does not detract from the other essential activities of children, leisure, play and education, is not child labour. Child labour is work which impairs the health and development of children.⁴

These arguments have been made since the 1980s in India and abroad but are demonstrably weak as we will try to show below. In India, for instance, the official statistics on child labour show that only 11.28 million children are to be described as 'child labourers'. But out of a population of 203 million children in the age range of 5-14 years, almost 100 million children are out of the school system.⁵ And what are these children doing? Most of them are working in rural areas, both within and outside the household, in so-called 'light, non-hazardous work' and kept out of the statistics of the labour market.⁶ Lietaen, using the census data from 1991 shows that around 42 per cent of child workers are engaged on their family farms in agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing. The National Sample Survey (NSS) data on the

50th round in 1993-94 has also provided similar figures. How does Lieten come to the conclusion that “many of these activities are relatively light in nature and, most of the time, have limited working hours?”⁷ The activities that he describes as being light includes carrying head loads of grass, firewood, pots of water, grazing cattle from dawn to dusk, spending hours in back-breaking chores transplanting, weeding, working to cross-pollinate plants and even applying pesticides and chemical fertilisers on the farms. Even if a particular task takes only a few hours, it is not as if children are engaged in single tasks only.

The struggle to get recognition for children’s paid and unpaid work is an uphill task. One set of child rights activists continue to pass off children’s full time work as part of the socialisation process. There are academics and activists alike who have glorified the work of children – who are looking after younger siblings, cooking, cleaning, fetching fuel, fodder and water – thus basically managing the household so that adults can take on more wage work. What is the evidence about the work of children?

Time Use Survey of the Government of India

The department of statistics, government of India, organised a pilot time use survey in six states of India during July 1998 to June 1999. The idea of undertaking such a study was, in part, to analyse the implication of paid and unpaid work among men, women and children in rural and urban areas. This study was conducted in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya. The total sample size was 18,628 households distributed among the states in proportion to the total number of estimated households as per the National Sample Survey organisation (NSSO) 1993-94 survey. The survey collected comprehensive information on how people, including children above six years, spend their time on different activities. The one-day recall method was used for data collection. Indira Hirway, analysing the data, shows “that the most important economic activity for children in the age group, 6-14 years is animal husbandry. About 11.47 per cent of boys and 10.69 per cent of girls in this age group participated in this activity, particularly in animal grazing...These boys and girls spent 21.54 hours and 13.94 hours, respectively on this activity, implying on an average, a daily engagement of three and two hours respectively”.⁸ The next important economic activity for children is the collection of fuelwood, water, fodder, fruits, etc. About 4.51 per cent of boys and 13.76 per cent of girls in the age group 6-14 were engaged in this activity, which implies that this activity is more important for girls than for boys.⁹ Crop farming engages 6.23 per cent of boys and 6.24 per cent of girls and petty services like informal sector activities engage 5.41 per cent of boys and 4.72 per cent of girls. Fishing and forestry and other manufacturing activities are also important from a children’s work point of view.

Breaking up the data by age groups, Hirway says that in the 6-9 years age group, about 6.82 per cent of boys and 6.37 per cent of girls are engaged in animal husbandry, mainly grazing. Petty services employ 4.57 per cent of boys and 4.40 per cent of girls. Crop farming engages 3.51 per cent of boys and 3.74 per cent of girls. Further, the data reveals that, “children aged 6-14, who participated in economic activities spent 21.46 hours a week (about three hours a day), on an average, on SNA work, which comes to 12.77 per cent of their total weekly time. SNA is the System of National Accounts which refers to economic activities which are covered under national income accounts. Extended SNA activities are those which are not included in national accounts but are covered under general production boundary, and non-SNA activities or personal activities. Boys spent 24.27 hours while girls spent 18.63 hours. The data show that boys engaged in mining, quarrying and digging spend maximum time on this work (34.5 hours), which implies that many of them are engaged in these activities on a full-time basis. This is followed by manufacturing work (32.70 hours), construction work (26.16 hours), animal grazing (21.54 hours) and crop farming (20.14 hours).”

In the case of girls engaged in SNA activities, maximum time (37.34 hours a week) is spent by those who are engaged in mining, quarrying and digging. This is followed by girls engaged in manufacturing activities (27.57 hours), construction work (22.30 hours), crop farming (20.79 hours) and animal husbandry (18.02 hours).¹⁰ The time-use survey showed that while 67.13 per cent of children are engaged in educational activities and about 17 per cent in pure economic activities, the balance 15.87 per cent were engaged either in extended SNA activities or in non-SNA activities. Extended SNA activities while not considered

strictly economic activities fall in the 'General Production Boundary' and include activities such as household maintenance, management, care of siblings, sick, aged and disabled and other household activities.¹¹ The care of siblings, the aged, the sick and the disabled take up a fair amount of the time of children. For example, girls in the age group 6-14 and 6-9 years spend 7.96 hours and 7.52 hours on the physical care of children respectively.

The time-use survey shows that boys and girls spend 21.46 hours a week on SNA activities, which is about 47 per cent of the time spent by an adult on SNA activities. Girls (6-14) participate in extended SNA activities much more than participant men of all ages. Thus, while girls spend 13.01 hours on household management, 10.64 hours on community services and 11.17 hours on care activities, the corresponding data on time spent by men are 6.76 hours, 7.99 hours and 6.12 hours respectively.¹²

As Hirway points out: when one combines SNA and extended SNA work, one realises that children's contribution to this total work in the society is more than marginal, in terms of both number of participants as well as hours put in. The contribution of girls is greater than that of boys.¹³ More significantly, she says that more than 32 per cent 'nowhere' children, who do not go to school, are largely engaged in economic or in extended economic activities. In the case of girls, their low attendance in school is not only due to their participation in economic activities but also due to the responsibilities borne by them in extended SNA activities.¹⁴

Other Research Findings

While international and national attention has been focused on child labour in hazardous conditions where the numbers of children involved are fairly substantial, it is clear from the available data that the largest numbers of children are in fact to be found working in agriculture and allied activities. These children are rarely taken into account.

