



International
Labour
Organization

Situation Report on Child Labour **(Plantation, Fire-Works Industry, Tile Industry,** **Coir Industry & Fishery)**

Final Report

International
Programme
on the Elimination
of Child Labour
(IPEC)

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Introduction

1.1 Background and Scope of Study

This report is the outcome of a study conducted by the Survey and Research Unit of the Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre (SPARC) of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo for the ILO. on child labor in five distinctive sectors that are vulnerable to child labor in Sri Lanka. The sectors surveyed are, the plantation sector, the fisheries sector, the coir industry, the tile industry and the firework industry.

This introductory chapter of the report outlines the background information on the problems of child labour highlighting the existing legal and institutional framework to deal with the problem in Sri Lanka. Various concepts and definitions of child labour are discussed and a working definition for the study is provided.

Child labour is seen as a serious problem in the developing world where the largest proportion of the less privileged and low income groups resides. Although the efforts of the national governments in collaboration with the international community in the past have led to some break through in combating child labor and safeguarding children's rights, the problem still looms large in many parts of the world. Sri Lanka, as a country committed to safeguarding the rights of children has ratified almost all conventions related to labor by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations (UN), in addition to national initiatives by the Sri Lankan government's efforts in dealing with children's rights and related issues. Sri Lanka has achieved remarkable success in enrolling almost all children in primary schools, a goal which is prominent among the millennium Development Goals [MDGs]. Sri Lankan laws ban the practice of child labor. However, child labor still remains a matter of concern as high school drop out rate are reported at the secondary level leaving the younger population more vulnerable and exposed to the informal labor market.

1.2 The issue of Child labor in Sri Lanka

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 138 and 182, define hazardous work by children as any activity or occupation, which by its nature or type has or leads to adverse effects on the child's safety, health (physical or mental), and moral development. Hazards could also derive from excessive workload, physical conditions of work, work intensity in terms of duration of work where the activity is known to be non-hazardous or 'safe'.

In short child labor can be defined as something that harms children's wellbeing and jeopardizes their development and violates their rights.

It is illegal to employ anyone below the age of 14 in Sri Lanka, although the UN convention on the rights of children (UNCRC, 1989) itself defines children as anyone below 18 years of age.

It is interesting to note that the definition given to labor force in Sri Lanka seems to be inconsistent with both of the above age limits related to child labor. In Sri Lanka the labor force includes economically active population above 10 years of age.

In Sri Lanka, the total number of children aged between 5 and 14 was around 3.18 million out of which about 0.475 million are engaged in some kind of work (ILO 2004).

A survey by the census and statistical department found that more than 90 per cent of child workers are engaged in activities in the agriculture sector.

While almost all children are enrolled in primary school education, secondary enrolment is less than one half leaving many children available to be used as labor. Concerned parties argue that weak social infrastructure is a major contributor to the problem than the lax Sri Lankan Law allowing anyone who is 14 years to be out of school and in employment. In most cases in the rural areas, parents would like to send their children but the quality of education in remote areas, though it is free acts as a disincentive to parents.

Child labor is a survival strategy in many rural areas and in the plantations in Sri Lanka.

Poor income of the family seems to have been the major factor contributing to child labor. Hence any attempt to reduce child labor has to ensure that the income lost by pulling out the child out of employment does not entail the impoverishment of the particular families.

1.3 Factors contributing to child labor in Sri Lanka

Past research has identified several factors that contribute significantly to child labor. The decision of a child to engage in an economic activity for a payment can be influenced by a host of mutually non exclusive factors. Some of these factors are listed below

- Parental poverty and illiteracy
- Poor social and economic circumstances
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of access to basic and quality education and skills
- High rate of adult unemployment /under employment
- Attitudes towards child labour (particularly in South Asia) children are expected to perform physical work as early as 10 years old in some countries

1.4 Forms of Child Labor

Child labor can take many forms. The main types of child labor are listed below:

- I. Child domestic labor
- II. Children working in hazardous industries
- III. Children working in export industries
- IV. Child trafficking (both internally and across borders)
- V. Bonded child labor in agriculture and certain parts of the industrial and informal sector.

I. Child Domestic Labor

In Sri Lanka, child domestic labor has been culturally accepted and commonly practiced. Child Domestic Labor refers to situations where children are engaged to perform household work in the home of a third party or employer.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (No.182) 1999 defines worst forms of child labor as where CDL is exploitative and includes trafficking, slavery, or practices similar to slavery or work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to be harmful to health, safety, or morals of the child.

The incidence of child domestic Labor in Sri Lanka is estimated to be around 100,000 in 1999. However, according to The National Child Protection Authority, there was a reduction in child labor of 10 to 15 fold following the intensified efforts by authorities and a wide media campaign against domestic child labor. The NCPA reports that using children as domestic servants has become a taboo today following the media awareness campaign (Island 12, January 2006)

II. Children Working in Hazardous Industries

In Sri Lanka, working in hazardous industries seems to be less problematic since, according to a child activity survey carried out by the Department of Census and Statistics and Ministry of Finance in 1999, nearly 90 per cent of the working children in the age group of 5 to 17 years have never experienced a health, or safety hazard due to the activity in which they were engaged.

III. Child trafficking

Child trafficking is another aspect of child labor. Sri Lankan experience shows that armed conflicts have increased children's and women's vulnerability to trafficking.

According to an IPEC project for combating Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Sri Lanka an estimated 5000 incidences of internal child trafficking and some sporadic incidences of cross border trafficking were also reported.

1.5 Institutional and legal provisions in relation to child labor

In addition to country and regional initiatives in protecting children's rights, the international efforts in combating child labor and child abuse since the late 1950s have produced an international framework to safeguard children's rights.

The main international treaties relevant to child labor are the following:

- a. ILO Minimum Age Convention (No.138), 1973
- b. ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (No.182), 1999.
- c. ILO Forced Labor Convention (No.29), 1930
- d. ILO Abolition of Forced Labor Convention (No.105), 1957
- e. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989
- f. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes, 2000.

Sri Lanka has ratified all four ILO conventions related to child labor and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.

1.6 Working Definition of Child Labor in the Study

The working definition of child labor has been formulated in consultation with IPEC as “any child aged between 5 and 17 years who are engaged for one hour or more in an economic activity during the reference period of past 7 days.”

Economic activity was defined as an activity in which the child is engaged for a payment, profit, or family gain. A child could also be engaged in an economic activity while attending an educational institution and/or engaged in housekeeping activities. In this survey, a child was considered a student if he or she was attending school or any other educational establishment that provides regular education, technical vocational training.

The rest of this report is organized as follows: chapter two deals with the issue of child labor in the plantation sector while chapter three is on the same issue in the fisheries sector. A detailed account on Child labor in the coir, the tile, and the firework industries is made in the chapters four, five and six respectively. Chapter seven summarises major findings and offers a conclusion to the report.