It is increasingly being recognised that a large number of children are out of the school system largely because they are involved in some kind of work within the household. Recent research has shown that if non-remunerative work for the household is included in the statistics of child labour, then a very large percentage of children are part of the labour force. Francois Leclercq, using the NCAER-HDI 1994 survey data, seems to suggest that on an average, children account for 44.7 per cent and 52.9 per cent, respectively, of days spent on agricultural and non-agricultural wage labour in their households, which is extremely high.¹⁵ Needless to say, this does not represent children's total contribution to household resources, which should include income generated through other types of child work and opportunity gains through substitution of child for adult labour. Piyush Antony's research work in rural Bihar points to large numbers of children working as agricultural labour and in cultivation. If animal grazing is included, approximately 25 per cent of all working children belong to agriculture and allied sectors. This does not include the 50 per cent of children who are full time engaged in household work and the 17.35 per cent of children engaged in fuel wood and cow dung collection.¹⁶

Bhattacharyya, Mathur and Dash writing about the situation in rural Rajasthan citing a UNESCO-sponsored study, say that it is estimated that 50 per cent of children are either working or are nowhere children for the year 2000, which is much higher than the figure estimated for the country as a whole. The authors say that "what is intriguing is that the incidence of child labour has gone up from 5.64 per cent to 7.8 per cent during 1981-91 [Census 1991] in rural Rajasthan. This is solely due to the increase in the work participation of girl children. ...What is more disturbing is that there has been a steep increase in the already high percentage participation of girl children in work activities in the rural areas during the 1980s. The figure has increased from 6.38 per cent in 1981 to 9.75 per cent in 1991".¹⁷ The study shows that the incidence of child labour is not uniform across districts and there is great disparity in the spatial distribution of child labour.¹⁸ The authors report that in three of the five districts of Barmer, Banswara and Churu, more than 50 per cent of the

children did not go to school and more than 20 per cent were engaged in economic wage activities which were hazardous to the health of children.

Parveen Nangia and Nizamuddin Khan's study of educational deprivation and employment status of children in the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa is based on the national family health survey conducted by the ministry of health and family welfare. Analysing the data, Nangia and Khan show that nearly 7 per cent of children could not attend school because they were required to work either in family businesses or on family farms. Overall, 21 per cent of children (17 per cent of boys and 24 per cent of girls) could not attend school because they were required to work or help in household chores or take care of siblings.¹⁹ Analysing the reasons for children dropping out of school, Nangia and Khan say that amongst other reasons, 13 per cent of children dropped out because they were required to do household work and 10 per cent because they were required to work on farm or family businesses or outside for payment in cash or in kind. In all, 26 per cent of children who ever attended school dropped out because they were required to work or help in the household chores or take care of siblings.²⁰ The sample size of this survey was extremely large covering 3,872 households from Andhra Pradesh, 6,749 from Madhya Pradesh and 4,689 from Orissa.

Nira Ramachandran, analysing the census data from 1971 to 1991, reports that there is a clear increase in girl child work participation rates in 13 of the 21 states for which data were available. In some of the backward states like Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, girl child participation rates have doubled between 1981 and 1991. According to the author, "what is even more disturbing is the one hundred per cent increase in these rates in developed states like Punjab and Gujarat. States like Bihar and Gujarat, which recorded a fall in rural girl child work participation between the seventies and the eighties, have again recorded an upward trend in the 1991 Census. In absolute terms, the number of girl child workers has increased from 2.8 million to 3.5 million since 1971. Over 80 per cent of these girls are still caught up in the agricultural sector, mostly as full-time agricultural labourers."²¹

Feminist Contribution

The debate on child labour has been frozen in arguments of what constitutes 'labour' and what constitutes 'work'. And it is astonishing for this is also the time when the women's movement is challenging the differential notions of 'labour' and 'work'. Not only is there a growing demand globally to recognise women's unpaid work but also because the labour market is itself becoming informalised. The informal economy is growing and contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The term 'informal economy' is increasingly being used instead of 'informal sector' for two reasons. One, the informal and formal parts of the economy are interlinked and therefore should not be seen as two distinct sectors of the economy. And second, the term 'sector' is more commonly used as a classificatory device for industry groups or commodity chains. See Chen, Martha Alter, Renana Jhabvala and Frances Lund (2002) *Working Paper on the Informal Economy. Supporting Workers in the Informal Economy: A Policy Framework*. Employment Sector 2002/2, International Labour Office, Geneva, p 2. What is yet to be recognised by the women's movement is the fact that along with women, children contribute significantly to the GDP. The studies cited earlier in this paper reflect the significant contribution of children, particularly girls, to the economy. There are lessons to be learnt both from the feminist approach and those who study the role and contribution of the informal economy.

The informal economy is linked closely with the formal economy – producing, distributing and providing services. Informal enterprises run by adults depend hugely on family labour, particularly the labour of children. And if children are not directly working on production related work, they are engaged in supporting the "care economy" so that their mothers can be freed up for wage employment. And while this may not 'officially' be defined as 'child labour' by some 'experts', there is no doubt that many self-employed persons, own-account persons/sub-contracts producing goods and services are able to do so because survival activities for households are managed by children, particularly girls.

If the numbers of children working were relatively small, just a few thousand, we may have been able to overlook the matter. But we are talking about millions of children involved in the

informal economy. The women's movement has struggled long and hard to get recognition for women's unpaid work within the "care economy". But some child labour activists continue papering over the contribution of children and passing it off lightly as a necessary rite de passage. There is also enough evidence to show that the informal economy is very extensive.

Extent of Informal Economy

A recent UNIFEM regional policy workshop in Kathmandu (2000) on the informal sector noted that at least 50 million home-based workers in south Asia of whom 80 per cent are women, who carry out remunerative production and services in their own homes and include own account or self-employed workers as well as those who do work for contractors or employers at piece-rates. This figure, of course, does not include the invisible army of child workers who support their mothers. Even estimates of beedi-workers (estimated at 4.3 million), does not take into account children working as part of family labour.