1.7. Objective of the Survey

The objective of the surveys on fireworks, fishery, coir and tile industries and plantation sectors is to estimate through a household based survey the size of the child workers population directly involved in the production process, as well as the number of migrant child workers in the plantation sector who were sent from these communities into other parts of the country as CDW, garment factory workers etc. Further, an estimate of the number of children at risk (siblings and other children in the same household/community not working but at risk of working) would also be captured. A close attention will be paid in the survey of fireworks to capture the peak season realities of the child workers population.

In the plantation sector survey, particular emphasis will be paid to the assessment of the economic and non-economic vulnerability of the households despite their relatively higher incomes, and to understand why they are compelled to send their children to cities to work after grade 8-9 rather than complete their O-levels and A-levels, the various forms of child labour that exist, and the community level constraints that households face.

1.8. Survey Methodology

The survey methodology was based on the guidelines given by ILO-IPEC. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been collected. Quantitative data were collected through administering a pre-coded questionnaire to parents in selected households, while qualitative data have been collected through conducting in-depth interviews and case studies.

Sample size

Sector	District	No. of respondents	
		Household	In-depth interviews
Plantation	Badulla	100	5
	Kandy	100	5
	Matale	100	5
	Nuwara Eliya	100	5
	Ratnapura	100	5
	Kegalle	100	5
Firework	Gampaha	100	5
	Kandy	100	5
Tile	Gampaha	200	5
	Puttalam	200	5

Sector	District	No. of respondents	
		Household	In-depth interviews
Coir	Galle	200	5
	Matara	200	5
Fisheries	Galle	200	5
	Matara	200	5

1.9 Instruments and methods of data collection

A pre-coded, close-ended questionnaire was administered to a parent (mother or father). The objective of the questionnaire was to assess the vulnerability of the household from the perspective of the head of the household. Questions on livelihood, expenditure and income, accessibility and quality of children's educational opportunities, type of migrant child labour (in the plantation sector survey), the work conditions and its associated hazards, health and socio-economic conditions have been included.

A separate questionnaire was administered to understand the situation and reality of the working children. The questionnaire on working children had modules on conditions of work, hazards at work, and other relevant socio-economic modules. The child himself/herself could verify which part of the production process he/she was employed in amongst other things if the child was available in the selected house or in the locality.

Qualitative information that provides the policy context of a community and sector was used to complement and strengthen the quantitative data.

In addition, key informant interviews were conducted with school principals, health and social workers, mid-wives, EMA etc

Chapter 2: Plantation Sector

2.1 Introduction to Plantation sector

The plantation sector contributes significantly to the country's national economy in addition to creating employment opportunities. The plantations since their inception in the 19th century remained as closed enclaves maintaining minimum links with outside communities. Even today, the plantation community remains relatively isolated from other communities in relation to their economic activities, political participation, and cultural and religious affairs. The plantation sector is also an area of concern in relation to child labor in the country. The problem of child labor in plantations may also have its unique characteristics since the plantation community itself remains district.

The field research for this study was conducted in five districts of Sri Lanka: Badulla, Kandy, Kegalle, Nuwaraeliya, and Ratnapura where the main concentrations of plantations are located.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the research in the plantation sector, as has been outlined in the Terms of Reference, was to estimate through a household based survey, the size of the child workers population directly involved in the production process as well as the number of migrant child workers in the plantation sector.

As has been emphasized in the terms of reference, the study was also intended to assess the economic and non economic vulnerability of the households in the selected plantations in order to identify the reasons as why the household are compelled to send their children to cities to work after grade 8-9 rather than encouraging them to complete their O-levels and A-levels.

Also the study tries to understand the various forms of child labor that exist, and the community level constraints that households encounter.

2.3 Methodology

The study has employed both quantitative as well as qualitative research tools. A structured questionnaire was designed in consultation with the ILO and administrated to the selected household in the Badulla, Kandy, Kegalle, Nuwaraeliya, and Ratnapura districts. First the questionnaire was administrated to the main respondent of the household (usually the head of the household). In depth interviews were conducted with the main respondent as well as with the working children (in the cases where child labourers) were found in the household. In addition to the household survey and in depth interviews, key persons such as Grama Niladari (village officers), religious leaders and estate leaders were interviewed.

2.4 The Sample

The six survey districts (Badulla, Ratnapura, Kegalle, Kandy, Matale, Nuwara Eliya) from three provinces (Uva, Sabaragamuwa and Central) were pre selected by IPEC on the basis of concentration of plantations. A total number of 600 households from six districts were selected for the survey. From each districts one estate was selected at random from the list of estates located in the district. In the final stage, 100 households from each estate were selected at random for the survey.

In addition to the sample survey, 4 in-depth interviews were also conducted from each district.

Table 2.1 a Distribution of the Sample: Provincial, District level classification.

Provinces	Uva	Sabaragamuwa		Central			Total
Districts	Badulla	Ratnapura	Kegalle	Kandy	Matale	Nuwara-Eliya	
No. of respondents	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
No. of case studies	4	4	4	4	4	4	24

Table 2.1 b. Distribution of sample by Estate

District	DS Division	Estate	Number of Households
Mathale	Raththotta	NikalaOya	100
Kandy	Panwilla	Raaxawa Estate	100
Kegalle	Daraniyagala	Miyanawita	100
Rathnapura	Godakawela	Springwoods	100
Nuwaraelliya	Walapane	High forest	100
Badulla	Wallimada	Dayaraba	100
Total			600

2.5 Significance of the Plantation Sector in the Sri Lankan economy.

The contribution of the plantation sector, mainly, tea and rubber to the country's GDP was less than two percent in 2007. As an export item plantation commodities account for more than 38 per cent to total merchandise exports and 6.8 percent to total exports. The plantation sector exports earnings are an important source of revenue for Sri Lanka in terms of local value addition. Next to garments exports and worker remittances from abroad, plantation exports are the largest revenue earner for Sri Lanka.

The use of child labor in tea production has been reported in Sri Lanka. A 1995 survey of 3,000 households on 100 tea estates found that youth 10-19 years of age made up about four per cent of the work force. The survey also reported that children not attending school, some under the age 10 were found weeding; a function estate management contracts out to families in acre units (Labor force Survey 1996).

However, Sri Lanka has tended to create an impression that child labor is not a serious issue in plantations. The reason was that plantation management can not hire children legally as laborers. However, tea plantations have been a traditional source of child domestic labor.

2.6 Major Characteristics of the Households selected for the Survey

The major characteristics of the households can be analyzed in terms of age of household head, level of education, employment, level of income, level of debt burden, perceptions on quality of the household and perception on income.

Table 2.2 Ages of Head of Household

Age Group	Percentage
15-19 Years	0.2
20-24 Years	1.0
25-29 Years	6.2
30-34 Years	10.3
35-39 Years	9.3
40-44 Years	12.0
45-49 Years	14.5
50-54 Years	12.2
55-59 Years	15.3
60-64 Years	11.5
65-70 Years	3.0
Above 70years	4.2

The majority of the household heads of this survey was more than 30 years old and 72.2 percent are more than 40 years old. One implication of this would be that these families need the support of their children to maintain their families. Since the parents getting old the children also feel that they should financially support them.

Table 2.3 Level of Education of the head of household

Level of Education	Percentage
Illiterate	9.0
No formal education but can read & write	3.0
Pre school	1.8
Primary school (class 1-5)	51.0
Upper primary school (class 6-8)	20.9
Lower secondary (class 9-10)	12.0
Upper secondary (class 10-13)	2.2
Total	100.0

Levels of education of the head of household will be an important factor having a direct impact on child labor. Level of education of parents is a factor that conditions their perception on the children's education and the attitudes towards child labor. It is reported in the survey that more than half of the household heads have received only primary education. Only 2.2 percent of the heads of households have received upper secondary education.

Table 2.4 Marital status of household head

	Marrital Status	Percentage
1	Never married	1.8
2	Currently married	81.0
3	Separated	1.2
4	Divorced	0.5
5	Widowed	15.5
	Total	100.0

Marital status plays a role in determining the household's economic and social characteristics. The table 2.4 shows that 16 percent of the household heads were widowed which seems to be a very high figure. And also widowed parents most of the time lose the support from others and have to manage the household with the income of a single breadwinner. This compels children to seek employment to support the family.

Table 2.5 Main Economic activity of household head

Economic activity	Percentage
Employed	75.8
Unemployed	2.3
Household work	2.8
Retired/unable to work	19.0
Total	100.0

Nearly one fifth of the household heads were retired or not in a position to engage in economic activities and hence there is every possibility for child labor in such families. The survey reveals that 75.8 percent of the household head were employed. Only about 3 percent of the household heads are unemployed in the sample. This no doubt affects their families.

Table 2.6 Monthly Family Income of Households

Monthly Income Intervals	Percentage of households
Less than Rs. 5000.00	12,0
Rs. 5000.00 - Rs.10,000.00	40.7

Monthly Income Intervals	Percentage of households
Rs. 10,000.00 – Rs. 15,000.00	22.6
Rs. 15,000.00 – Rs. 20,000.00	13.0
Rs. 20,000.00 – Rs. 25,000.00	5.9
Rs. 25,000.00 – Rs. 30,000.00	2.6
Rs. 30,000.00 – Rs. 35,000.00	2.0
More than Rs. 35,000.00	1.2
Total	100.0

Nearly 53 per cent of the households in the sample receive a monthly income of less than Rs.10,000.00 and an overwhelming majority of 88 percent of the households receive a maximum of Rs. 20,000.00 a month. However at lower end 12 percent of the households receive a monthly income less than Rs 5,000.00. The national average income of a family in Sri Lanka stood around Rs. 12,803.00 a month and in the plantation sector's average income was reported to be Rs. 7,303.00 in 2002. Clearly this figure is much less than that of the urban and rural sectors that received an average income of Rs. 22,420.00 and Rs. 11,712.00 respectively. However, it has been pointed out in many discussions that the average salaries of plantation workers were higher than those obtained in the rural communities in Sri Lanka.

Table 2.7 Adequacy of Income to support the family

Perception	Percentage
Adequate	37.3
Inadequate	62.7
Total	100.00

Although estate workers receive a basic fixed income, for the majority, the income is insufficient to meet the expenses including the schooling of children. In this survey, nearly 63 percent of the household heads stated that their income was insufficient to support the family, and naturally this can induce children to seek employment.

Table 2.8 Debt burden of the household

Perception	Percentage
Yes	42.2
No	53.8
Total	100.00

More than half of the households surveyed suffer from the debt burden and the size of debt burden varied from less than Rs.10,000 to more than Rs. 50,000. Nearly 70 percent of the indebted households owe Rs. 30,000 or less to their creditors, which is considerable amount given the low level of income of many families. Although there were no causes of bonded child labor in the plantation sector, children may have been compelled to work in order to help the family to relieve itself from debt burden.

Table 2.9 The Size of debt burden of the household

Size of debt	percentage
Less than Rs.10,000	42.2
Rs.10,000 – Rs. 20,000	22.4
Rs.20,000 – Rs. 30,000	12.3
Rs.30,000 – Rs. 40,000	6.1
Rs.40,000 – Rs. 50,000	7.6
Above Rs. 50,000	9.4

Table 2.10 Perception on the quality of the house

Perception	Percentage
Poor	60.7
Fair	34.7
Good	4.6
Total	100.0

An overwhelming majority (95 percent) of the household heads felt that the quality of their house was poor or fair. Despite some government efforts to improve the quality of the houses of estate workers, due to various practical reasons, for the majority the quality and the conditions of the household is extremely unsatisfactory. This is having a negative impact on children doing school work. Inadequate space in the house compels children

to study in the common space shared by all members in the household. Extended families are forced to live in the same household in some cases leading to many family problems. Particularly, in the case of a family member addicted to alcohol the plight of the child is often to be miserable.

Main findings of the key informant interviews_ Kandy District

The main problem is insufficient income. Although the people are employed in the estate, their income is insufficient to meet the expenses of schooling of their children. Majority of estate workers take loans to meet the expenditure gap under the condition of repayment of the loan at the end of the month.

These people are not eligible for government support such as Samurdhi benefit since they are employed. Yet, they sometimes earn even less than 2000 rupee a month from their work

Since the salary is insufficient to meet the daily expenditure the estate workers seek casual jobs in the nearby villages for 2 or 3 days a week. They can earn a daily wage of Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 from such casual work

The younger generation does not like to work in the estate. They wait till they reach working age and then migrate to find employment outside the estate. Boys find employment mainly in and around Colombo. Girls seek employment in garment factories. They find employment through person who already employed in these institutions.

Many children aged 14-15 years stop schooling and spend their time in playing. Children older than 10 years go to nearby villages for clove plucking during the harvest season. Clove harvest is a dangerous task. Clove tree branches are weak and thus an adult cannot climb the tree for harvesting. Children are versatile to move quickly from one branch to another, despite the danger of falling from trees. Hence children find an opportunity for making money. They can earn Rs.40 to Rs. 45 for every kilogram of clove they harvest. On average, each child can easily harvest more than 45 kilograms a day and therefore can make Rs. 600 – Rs.700 per day.

This money attracts many children into this activity though the harvest season of clove lasts only a few months if not weeks. Though the school administration often takes stern action against this practice, children engage in this activity after school hours for which the school administration has no control.