Some of us working on the issue of child labour have moved away from the traditional definition of 'labour' precisely because the nature of work and labour has changed in the era of globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation. Subcontracting has become a major way in which goods and services are produced and provided. It has become clear that there are very thin lines between 'labour' and 'work' and if we persist in keeping these lines intact, we will indeed be doing a great disservice to workers in this sector, particularly women and children. More importantly, the number of workers in the informal economy are huge and growing every day. As Chen, Jhabvala and Lund (2002) point out:²²

Official statistics indicated that the share of informal workers in the non-agricultural workforce ranged from over 55 per cent in Latin America to 45-85 per cent in different parts of Asia, to nearly 80 per cent in Africa. But

If one includes small farmers and agricultural labourers in the informal workforce, as many countries do, the share of the informal workforce in the total workforce is higher still: in India, for instance, the informal workforce (including agriculture) accounts for over 90 per cent of the total employment.²³

Not only is the informal economy large, but the estimation of the contribution of the informal sector to the GDP is inadequate. The statistics division of the United Nations secretariat in the year 2000 calculated the contribution of the informal sector to GDP in 24 developing countries (14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, two in North Africa, seven in Asia, and one in Latin America). It was found that:

In Asia, the share of the informal economy ranges from 17 to 48 per cent of non-agricultural GDP and from 16 to 32 per cent of total GDP: the lowest and highest share being in Korea and India, respectively.²⁴

The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), and the Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR) calculated the contribution of the informal sector. The NCAER study showed that the informal sector – or the unorganised sector, as it is called in India – "generates about 62 per cent of GDP, 50 per cent of gross national savings, and 40 per cent of national exports".²⁵

Given the fact that children contribute majorly to the informal economy, albeit invisibly, it is important to take a quick look at the economic contribution of this sector to the GDP. ILO's recent report (2002)²⁶ on the informal economy presents some interesting statistics which need to be taken into account.²⁷

Contribution of Informal Sector to GDP in Developing Countries

There are, as yet, no estimates of the contribution of the informal economy as a whole to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, there are estimates of the contribution of the informal sector to GDP. These estimates indicate that the contribution of informal enterprises

(i.e., the informal sector) to non-agricultural GDP is significant. "The average (unweighted) share of the informal sector in non-agricultural GDP varies from a low of 27 per cent in North Africa to a high of 41 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa...The contribution of the informal sector to GDP is 29 per cent for Latin America and 41 per cent for Asia".²⁸

Within Asia the figures are India (1990-91) 45 per cent, Indonesia (1998) 31 per cent, Philippines (1995) 32 per cent and The Republic of Korea (1995) 17 per cent.²⁹

Estimating Informal Sector Contribution

"According to the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA), the informal sector is regarded as a group of production units which form part of the household sector. However, the whole contribution of the household institutional sector in the SNA cannot be attributed to the informal sector. Production for own final use is not included, which means that 'imputed rents', paid domestic services and subsistence agriculture are excluded. The estimation of the informal sector in GDP requires that the accounts of the household institutional sector are available by detailed industrial sectors, making it possible to distinguish agriculture and other primary activities as well as the estimates for rents and domestic service".³⁰

As seen above, there is perhaps no sector in the informal economy where children are not working. Perhaps the category, under which children are engaged in most, is that of self-employment where they work as part of unpaid family workers. They are of course excluded from compilations of the self-employed because they are not even considered entrepreneurial assistants. While the group of own-account workers within the larger category of the informal economy capture the work of women, this is yet another category which is also heavily dependent on children and where again the contribution of children is little recognised.

As a leading feminist economist Nilufer Cagatay points out, "part of the reason for the perpetuation of poverty has to do with women's lower wages compared to men, with particularly adverse effects on poor women-headed households. Low wages, especially for women, also encourage greater reliance on child labour, which depletes capabilities, health and well-being and further depresses adult wages in countries where child labour is relatively widespread".³¹ This is borne out by the data presented earlier.

Working at Home in India

"In India in 1999-2000, the National Sample Survey Organisation included a question in the labour force survey on the 'place of work'. The results show that about one quarter of all non-agricultural workers in informal enterprises work in their own dwelling. Within this overall picture, there are marked urban-rural and male-female differences. About 18 per cent of these workers are home-based in rural areas, while only 6 per cent are home-based in urban areas. Well over half of the female non-agricultural workforce in informal enterprises (57 per cent) works at home while less than one-fifth of the male non-agricultural workforce (18 per cent) works at home."³²

A recent sample survey of the workforce of Ahmedabad city in western India brings out very clearly the gender differences in the location of work. The findings from that survey show the following distribution of all male and female workers – both formal and informal – across different sites:

- 52 per cent of all women, compared to 8 per cent of all men, work at home.
- 18 per cent of all women, compared to 1 per cent of all men, work in others' homes.
- 5 per cent of all women, compared to 23 per cent of all men, work on the streets.
- 3 per cent of all women, compared to 5 per cent of all men, work at construction sites.
- 22 per cent of all women, compared to 58 per cent of all men, work at factories, offices, or workshops.

This study found that women operate nearly 70 per cent of the informal manufacturing activities, nearly 30 per cent of the informal service activities, and just under 15 per cent of the informal trading activities and that the majority of the economic activities managed or operated by women are home-based. We have noted earlier in the paper how children support the work of their mothers within and outside the household.

Street Vending

If street vendors are to include not only those street vendors who sell goods but also a broader range of street workers who sell services and produce or repair goods, such as: hairdressers or barbers; shoe-shiners and shoe repairers; car window cleaners; tailors specialising in mending; bicycle, motorcycle, van and truck mechanics; furniture makers; metal workers; garbage pickers and waste recyclers; head-loaders and cart pullers; wandering minstrels, magicians, acrobats, and jugglers; beggars and mendicants; then a very large number of children would have to be counted.

Street vending could be a full-time or a part-time activity and child street vendors can be seen selling cigarettes, newspapers and magazines, fruits and vegetables. They are very visible at railway stations, bus stops, street corners and central business districts. But representatives from street vendor associations, activists and researchers rarely notice them.