These children give their earnings to their parents/guardians and spend a portion of it by themselves. Even the parents do not object to their kids making money at the expense of schooling.

2.7 Child Labor in the Plantations:

A total 2999 children are in the sample out of which only 43 are employed as workers. The following section provides a closer look at the activities of the children and those who are employed.

Table 2.11 Main Economic activity of Children (age groups)

Economic Activity	5-13 years%	14-17 years %	Total %
Employed	0.8	16.9	5.9
Unemployed	-	4.0	1.3
Student	98.4	73.8	90.6
Household work	0.8	1.8	1.0
Unable to work (disabled)	-	2.2	1.0
Schooling & unpaid family worker	0.2	1.3	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	0.6

This study shows that an overwhelming majority of children in the study area aged between 5-13 years were students and currently attending school and other educational institutions. Only 0.8 percent of children in this age group were employed, confirming that the primary enrolment rate in the plantations sector is on par with the national average.

However, it is quite revealing that the student percentage of children falling under the age group of 14-17 years records a drop to 73.8 percent. Likewise, employed category of this age group increased up to 17 percent. This clearly indicates that the children do not continue with their education although almost all of them were enrolled in the primary education. Lack of quality educational facilities at the secondary level, low family income household environment, and attractive alternative opportunities for work play an important role in the above regard.

Table 2.12 Main economic activity of children in the selected districts %

Economic activity	Matale	Kandy	Kegalle	Ratna pura	Nuwara eliya	Badulla	Total
Employed	4.2	4.2	11.6	2.7	8.6	4.5	5.9
Unemployed	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.8	3.4		1.3
Student	92.7	91.7	87.5	94.0	82.8	93.5	90.6
Household work	1.0	1.7	-	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.0
Unable to work (disabled)	1.0	1.7	-	-	1.7	-	0.7
Schooling & unpaid family worker	-	-	-	-	2.6	0.6	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2.13 Type of employment of working child

Type of employment	Percentage
Unpaid family worker	20.9
Paid employee (regular)	39.5
Paid employee (casual)	37.2
Others	2.3
Total	100.0

A majority of child workers (76%) are either regular or casual paid employees. More than 20 percent are engaged in unpaid family works.

Table 2.14 Work place of child labor

Work place	Percentage
Home	2.4
Factory	4.9
Shops/boutiques	17.1
Field	70.7
Employer's house	4.9
Total	100.0

Most of the child workers are employed in the field, particularly in farming activities in the nearby villages. They return home in the evening after work and do not stay away from home. More than 17 percent are employed in shops and boutiques often located far away from their homes. Nearly 5 percent are employed in the employer's houses. They may be considered as domestic child workers.

Table 2.15 Working hours per week

Number of hours	Percentage
Less than 10 hours	19.5
10-20 hours	17.0
20-30 hours	4.9
30-40 hours	19.5
40-50 hours	4.8
50-60 hours	24.4
More than 60 hours	9.8
Total	100.0

Working hours of child workers vary to a considerable extent and nearly one fourth of the working children work 50 to 60 hours per week.

Table 2.16 Reasons for child labor

Reasons for child labor	Percentage
Cannot afford schooling	28.6
Family requires the child's income	33.3
Child has reached the working age	7.1
No opportunity to do another job	9.5
Do not have enough land for farming	2.4
Children help family business voluntarily	11.9
Children do not like to go to school	7.1
Total	100.0

According to Table 3.15 the major reason for child labour is poverty. Nearly 30 percent of the household heads said that they cannot afford schooling of their children and more than 33 percent expressed that they require the child's income to maintain the family.

Table 2.17 Decision making on child labor

The person who made the decision	Percentage
Him/her self	83.3
Father	11.9
Mother	4.8
Total	100.0

The decision on child labor as reported in table 3.16 has been made by the child him/herself in most cases. Fathers also made decisions to send their children to work. Mother decisions on the matter is insignificant and it is not surprising in a male dominant society such as the plantation community.

Table 2.18 Receiving and spending of income earned from child labor

Payment received/spend by	Receiving Percentage	Spending percentage
Him/her self	62.5	30.0
Mother	22.5	45.0

Payment received/spend by	Receiving Percentage	Spending percentage
Father	12.5	22.5
Others	2.5	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0

The income generated by child labor was received mainly by the child him/herself. It is quite interesting to note that, although the mother does not have a significant role in the decision making with regard to child labor, she received a considerable proportion of the income generated by child labor. On the expenditure side, it is the mother who spends most of the money from child labor. Although 62.5 percent of the working children receive their salary by themselves, only 30 percent of them spend their earnings by themselves. The rest, transfer their earnings mainly to their mother and in some cases to their fathers as well.

Table 2.19 Impact of stopping child labor

Nature of impact	Percentage
Household living standard declines	60.0
Household cannot afford to live	12.5
Does not affect anyway	27.5
Total	100.0

Table 2.19 reveals the perception of the household head on child labor. For 60 percent of the households with child labor, the household living conditions are expected to deteriorate if children terminate their work. 12.5 percent of the households reported that they cannot afford to live without the support from their children. Taken these two together, for 72.5 percent of the households, stopping child labor will have a direct negative impact on 72.5 percent of the households with child labor. This is a serious issue that has to be taken into consideration at the policymaking level.

Table 2.20 Father/mother/gardian's perception on child labor.

	Perception	Percentage
1	Happy about the child's work	78.0
2	Not at all happy about the child's work	17.1
3	No option but to work	4.9
	Total	100.0

It has been found that a majority of parents are happy about their child work. Only 17 percent of the respondents were unhappy about their child being engaged in employment activities. A very tiny percentage of respondents expressed that they have choices other than sending their children to work. Nearly 39 percent of the respondents believed that the employer treats the child properly. More than half of the respondents felt that their children were treated moderately.

Main findings of the key informant interviews _ Nuwara Eliya District

Alcoholism is a burning problem in the estate areas. Often the male member of the household, i.e. the household head is addicted to alcohol. There are cases where both parents are addicted to liquor. When the father is under the influence of alcohol, he makes quarrels with the mother. The calm family environment shatters as a result. Often their children are the victims of this process. Sometime the drunken father beats up the children as well. The fear psyche disturbs the minds of the children and they lose concentration on studies. Since the plantation houses are built in lines, the children are even disturbed by problems in the nearby households.

Students report to school without having their breakfast. This leads to loss of concentration and falling sick during the school hours. Absenteeism and irregular attendance to school are prevalent in the plantation sector.

The main reason for child labor is poverty. Parents do not have sufficient income to meet expenses on education though it is given free. Parents give priority to earn money rather than giving children a good education. The perception of parents is such that sending the child to work is seen as credit (the child earns money) while sending them to school is seen as debit (the parents have to spend money)!

Almost 90 percent of the parents –particularly the father- do not seem to care about their children's education. Neither have they cared for their children's welfare. All what they need is financial support from their children to maintain the family.