Human Development Report, 1996

Years of research and activism by stakeholders through various fora have brought to attention of the global community that the informal economy has to get greater recognition. The very fact that much of this work in society goes unrecognised and under-valued only goes to show that the point has to be stated again and again. The *Human Development Report 1996* points out that most of this work is done by women. In individual countries roughly two-thirds of women's total work time – but only a third of men's – is unrecorded.³³ In developing countries the proportion is similar for women, but for men it declines to less than a quarter.³⁴ "Women in developing countries tend to carry an even larger share of the workload than those in industrial countries – on average about 13 per cent higher than men's share and in rural areas 20 per cent higher. In rural Kenya women do 35 per cent more work than men".³⁵ "In some countries women's work burden is extreme. Indian women work 69 hours a week, while men work 59. Nepalese women work 77 hours, men 56...."³⁶

The *Human Development Report* also rightly points out that "millions of children are put to work in ways that deny them their right to childhood....Most of these children belong to marginal communities and to socially and economically deprived groups. The worst consequence of all may be that child labour keeps children out of school, thereby preventing the development of their capabilities – a priority for a long-run solution to poverty and exploitation".³⁷ And further the report says that "the unjust employment of children, unlike unemployment and underemployment, has received little attention until very recently.... estimates of the number of employed children vary from 14 million to 100 million children in India, 2 million to 19 million in Pakistan, 5 million to 15 million in Bangladesh, 2 million to 7 million in Brazil, 1.3 million to 13 million in Mexico and some 12 million in Nigeria. In Africa more than 20 per cent of children are considered to be working, and in Latin America between 10 per cent and 25 per cent. Some of the most widespread forms of child labour – domestic help, agricultural and bonded workers, especially girls – are largely invisible".³⁸ Child labour is not an economic compulsion of all poor families. The point that is being made is that child labour is the consequence of extreme social and economic exploitation. The only way to prevent child labour is to recognise that children's rightful place is in school, not in the workplace or in the house. So, the first step is to ensure compulsory primary education for all children. Historically and worldwide, wherever child labour has been abolished, this is how it has been done.

It is this recognition of the economic contribution of children through their active participation in the informal economy that has made many researchers and child rights activists strongly endorse the view that the traditional definition of child labour needs to be changed to include all kinds of work because the very invisibility of children's work was making protagonists claim that this was part of the 'socialisation process'.

It must also be realised that by focusing only on 'child labour' and not 'child work' a great disservice is being done to the girl child. Research has shown that gender discrimination is rampant within the household with girls being made to do a disproportionate amount of work.

Interestingly, this idea of 'redefining' child labour with a more inclusive definition was taken up by the National Commission on Labour (2002) and the *National Human Development Report* (2001).

Hazardous and Non-Hazardous Work: An Invidious Distinction

Research studies reported here and elsewhere show that in the era of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation the notions of labour and employment have changed. Therefore to insist on a purist definition of 'labour' to include wage employment only and not to include 'work' which may not be paid seems unnecessary. Lieten and others are fond of making a distinction between the so-called 'hazardous' and 'non-hazardous' work, in the belief that some types of work are actually good for the child. But again studies have shown that almost all types of work become hazardous for children given their peculiar vulnerabilities of age. The national labour institute (NLI) studies on child labour in home-based industries show that large numbers of children are working in industries which are hazardous to the health of the child.³⁹ A 1998 ILO/CORT study says that children's better health is one of the reasons for hiring children in industries where the health of many adults stands compromised by early work in the industry. Anker et al go to the extent of saying that "in some hazardous industries such as the limestone, slate and glass industries, children are said to be used either because it is argued that workers need to get acclimatised to the hazardous working conditions (e.g., extreme heat in glass factories) when young in order to be able to do this work as an adult".⁴⁰ My own research findings were similar.⁴¹

Why Children Are Hired

Another even more significant point that needs to be made is that while children are being forced to work for industries on the grounds that they are most suitable for the work, research on the ground shows that this is simply not the case. Even Anker et al's recent study in the glass and carpet industry reveal that virtually all the work performed by children is unskilled and child labourers do not need a special physical dexterity that is not also possessed by adults. Interestingly while this ILO/CORT study was done from an industries point of view, it showed that some of the non-pecuniary reasons for hiring children was that children were more innocent and less aware of their rights. They would therefore be less troublesome, more willing to take orders and uncomplainingly perform monotonous tasks.⁴² Employers preferred children because they were innocent and unlikely to agitate for workers' rights or join trade unions. In spite of the evidence of their own study that children get paid less than adults for the same work, that when paid by piece-rate, children needed to work longer hours than adults in order to achieve the same output and therefore the same daily income, that child labourers go through unbelievable periods of apprenticeship ranging from a few months to two or three years, the authors still find enough reasons to suggest that some types of work is acceptable for children!

Law and Implementation

The other important fact to remember is that the so-called 'child labourers' working in hazardous industries have not particularly benefited from labour legislation. The labour law route is full of pitfalls and loopholes. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 only prohibits child labour in specific processes listed in the schedule attached to the Act. This Act only applies to workshops as the Factories Act is supposed to cover factories.

Several factors have ensured that the law is not enforced. For one thing, there are very few labour inspectors. Most of them are in collusion with employers. There is pressure from local politicians who generally support employers. Wherever there are raids, either the employer has some advance information or if caught, out-of-court settlements between parents and employers takes place. To compound the problem children come with false age certificates. A new phenomenon is the subcontracting of work to the household so that child labour can be passed off as part of family labour, even though everyone knows that the child employed is not related in any way to the adult. An NLI report points out that the carpet industry has in fact moved out of the core area of Mirzapur-Bhadohi to districts like Gadhwa and Samastipur in Bihar where no labour inspections are done. Even RugMark, the organisation set up by the Germans and with NGO support to provide labelling for carpets not made by children, confirmed the lack of inspection in the remote areas of Bihar.

National Child Labour Programme and Its Limitations

The National Child Labour Programme (NCLP) of the government of India is ostensibly supposed to provide special schools for 'child labourers'. But the reality is that in rural areas where special schools exist, most of the children enrolled are working as agricultural labourers or goat-herds as 'hazardous industry' is not to be found everywhere. Moreover, because of the Rs 100 stipend that is given to 'child labourers', those studying in regular schools shift to the special schools thus defeating the whole purpose of these special schools. It is only in the state of Andhra Pradesh that special schools are sanctioned for running bridge camps for out-of-school children on the model of the M V Foundation.

Clearly, defining child labourers differently from child workers is not a very useful exercise either from a public policy perspective or from a practical programme perspective. The experiences of grassroot groups who have worked with NCLP schools has been that while the children do well in these schools, there is no large-scale community participation or social mobilisation possible. In a specific geographic area if only a few children are picked up for special dispensation, then the community at large is not involved or interested. On the other hand if the universe of children is large and includes all out-of-school children, then the chances of social mobilisation are greater.

Reality Check

Analysis of the National Commission on Labour Using the Census of India 1991 data as also the 55th round of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) data which is based on a 30- day recall basis, the report points out that none of these definitions of labour and work have fully captured the extent and degree of women's participation in the workforce. As they rightly explain, perceptions about what constitutes 'labour' and what constitutes 'work' depends upon the enumerator on the analysis perception. "A UNIFEM supported survey found that 98 out of 100 enumerators did not even put questions regarding work to women: it was simply assumed that women did not work. Out of 2002 women in the 1,000 households covered, only four women were asked about any work they had done in the previous year. In other cases, enumerators depended solely on answers or information supported by male members of the family." ⁴³ If women's labour is left unrecorded, more so is the case with the labour of children.

Agriculture is the largest sector employing 62 per cent of the total workforce. Women comprise 84 per cent of this workforce, with the highest number of women workers engaged as agricultural labourers. The commission recognises that the burdens of women are of such a magnitude that they have no choice but to take assistance from their children. The report emphasises that traditional family arrangements are no longer valid. The numbers of women forced to seek employment outside the house have increased. "Today, there are over 15 crore women living below the poverty line and 5-6 crore children under six years belong to the group where mothers have to work for their survival. Most of them are in the unorganised sector". ⁴⁴

Elaborating further, the commission says: "In the absence of adequate childcare facilities, a working mother has often no option but to leave the child with a slightly older sibling. A large part of sibling caregivers are girl-children many of them not above the age in which they themselves need care and nurturing. Provisions of childcare facilities will release the girl child to attend school and to enjoy her own childhood, and grow". ⁴⁵

Giving a graphic description of the work that children do, the commission goes on to say that "a child chasing goats or cows, cutting grass or a very young girl washing utensils, carrying a pot of water, precariously balancing it on her head or cleaning her house while minding her younger brother in a cradle, are not uncommon images in rural India. This is the face of working children in the agricultural sector". ⁴⁶

The sensitivity with which the report has recognised the economic contribution of children in agriculture is a reflection of the deep understanding and commitment of the members of this commission to the issue of women and children's work. And therefore the report goes on to say that:

Not so visible are the thousands of children rolling beedis, working in glass factories or engaged in sericulture, carpet weaving, match making, etc. Similarly, shoeshine boy or the little child serving a cup of tea or sweeping the floor with a soggy dark piece of cloth in a 'hotel' or a dhaba, and the rising number of street children may be the visible forms of working children in urban townships or along highways. But there are innumerable invisible young girls and boys performing domestic chores, helping their parents employed in an urban or rural home. Some of these children attend regular school some of them struggle to keep pace and go to school whenever possible, while some others drop out. Some of these children manage to attend night schools or non-formal education classes. Others do not even have the opportunity to visit a classroom. These are the multiple images of childhood amongst the less privileged in India.⁴⁷

Apart from the visible child labour in workshops and factories, there is the not so visible face of child labour in agriculture where young boys and girls work as part of family labour. The report states that, "coming from poor rural households, these children are forced to take on a number of "adult-releasing" tasks so that their parents are free to engage in direct productive activity. This is especially true of the girl child, who has to take on the responsibility of fetching fuelwood and fodder looking after younger siblings, cooking, washing utensils, and grazing cattle. However, despite evidence to the contrary, the contribution of these children to the economy is not taken into account".⁴⁸

The commission's well researched report points to the presence of child labour in plantations. "There is also evidence that children are employed in plantations. Studies show that the percentage of child labour in the tea plantations of Assam and West Bengal is quite high."⁴⁹ "Working children are also found amongst migrant families as well. They work at construction site, sugar factories, brick-kilns, mines and plantations where circumstances do not permit the parents to leave the children at home. Numerous studies have documented that children of migrants form a very large percentage of the non-domestic, non-monetary child labour force. Another subgroup falling into this category comprises children, who accompany their mothers working as part-time domestic servants...Domestic work, categorised as non-hazardous by the existing laws, can turn hazardous for a child. Being beaten for breakages or for not being quick enough, being starved are commonly mentioned as penalties imposed by the employer."⁵⁰ Children are also found among victims of disasters, natural as well as man-made, drug abuse, physical neglect within the family, and being sold and trafficked in for prostitution, producing pornographic material and drug peddling. Besides, there are also children whose services are dedicated to a deity in early childhood (e.g., 'devdasis', 'jogins'). These children are not paid for their services, and often end up as prostitutes in adulthood.⁵¹

And finally, based on the evidence the members were able to put together, the report says the following:

The approach of the group on women and child labour has been that the child, the child's welfare and the child's future should be central to our programmes and to our laws. Children are the future of our society, and our economy. Every child should have the opportunity to develop his or her skills and potential to participate both as a citizen and as a worker. In today's society, a certain level of schooling is necessary for each person to feel an equal. Moreover, with a rapidly changing economy, to deny schooling to any group of children is to forever deny them an opportunity to acquire skills and earn a decent livelihood. A child-centred approach to child labour is, therefore, not merely to save the child from severe exploitation, but also to ensure that she or he has the chance to a future. The commission endorses this approach.⁵²

The National Commission on Labour has been criticised for using only six studies on the basis of which the study group prepared this report. This is factually incorrect as the data

used for the report also included field investigations and interviews. Looking at most of the major studies done on this subject in the last five years, the evidence has not changed. Whether it is studies commissioned by the National Labour Institute or published recently by the Institute for Human Development and the World Food Programme or the research cited by Lakshmidhar Mishra in his book on child labour in India, the evidence points to the fact that child labour is rampant and the work that children do takes a toll on their health. Growing up as illiterate, unskilled, adult workers, they only increase the growing numbers of the exploited, vulnerable and marginalised labour force. Any serious analyst working on the issue of workers' rights would be aware of the seminal work of scholars such as Jan Breman or Mahasweta Devi who have drawn attention to the plight of the labouring classes in India. The National Commission on Labour draws upon a rich understanding of the labouring classes in India and its conclusions are therefore nuanced by it.