2.8 Households having child labour

All the households may be grouped as

- a). households with child labour in plantation Sector,
- b). households with child labour in other sectors and
- c). households without child labour

Table 2.21 Access to social security programs such as Samurdhi

	Receiving benefits (%)	Not receiving benefits (%)	Total (%)
Households with child labor in the fishing sector		(11)100.00	(11)100.00
Households with child labor in other sectors	(2)8.7	(21)91.3	(23)100.00
Households without	(119)21.0	(447)79.0	(566)100

	Receiving benefits (%)	Not receiving benefits (%)	Total (%)
child labor			
Total households with child labor	(121)20.2	(479)79.8	(600)100

Out of 600 households in the sample a little more than 20 percent is receiving social security benefits. Over 90 percent of the households with child labor are not supported by any sort of social security from the government. However 21 percent of the households without child labor are receiving social security indicating that government intervention to increase household income in the plantation sector can have a positive impact on the problem of child labor.

This fact can be further supported by the household perception data in Table 2.22 A majority of 70 percent of households with child labor working in the plantations have expressed that the current income they receive is sufficient to meet the needs. It should be noted that their current income is inclusive of the income generated by child labor. The opposite is observed in the households who send their children to other sectors for employment. Nearly 28 percent of the households felt that their current income is inadequate to meet their expenses.

Table 2.22 Sufficiency of income and the state of debt burden

	Sufficiency of income		State of debt of family	
	sufficient	insufficient	Suffering from debt	Not suffering from debt
Households with child labor in the plantations sector	(7)70.0	(3)30.0	(3)30	(7)70
Households with child labor in other sectors	(5)27.8	(13)72.2	(6)33.3	(12)66.7
Households without child labor	(195)38.5	(311)61.5	(228)45.1	(278)54.9
Total households	(207)38.8	(327)61.2	(237)44.4	(297)55.6

Nearly 45 percent of the total households surveyed have been suffering from indebtedness. More than one third of the households with child labor are suffering from debt burden.

Table 2.23 Access to electricity and household quality

	Access to electricity		Household quality in terms of: privacy, roof, floor, walls, latrines		
	Households with electricity	Households without electricity	Poor	Fair	Good
Households with child labor in the plantations sector	(3)30.0	(7)70.0	(8)72.7	(3)27.3	
Households with child labor in other sectors	(7)38.9	(11)61.1	18(78.3)	5(21.7)	
Households without child labor	(294)58.2	(211)41.8	(338)59.7	(200)35.3	(28)4.9
Total households	(304)57.0	(229)43.0	(364)60.7	(208)34.7	(28)4.7

For a majority of more than 70 percent of the households surveyed, the quality of the houses in terms of privacy, quality of roof, floor, walls and availability of latrines has been poor. Only less than 5 percent households have houses that can be considered as of good quality. The households with child labor particularly have only poor or fair quality houses. 30-40 percent of such households have been supplied with electricity. Others do not have access to electricity. The households without child labor in general have better access to electricity and quality houses compared to the ones with child labor.

Table 2.24 The level of education of the household head

	Child labour in Plantation Sector	Child labour in other sectors	Without child labour	Total
Illiterate	18.2	4.3	9.0	9.0
no formal education, but can read and write	0.0	4.3	3.0	3.0
primary school (class 1 – 5)	72.7	34.8	53.4	53.0
upper primary school (class 6-8)	9.1	34.8	20.5	20.8
lower-secondary school (class 9-10)	0.0	17.4	12.0	12.0
upper-secondary school (class 10 to 13)	0.0	4.3	2.1	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The level of education is a contributory factor of child labor. Low level of education of parents and guardians has a profound impact on child labor. Partly because the parents do not understand the importance of education nor they consider education as an investment in building human capital. They think that the children should acquire some job training at young age if they have to become successful adults. Earning money at young age is seen as a smart thing to do for a child. This mentality contributes to child

labor. It is quite evident that, the level of education of an overwhelming majority of household heads has been upper secondary school or less. A 91 percent of the household heads who have sent their children for work within the plantation are schooled up to class five. And nearly 20 percent of the household heads are illiterate.

2.9 Conclusions

The objective of this study has to been to survey the incidence of child labor in the plantation sector of Sri Lanka. The study has also attempted to understand the nature of the child labor problem in the plantations and to identify the causes of the problem, more specifically to shed some light on the hidden factors that contribute to child labor.

The findings confirm that child labor prevails in the plantations although formally and legally employing a child is prohibited in Sri Lanka. The informal sector and family businesses are the main avenue for child labor. Parents make the decisions to send children to work. And the parents were happy about their decisions as they perceive work as a training to the child which in turn will improve the employability in the future. In addition they do not value education much as making money is the priority over education. This is a clear deviation from the village community in the country. In poor villages of Sri Lanka, parents work hard to send their children to school and other higher educational institutes even pawning their valuables, whereas in the plantations, many parents are sending children to work. This highlights the need for a separate approach to tackle the problem of child labor in the plantations.

A majority of child workers are employed in the fields or in factories. Poverty seems to be the major contributor to child labor and once the children are withdrawn from work these families tends to suffer economically. Poor availability of facilities for higher education, un-suitable and unpleasant housing condition and its surrounding areas seem to have a negative psychological impact on children. Alcoholism and related problems, mothers' migration to work and the resultant father's extra marital affairs deter the children's education. Also the nature of the work roster of the plantation workers i.e the parents have to leave to work before the children go to school also plays a significant part, encourages children to keep away from school.

Demonstration impact and money attraction by other children who have already employed will also have bearing on the children's mind. This makes the schooling children stop schooling and seek employment.

Any effort in dealing with child labor in plantations should incorporate mechanisms to manage with the issues that are identified in this study.

Main Findings of Case Studies_ Plantation Sector

District: Badulla,

Estate: Dyraba Estate

Respondent: Religious Leader

- Alcoholism is a major problem. Illicit liquor trade in estates
- Illegal or extra marital affairs
- Low level of income
- Poverty is a major reason for children stop education
- Children do not have enough support from their families although education is provided free.
- In some cases the families do not have money to stitch uniforms with free materials provided by government. Many children go school barefooted.
- Mother has migrated for employment, siblings have employed in city centers, and father would be working in the estate. In such cases no one will be there to look after the children at schooling age. Often grandparents look after them or female children stop schooling to look after their younger siblings.
- The major reason for child work is poverty. Another reason is lack of education of parents
- Parents do not value education much immediate monetary benefit would be the immediate concern

District: Badulla,

Estate: Dyraba Estate

Respondent: Estate Leader

- Poverty is major problem
- Workers go to villages for additional work, some engage in cultivation especially vegetables.

- Housing problem is a burning issue. Several families live in the same house with one bedroom
- Houses built in lines closely to each other create quarrels with neighbors. Extra marital affairs are common which makes families – particularly the children – to suffer
- Alcoholism hampers children's education as peace. Use of TV and radio also disturbs children's concentration and impact negatively on their mind set.
- Parents do not take sufficient care on their children's education –partly due to lack of education. Children those want to study too loose interest because of this attitude
- Students go to school without having breakfast and find it difficult to maintain concentration and sometimes faint in the class.
- Only few periods are taught out of eight periods a day due to various reasons including lack of teaching staff in the estate schools. Students lose interest in schooling as a result
- There is lack of interaction between teachers and parents. Only few will turn up when the teachers want to have a discussion.
- Sometimes teachers inquire about parents private matters with their children which make the children ashamed and stop schooling.
- If proper support is provided children's schooling can be improved. Parent's income should be improved. Parents should be enlighten about the importance of education

District: Badulla,
Estate: Dyraba Estate
Respondent: Teacher

- Poverty is major problem
- Alcoholism is another problem
- Income is insufficient to meet the expenses
- Poverty lead to fight between father and mother, drunken father beats mother, or the neighbors fight each other in the vicinity, children psychologically affected lose concentration in education
- Residential facilities in schools or establishing children homes can be a good idea to help children continuing with their education
- Absent rates are high in estate schools. Nearly one fourth of the number of total enrollment is absent daily. Children were used to fetch teach for their parent work in the estate or to accompany mother to hospitals.

- The major reason for child labor is poverty. Parents find it difficult to feed their children would consider child labor as a support to keep up family income.
- The society does not have a mechanism to support the children as almost all in the society are affected by poverty. Although some effort made toward this direction by school development society, old boys association and temple development committees, little progress have been made because of parents attitude: Some parents consider schooling as a debit while child labor as a credit
- 90 percent of parents have no interest at all about their children's education. Permission and leave must be obtained from the estate officials if a parent needs to discuss matters with teachers. Even though the principal has obtain permission for them they do not turn up for meetings instead they use the leave to go to outside villages for work
- Employers are aware of the law related to child labor, yet they make use the opportunities to get child labor for cheap cost. Loopholes on law enforcement make this possible
- School education should be made more attractive to children, resources should be improved in estate school.

District: Badulla,

Estate: Dyraba Estate

Respondent: Primary Teacher

- Large amount of money has been spend on alcohol consumption
- Poverty incidence is high
- Line houses create many problems –lack of privacy, drainage problems etc.
- Home environment is not suitable for learning
- Students miss their breakfast hence difficulty in concentration
- Parents do not have sufficient income to meet education expenditures
- Students are attending to school irregularly
- Parents use their children to send tea to family members working in the estate
- Reason for child work is nothing but poverty
- Parents do not worry about their childrens' education
- They do not encourage children to go to school
- Parent expect financial support from children
- Parents' consider education as a debit and child labor as a credit to their family budget
- Social security such as Samurdhi has been available for only a small fraction of the population and often given to those who are not eligible for such benefit

- When school principal obtain permission for parents to meet the teachers, they will not turn up for discussion instead they use they leave to work in the nearby village for money
- Those employ children for work know very well it is illegal. But they do not care, instead they take the opportunity to hire child labor for cheap wage rates

District: Badulla,
Estate: Dyraba Estate
Respondent: Volunteer Teacher

- The common problem of the society is alcoholism
- Land problem, water problem, sanitation problem exit
- More than one family live in a single household- i.e., line house
- People live in extremely poor economic conditions
- People work in estates, vegetable farms and in villages outside the estate
- Employment opportunities are rare for the educated youth in the estate
- Children do not respect their father simply because he is addicted to alcohol. Quarrels between father and mother and father and children occurs quite often
- Occurrences of extra marital affairs of both parents often leave childrens' education and future in jeopardy
- Parent's give utmost priority to their work. Education for their children may be among the last items in their priority list.
- Family environment is not conducive to academic activities. Noise, quarrels, and congestion in line houses lead children to lose concentration on their study
- Children go to work to support the family
- Children stop schooling because do not get necessary guidance and financial support from their father.
- Very few parents meet the teachers to discuss academic matters of their children

District: Kegalle
Estate: Miyanavita Estate, Deraniyagala
Respondent: Teacher

- Water problem is significant
- Alcoholism is a common nuisance in the evenings. Sometimes females are also addicted to alcohol
- Alcoholism is the root cause for all other major problems
- Poverty incidence is extremely high

- Lack of income compels them to work in the outside villages for daily wage. A large proportion of this income is spend on alcohol
- Poverty leads to unrest in families. Quite often they take loans which make quarrels between husband and wife, the children get caught in the middle of their parents fight and become the ultimate victims at the end. With broken minded the children seek employment at the expense of their education
- Addiction to Tele drama serials and radio dramas: children have no time to study at home. Nor the home environment is suitable for it
- Some children go to bed early as they fear that their fathers will beat them up under the influence of alcohol when they return home in the evening
- The level of education of parents is very low hence they do not encourage children to study.
- Poverty, insufficient income and poor living standards together with illiteracy make families more lethargic towards upward mobility
- Elder brothers and sisters seek employment at the expense of their education to support their younger siblings
- The demonstration effect of those who already employed has a great impact on child labor. Once a young lad move to city area for employment he may show his newly bought cloth, electronic items and other fancy items to those in the similar age. Psychologically this will make the students to value employment more than having education.
- Children have to walk long distances to school. There are almost no transport facilities available to remote part of the estate.
- If alternative income sources available child labor can be stopped. In addition, school facilities, transport facilities to be improved.

District: Kegalle

Estate: Miyanavita Estate, Deraniyagala

Respondent: Community Leader

- Major problem is alcoholism. Majority of male population is addicted and significant proportion of females is also addicted
- Shortage of water is another major problem
- Both male and female work in the estate. Some of them go to outside villages for daily work.
- The level of living standard is extremely poor
- Mother sends children to neighbors when the father returns home in the evening under the influence of liquor.

- There is no school with GCE ordinary level classes in the area. The estate school has classes up to class 8.
- Transportation is another hurdle that hampers the education activities

Chapter 3

Fire-Works Industry

3.1 Background and scope of the study

This section deals with the child labour in the fire-works industrial sector. Field work collecting data commenced at the beginning of 2008 and completed within two months. In general the industry of fire-works was mainly confined to Kandy, Gampaha and Puttalam districts and data collection for the study was limited to the two districts of Kandy and Gampaha, which were selected purposively.

The fireworks sector in Sri Lanka is widely known to employ child workers. A Rapid Assessment (RA) in the fireworks sector in the Western Province was undertaken in 2003. While the RA revealed the nature of the problems and realities in the fireworks sector in the Western province, the size of the problem at sub-national level is still unknown.