The National Commission on Labour adopts a strong human development approach to the issue of child labour. As human development is the process of enlarging people's choices, these choices will only be open to the vulnerable and the underprivileged if they have a chance to get quality education and to have access to resources. Since human freedom is vital for human development, people must be able to exercise their choices. Working full-time at the cost of formal education is to a great extent a denial of those choices. And as has been pointed out in the 1990 Human Development Report⁵³ "...literacy figures are only a crude reflection of access to education, particularly to the good quality education so necessary for productive life in modern society. But literacy is a person's first step in learning and knowledge-building, so literacy figures are essential in any measurement of human development".⁵⁴

Redefining Child Labour

While the National Commission on Labour has been accused of creating confusion by redefining child labour to include all out-of-school children and thereby artificially inflating the number of working children to more than 10 times the official figure,⁵⁵ the *National Human Development Report* prepared by the Planning Commission in 2001 has also raised issues of definition of child labour. As the report points out:

The definition of child labour is far from being unambiguous or precise, particularly in the Indian context. To begin with, such a narrow definition of child labour runs into problems if a child is involved in any unpaid work, for example, in day to day household chores or looking after the younger siblings in the family; or for that matter, in small family enterprise like retail business, or in seasonal agricultural work on the household farms. The problem becomes particularly serious when all this work on which children are deployed, is at the expense of acquiring education and becoming literate. The second set of problem arises when one looks at number of children in the age group 5-14 years, who are categorised neither as child nor as students enrolled or attending schools. This segment of the child population, often categorised as the 'no where children' is sizeable and comprises children who, though generally working, are not counted as part of the workforce perhaps because of conceptual narrowness of the definition of child labour or because of difficulties in accounting the work performed as per the system of national accounting or because of the sporadic nature of their engagement in the labour market. Such children in any case provide a ready pool, both in rural and urban areas, from where the prospective employer can engage a more easily manageable labour, often, at a fraction of the going wage rate.⁵⁶

The important point being made by the Planning Commission report is that by narrowly defining child labour one cannot wish away the problem, and certainly not from the point of view of "designing public policy or from considerations of devising effective strategy of public intervention for mitigating the problem".⁵⁷ In addressing the issue of child labour, the policy framework, public interventions and civil society initiatives have to necessarily focus on

bringing about a decline in the proportion of time spent by children in providing labour in activities that are captured in the system of national accounting, such as those involving production, trade, business or services and those activities that broadly come under the category of household chores. It is all the more important to bring about such a shift, if the deployment of children in these activities is at the expense of their enrolment and attendance in schools. At the same time, the time spent by an average child on education and becoming literate as also participation in cultural, social and community services has to increase.⁵⁸

In a labour surplus economy, it is presumed that employers would prefer adults by paying them marginally higher wages than they would to children. This argument assumes that paying lower wages is the only reason why children are preferred to adults. The fact of the matter is that children, like women, are a docile labour force. They are unlikely to demand higher wages, take longer breaks from work, willing to work longer hours without question. Study after study has shown that children are preferred because they are easy to control. Children who are working outside the formal labour market have been defined as 'nowhere' children by some economists, who do not seem to see the economic contribution of children as being significant. The fact is that almost 100 million children are categorised as "nowhere children".

Fortunately both the National Commission on Labour and the Planning Commission recognise the important contribution of children to the informal economy and this is evidenced by their strong advocacy for redefining child labour to include all out-of-school children. While it is true that a number of children work both before and after school, a number of children start working full-time because of the lack of availability of schools within their neighbourhoods, The department of elementary education, the ministry of human resource development, government of India, recognises that universalisation of education depends also on child labour elimination. Efforts have therefore been made to see how former child labourers can be brought back into the formal school system through the bridge camp approach, which has become an integral part of the 'sarva shiksha abhiyan' programme of the government of India. This is the first necessary, if not sufficient, condition for both child labour elimination and universalisation of elementary education. The census of India 2001 has also broadened the definition of work to include categories of work done by women and children for household consumption as work.

Practical Problems in Narrowing the Definition of Child Labour

As mentioned above, there are serious problems in tackling the problem of child labour narrowly defined. A conceptually narrow view of child labour results in leaving out millions of children, particularly girls, from the focus of public attention. Since they are not accounted for in statistics and not covered by the law, they remain invisible and outside the ambit of public policy. A lot of the recruitment of child labour in industry takes place through the intermediation of adult employees who know vulnerable families and are able to bring children to work with them. With the growing system of subcontracting, work is farmed out to children either in their homes or work is provided to poor families at home where they can use child labour and pass this off as family labour. Labour departments of governments can merrily shut their eyes by defining the issue differently.

Practical Solutions

While child labour narrowly defined is difficult to eradicate, child labour broadly defined can be easier tackled. The work of Shantha Sinha (of the M V Foundation (MVF) in Andhra Pradesh) who has recently won the Ramon Magsaysay Award for her pioneering work for the elimination of child labour, is a case in point. MVF has a non-negotiable approach to the issue and considers all children who are out of school as either child labourers or potential child labourers. Starting work with a group of 30 children in 1984, they have assisted over 2,40,000 child labourers to get into formal schools with more than 95 per cent retention. They work in over 4,000 villages and monitor the progress of over 6,00,000 children on a day to day basis to ensure that there are no drop-outs.

While many NGOs and educationists have been preoccupied with issues regarding the value of formal education for the poor or pedagogical issues rather than issues of access to education, MVF's approach has been that every child must be in formal school and every

effort must be made to that end. They have pioneered the 'bridge camp' approach for older children who have never been to school. These 'bridge camps' provide accelerated learning opportunities for older children for periods ranging from 6 to 14 months so that they can catch up with children of their own age groups. This ensures that older children do not have to sit with younger ones in the same classroom. In a short period of time, children are able to complete a seven-year syllabus and appear for the class seven board examination. This has given a huge boost to children, particularly girls, who would have otherwise been forced to live a life of illiteracy. So successful is the approach that it has been mainstreamed in the government of India's sarva shiksha abhiyan programme for universalisation of elementary education. In Andhra Pradesh, as a result of the work of MVF, the elimination of child labour is the responsibility of the education department and not that of the labour department. MVF, through its grassroot level work, has shown that the solutions to child labour elimination lies in strengthening the formal school system. To date, MVF is working in 4,000 villages in 63 mandals of Andhra Pradesh. They have released 2,40,000 children from work and mainstreamed them into formal schools. They follow approximately 6,00,000 children in formal schools on a day-to-day basis to ensure that children don't dropout and join the workforce again. This is an uphill task, but nevertheless, MVF has shown that it is possible to get children out of work and into school. The challenge is not over and new hurdles emerge every day.

MVF believes in developing a consensus and works with multiple stakeholders to achieve their goals. They also believe in the setting up and strengthening of grassroot level institutions which can become accountable to communities. Thus, they not only assisted formal school teachers to deal with the swelling numbers of children enrolled in schools, because of the MVF work by providing para teachers, but also worked with the teachers' unions and helped them to form a teachers' forum against child labour. Similarly, they engaged the assistance of sensitive panchayat sarpanches and landlords to force other landlords to give up bonded child labour. They have a continuous training programme to sensitise government officials at all levels on the need to get children back to school.

MVF's pioneering work has influenced some state governments and NGOs in other parts of the country as well. The centre for rural education and development action (CREDA) in Mirzapur district of the state of Uttar Pradesh, CINI-ASHA, an NGO working in the city of Kolkata in West Bengal, Lokadrushti, an NGO working in the Nuapada district of Orissa, Vidhayak Sansad, an NGO working in Thane district of Maharashtra, the work of self-help groups organised under the UNDP supported South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme in child labour elimination in three districts of Mahbubnagar, Kurnool and Ananthpur districts of Andhra Pradesh are significant. Taking a leaf from the success of both MVF's work and that of other NGOs, what is required is a nationwide discussion on the issue of child labour and child work so that there is greater conceptual clarity about the economic contribution of children to the economy. The children's rights movement also needs to take a leaf from the women's movement in highlighting the contribution of children to the economy. It is only when there is recognition of the widespread use and abuse of child labour in its many forms, that our people and the state will recognise that economies cannot be built on the backs of children. Public policy and programme needs to understand the extent to which the Indian economy, in all its varied forms, is built on the life and work of its children.

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Notes

1 ILO/UNICEF (1997): *Strategies for Eliminating Child Labour: Prevention, Removal and Rehabilitation* (Synthesis Document), International Conference on Child Labour, Oslo, Norway, October.

2 Ibid, p 1008, quoting from a World Bank Report of 1998.

3 G K, Lieten (2002): 'Child Labour in India: Disentangling Essence and Solutions', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XXXVII, No 52, December 28, p 5191.

4 Ibid, pp 5191-92.

5 See, Lakshmidhar Mishra (2000): *Child Labour in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp 18, 23.

6 See *National Human Development Report 2001*, Planning Commission Government of India, March 2002, published by Oxford University Press, New Delhi. As reported by the Planning Commission, the incidence of children who are participating in the labour market along with those who are neither enrolled/attending school nor are categorised as working, declined from 60.4 per cent (65.1 per cent for rural areas and 44 per cent for urban areas) in 1981 to 50.6 per cent (55.8 per cent in

rural areas and 34.3 per cent for urban areas) in 1991. The proportion of such girls was 67.2 per cent in 1981 declining to 57 per cent in 1991. Though the proportion of working girls is lower than that of boys, the proportion of girls who are neither working nor going to school is higher than that for the boys. This is, perhaps, because the girls are expected to perform more household chores and provide seasonal labour on the farms as well. The gender gap declined very gradually between 1981 and 1991 in urban areas, and stagnated in rural areas, p 96.

The state-level information for 1981 reveals that working children and the “nowhere children” together account for nearly two-thirds of the total children (over 75 per cent for girls) in the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. This proportion was over 70 per cent (over 85 per cent for girls) in these States in rural areas. In the better off states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, this ratio was between 40 and 45 per cent but was just 19.2 per cent in Kerala. With the exception of Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu which achieved a fairly reasonable decline of “nowhere children”, the pace of improvement was very slow in most states in 1991. The proportion was in the range of 60-65 per cent (72-75 per cent for girls) in Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. It was 65-70 per cent in rural areas (close to 80 per cent for girls) in these states. Even in urban areas, the combined proportion for these states was in the range of 40-50 per cent, and between 45 and 55 per cent for girls. This proportion was much lower than the national average in the states of Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Tamil Nadu. In 1991, there was significant rural-urban difference of over 20 per cent and gender differences of over 15 per cent in rural areas, p 96.

As per the 1991 Census, nearly 91 per cent of the total working children (excluding “nowhere children”) were in rural areas. This is partly explained by the lower proportion of the children in rural areas attending schools as compared to urban children. It is also, perhaps, on account of difficulty in enforcing minimum age for working as well as the minimum years of schooling in rural areas. The seasonal nature and bunching of agricultural operations generate a fluctuating demand for labour that is seen to be best met by household hands, including the children. Most of the children are pushed into work because of this nature of rural economy. In addition, there is always the consideration of augmenting family incomes, pp 96-97.