3.2 Objective of the study

The objective of the survey on the fireworks sector is to estimate through a household based survey the size of the child workers population directly involved in the production process in the fireworks. Further, an estimate of the number of children at risk (siblings and other children in the same household/community not working but at risk of working) would also be captured. A close attention was paid in the survey of fireworks to capture the peak season realities of the child workers population.

In addition, the Terms of Reference for the study emphasised the need to assess the economic and non-economic vulnerability of the households in the identified districts in order to understand the reasons that compel children to drop out of education after Grades 8-9 instead of completing their O-levels or A-levels, the various forms of child labour that exists and the community level constraints that these households face.

3.3 Methodology

The two Grama Niladhari (GN) divisions of Kimbulapitiya in the Gampaha district and Halloluwa in the Kandy district have been selected purposively considering the prevalence of firework industry in the two GN divisions. These locations were selected purposively as the industry was limited to certain villages and not spread out in all parts of the districts.

Both quantitative and qualitative data relating to the industry have been collected. Quantitative data were collected through administering a questionnaire to 200 households (100 from each district). Two- 25-cluster of households were selected from the each GN division, selecting the sample points at random.

In addition, 10 in-depth interviews (5 from each district) were conducted, selecting respondents purposively.

Table 3.1 Distribution of the Sample by Districts.

Fire Workers	Gampaha	Kandy	Total
	Fire Workers	Fire Workers	
No. of respondents	100	100	200
No. of in-depth (case) studies	5	5	10

The questionnaire was administered to the main respondents in household (usually the head of the household). If a case of child labour was found in the household, in depth interviews were conducted with the main respondent and the working children. In addition, to household surveys and in-depth interviews, key-informants were also interviewed.

3.4 Limitations

In order to assess the size of the child labour in the fire-work industrial sector, fire-work factory approach would have been better. Considering the problems associated with preparing a sample frame of factories and access to factories to find child labour, which is legally prohibited, a household approach was adopted.

3.5 Household Profile

The number of households enumerated in the selected districts, average household size, demographic and economic characteristics of the households will be discussed in this section, as these characteristics are important to understand the child labour problem in these households. The two villages of Kimbulapitiya in the Gampaha district and Halloluwa in Kandy district have been selected purposively as majority of the households in these two villages are involved in fire-work industry. Tables given in the Appendix relating to fire-work are referred to with a letter A. Thus Table numbers A1 to A12 refers to household profile. Tables given in the text are numbered serially as Table 3.1, 3.2 etc.

3.6 Profile of Households engaged in Fire-work industry

Household size:

Altogether 197 households have been enumerated in the two districts of Kandy and Gampaha, where fire-work industry is prevalent, as given in the Table 3.2. Although 100 households have to be enumerated from each location, three households in Kimbulapitiya, Gampaha district did not respond. On an average there were 4.2 members per household in the two GN divisions. (Table 3.3).

Table 3.2: Number of households and Household members by Location

	Halloluwa Kandy District	Kimbulapitiya Gampaha district	Total
No. of Households	100	97	197
No. of Household members	418	409	827
Average HH members	4.2	4.2	4.2

Age and Sex ratio

The sex ratio (number of males per 100 females) given in Table 3.4 indicates that there were more males than females in both the two locations. As given in Table 3.3 the size of the child population aged 5-17 years, is higher in Gampaha than in Kandy. The proportion of male population in this age group was considerably high in both the districts as the sex ratio was around 134 (number of males per 100 females). There is one child aged 5-17 years for every five persons in the population in these two villages. It is also evident that Kandy population is aging than the Gampaha population, probably due to low fertility that prevailed during the last two decades.

Table 3.3: Number of Household Members by Gender and Age

Age group	Number			Percent		
	Kandy	Gampaha	Total	Kandy	Gampaha	Total
0-4	36	33	69	8.5	8.1	8.3
5-17	78	107	185	18.4	26.2	22.2
18-59	261	253	514	61.7	61.9	61.8
60+	48	16	64	11.3	3.9	7.7
Total	423	409	832	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3.4: Household population by district, gender and Sex Ratio

Sex	Kandy	Gampaha	Total
Male	227	208	435
Female	197	201	398
Total	424	409	833
Sex ratio	115	103	109

Civil status (Tables A6 & A7)

The proportion of currently married females was higher than that among males as proportion of never married males was as high as 51% compared that of 37% among females. Widowhood was also high among females, as nearly one out 10 females was a widow. It seems that more males used to postpone their marriages than females, as shown in Table 3.5 and 3.6.

Table 3.5: Percentage of household members by civil status

	Never married	Currently married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	Total
Male	51.4	47.7	0.0	0.2	0.7	100.0
Female	37.2	52.0	1.3	0.3	9.3	100.0

Table 3.6: Percentage of household members by marital status and gender

Age group	Never married		Currently married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	13.0	27.0		
5-9	17.5	18.9		
10-13	11.7	20.9		
14-17	18.4	12.8		0.5
18-24	26.0	12.8	5.8	11.1
25-59	13.0	7.4	79.7	81.2
60+	0.4		14.5	7.2

Age group	Never married		Currently married	
Male	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Activity (Table 3.7)

The percentage distribution of household members by age group and activity is given in Table 3.7. Children in age group 0-4 years attending Montessori schools are reported as students. It is interesting to note that almost all the children aged 5-13 years were attending school in these two villages, as primary education is compulsory. Drop out rate seems to be high among children after age 14 years that is after attending 10 years of schooling. Once those children aged 14-17 years drop out of school, one out of ten of them get employed and another one out of ten seek employment, while the balance 8 out of ten continue schooling.

14% of youths aged 18-24 years continued their educational activities, while one out of ten of them seek employment. The majority, 66%, had found employments. The unemployment rate was very low in these villages as majority could find employment.

Table 3.7: Percentage of household members by activity and age

Age group	Employed	Unemployed	Student	Household Work	Retired/ Unable to Work	Other	Total
0-4	0.0	0.0	24.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
5-9	0.0	0.0	98.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
10-13	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
14-17	9.8	9.8	78.7	0.0	1.6	0.0	100.0
18-24	66.1	10.7	14.3	7.1	0.0	0.9	100.0
25-59	82.1	0.7	0.5	14.9	0.2	1.5	100.0
60+	65.6	1.6	0.0	3.1	29.7	0.0	100.0
Total	54.3	2.6	24.8	8.4	2.5	0.8	100.0

Educational attainment

Higher educational attainments were very poor in these two villages, as the school drop out rate was high and finding employment for dropped out was not difficult. Because of poverty, lack of motivation and parents' ignorance the attitude of adolescents was to earn money. There were only two university graduates in the two villages. 25 of these villagers were illiterate and all of them were aged 25 years and above, while 11 had no

formal education but could read and write. Nearly 90% of the villagers had less than 10 years of schooling.