As per the 1991 Census, over 90 per cent of boys and girls among the working children in the rural areas were engaged in agriculture and related activities. While boys were equally likely to work in own cultivation and as agricultural workers, the proportion of girls working as agricultural workers was much higher. The employment structure of the urban child worker has been quite different and more diversified. Only 20 per cent of urban boys and 30 per cent of urban girls were employed in agriculture. Around 35 per cent of urban boys and girls are engaged in household and non-household industries. Within this group boys were likely to work more in non-household industries vis-à-vis girls who worked mainly in household/domestic work. Much larger proportion of boys worked in trade and commerce than girls. Nearly one-fourth of the working girls and one-sixth of the working boys in urban areas were engaged in service sector, including domestic work, p 97.

7 See G K Lieten (2002): ‘Child Labour in India: Disentangling Essence and Solutions’ in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol 37, No 52, December 28.

8 Indira Hirway (2002), ‘Understanding Children’s Work in India: An Analysis Based on Time Use Data’ in Nira Ramachandran and Lionel Massun (eds), *Coming to Grips with Rural Child Work*, op cited, p 84.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid, pp 86-87.

11 Ibid, pp 89-90.

12 Ibid, p 98.

13 Ibid, p 103.

14 Ibid.

15 Francois Leclercq (2002), ‘Child Work, Schooling and Household Resources in Rural North India’ in Nira Ramachandran and Lionel Massun (eds), *Coming to Grips with Rural Child Work: A Food Security Approach*, Institute for Human Development and United Nations World Food Programme, New Delhi, p 170.

16 See Pius Antony (2002), ‘Child Work in Bihar: A Leeway for Household Food Insecurity’ in Nira Ramachandran and Lionel Massun (eds), *Coming to Grips with Rural Child Work*, op cited, pp 223-25.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid, pp 282-83.

19 Parveen Nangia and Nizamuddin Khan (2002), ‘Educational Deprivation and Employment Status of Children in Rural Areas of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa: Evidences from NFHS-2’ in Nira Ramachandran and Lionel Massun (eds), *Coming to Grips with Rural Child Work*, op cited, pp 322.

20 Ibid, p 322.

21 Nira Ramachandran (2002), ‘Introducing the Concept’ in Nira Ramachandran and Lionel Massun (eds), *Coming to Grips with Rural Child Work*, op cited, p 7.

22 Chen, Martha Alter, Renana Jhabvala and Frances Lund (2002), ‘Working Paper on the Informal Economy – Supporting Workers in the Informal Economy – A Policy Framework’, Employment sector 2002/2, International Labour Office, Geneva, p 4.

23 Ibid, p 4.

24 Ibid, p 13.

25 Ibid.

26 International Labour Office (2002), *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*, Employment Sector, ILO, Geneva. According to this report, “Informal employment comprises one-half to three-quarters of non-agricultural employment in developing countries: specifically, 48 per cent of non-agricultural employment in North Africa; 65 per cent in Asia; and 72 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. If South Africa is excluded, the share of informal employment in non-agricultural employment rises to 78 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. If data were available for additional countries in south Asia, the regional average for Asia would likely be much higher”. Main findings, p 7.

27 Ibid, “Some countries include informal employment in agriculture in their estimates of informal employment. In these countries the inclusion of informal employment in agriculture increases significantly the proportion of informal employment: from 83 per cent of non-agricultural employment to 93 per cent of total employment in India; from 55 per cent to 62 per cent in Mexico; and from 28 per cent to 34 per cent in South Africa”, p 7.

28 Ibid, p 24.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid, p 25.

31 Nilufer Cagatay (2001): ‘Trade, Gender and Poverty’, background paper, UNDP, Social Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy, p 29.

32 Ibid, p 48.

33 *Human Development Report 1990*, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, Oxford University Press, points out that “much of the work that women do is ‘invisible’ in national accounting and census, despite its obvious productive and social worth. The reason is that women are heavily involved in small-scale agriculture, the informal sector and household activities areas where data are notoriously deficient,” p 32, “Women’s work especially their household

work, often is unpaid and therefore unaccounted for – processing food, carrying water, collecting fuel, growing subsistence crops and providing child care. For example, women in Nepalese villages contribute 22 per cent to household money income, but when non-marketed subsistence production is included, their contribution rises to 53 per cent. It is estimated that unpaid household work by women, if properly evaluated would add a third to global production.” And again, “even when women are remunerated for their work, their contribution is often undervalued. In formal employment, women earn significantly less than men in every country having data. In the informal sector, where most women work, their earnings at times reach only a third (Malaysia) to a half (Latin America) of those of men”.

34 *Human Development Report 1996*, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Oxford University Press, New York, p 52.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid, p 91.

38 Ibid, p 91.

39 Singh, Ruma Ghosh, Nikhil Raj and Helen R Sekar (2002): ‘Hard Labour at a Tender Age – Child Labour in the Home-based Industries in the Wake of Legislation’, V V Giri National Labour Institute, NOIDA.

40 Richard Anker, Sandhya Barge, S Rajagopal, M P Joseph (1998): ‘Economics of Child Labour in Hazardous Industries in India’, Centre for Operations Research and Training, Baroda.

41 Neera Burra (1995): ‘Born to Work – Child Labour in India’, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

42 Anker et al (1998), *Economics of Child Labour*, op cited, p 15.

43 Report of the National Commission on Labour, Vol I (Part II), ministry of labour, government of India 2002, p 938.

44 Ibid, p 972.

45 Ibid, p 973.

46 Ibid, p 1006.

47 Ibid, p 1006.

48 Ibid, p 1013.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid, p 1014.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid, p 1016

53 *Human Development Report 1990*, published for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Oxford University Press, New York, 1990.

54 Ibid, p 12, a World Bank study showed private returns to primary education as high as 43 per cent in Africa, 31 per cent in Asia and 32 per cent in Latin America...., The special returns to female education are even higher, in terms of reduced fertility, lower population growth, reduced child mortality, reduced school dropout rates and improved family nutrition.

55 Lieten, 2002, p 5190.

56 NHDR 2001, op cited, p 95.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid p 99.