Occupations

The firework industry was the major industrial sector that provided employment to these villagers and 51% of those employed were in this sector. Construction and transport sectors also provided employment to some of these villagers. 48.5% of the employed population worked in the firework industry as labourers.

This industry was not traditional as only 5% said that it was traditional for them.

Out-Migration

In Sri Lanka migrating out of the country seeking better employment opportunities is not unusual. In any village there are several households with migrant labour. 26 families had at least one family member employed out of the country in the Middle East or any other country. All these migrants migrated out after mid 1970's , since the country adopted an open economic policy and promoted out migration, to solve unemployment.

Income and Expenditure

The majority of the working population in these two villages were daily paid (51%) and weekly paid (11%) labourers. Only 37% was drawing a monthly salary, indicating that they were in permanent occupations. Most of the workers, 47%, had an individual monthly income of Rs. 5000-10,000, while another 30% had Rs.10,000 – 20,000. Only 5% had an income of more than Rs. 20,000 a month. The total household monthly income was very much similar to the individual income. Anyhow, more than 20% of the households were having a monthly income of more than Rs.20, 000, compared to 5% of individuals getting this amount. It can safely be assumed that there could have been more than one income earner in these families.

Samurdhi is a poverty alleviation programme, which gives an allowance to low income families. Samurdhi recipients are said to be living below the poverty line. 58% of the families in these two villages were Samurdhi beneficiaries. According to this survey only 33% of household were having a monthly income below Rs. 5,000. The Samurdhi

financial allowance received by many (63%) of the families seemed to less than Rs. 350. 18% received Rs. 350 to Rs. 500. Another 18% received more than Rs. 500.

The majority of the households were of the opinion that their present monthly household income was sufficient for them. (Table A28).

Indebtedness

It is evident that around 40% of the households was indebted and nearly 80% had taken loans up to Rs. 10,000. Taking loans for investment among villagers was not so popular and often they take housing loans.

Use of Electricity, firewood and Gas

Most of these villages were provided with electricity from the main grid and 85% of the households in these two villages were having electricity. They use electricity mainly for lighting and not for any industrial purpose. Very rarely a household use electricity and kerosene oil for cooking. Although gas is popular in urban areas in rural villages around 5% of the households use gas for cooking. Almost all the families (93%) use firewood for cooking.

3.7 Firework Industry

In the two villages there was a household population of 832, and out of which 450 (54%) were employed. Out of the 450 employed household members 231 were employed in the firework industry, which is 51% of the employed population. It is clear that more than half of the employed population in these two villages depend mainly on firework industry for a living. It is also clear that a very large proportion, 89%, of these workers in the firework industry were just labourers drawing an income less than Rs. 5,000 a month.

Child labour

Out of the 450 employed household members there were 6 children aged 14-17 years reported as full time employed. Altogether, there were 254 children aged less than 17 years in these households, which is 30.5% of the household population. When children aged less than 5 year were (69) excluded, the vulnerable child population aged 5-17 years is 185. Out of these 185 children, 89 were reported as engaged in household work, most of

them while going to school. (Table A49). That is nearly one out of two children were engaged in household work helping parents.

The distribution of children aged 5-17 years by working status is as follows:

Table 3.8: The distribution of children aged 5-17 years by working status

Status	No. of children
Working outside	3
Working in firework (home)	29
Household work	89
Total no. of working children 5-17 yr	121
Non-working children	64
Total no. of children aged 5-17 yr	185

Household work

In the two villages under study there is no serious violation of child's rights and child abuse as expected. According to the study there were 185 children in the age group of 5-17 years (see Table 3.8). Out of them 89 children or 48% help parents by engaging in household activities, which involved bringing water, cooking, washing cloths, collecting firewood and looking after sibling (Table A50). Although they were engaged in household work, except three aged 14-17 years, all the others, that is 97% of the children of school going age, were attending school. (see Table 3.8). With regard to age preference, more female children aged 10-13 years and more male children aged 14-17 years tend to attend household work.

Table 3.9

Number and percentage of children engaged in household work by age and Activity

Age group	Employed	Unemployed	Student	Not working	Total
5-9			17	50	67
10-13			35	22	57
14-17	2	1	34	24	61
Total	2	1	86	96	185
Percent					
5-9	0.0	0.0	25.4	74.6	100.0
10-13	0.0	0.0	61.4	38.6	100.0
14-17	3.3	1.6	55.7	39.3	100.0
Total	1.1	0.5	46.5	51.9	100.0

Firework

In the field of firework industry child employment had taken a different form. They are not going to the factory or a fixed place of work, but work at home with parents. It is a form of cottage industry. The completion of the final product of firework involves several processes. The activities that are not risky, such as the preparation of rolls (*roll gahanawa*) or making cases and closing one end of the roll with mud (*metikatta ghanawa*), are done at household level. The risky part of the product, such as filling rolls with gun powder, is done at the factory level. The factory distributes raw materials to households and gets the basic work done. The final product is completed at the factory. Once the household gets the raw material, all the household members, including children, work together as unpaid family workers. The payment from the factory is collected by the mother and she gives some money to the children.

There were 29 children aged 5-17 years of age working in the firework industry. Out of 29 children, 24 (83%) were students. It means that they work only part time at home, after school. Parents allow these children to work because

- The family needs an additional income and
- Children help family business voluntarily, (Table 3.8)

Out of 29 children engaged in fireworks 26 work as unpaid family workers, as this industry in these villages function as a cottage industry.

Households having child labour

All the households may be grouped as

- a). households with child labour in firework industry,
- b). households with child labour in other sectors and
- c). households without child labour

Out of 197 households, only 192 households had given information relating to the type of child labour, as shown in Table 3.10. There were 22 households with children engaging in firework. That is, nearly there was one house per 10 households with children working in

firework industry. Households with children working in other economic sectors were almost negligible as there was only one such household. In these villages, availability of opportunities to work in other economic sectors was not so high and at the same time, parents were not ready to send their children out of home to engage in economic activities without going to school. As such, the number of households without child labour is high as 88%.

Samurdhi is a government poverty alleviation programme, providing financial assistance to poor families. Child labour is associated mainly with poverty. In these two villages 59% of the households had received Samurdhi benefits. Out 23 households with child labour only 11 had received Samurdhi benefits, indicating that these poor families had not much benefited out of this programme. (Table 3.11).

With regard to *indebtedness* 40% of all the households were in a state of indebtedness. Out of those households with child, labour only 43% was indebted. The low level of indebtedness in these villages was mainly due to low access to sources of credit facilities provided by banking sector. At the same time, they were not much concerned with taking loans for investment, except housing loans. They may be indebted to local shopkeeper and village moneylender.

Table 3.10: Number of households by type of child-labour

Household status	No. of Households	%
Child Labour in Firework industry	22	11.5
Child Labour in other sectors	1	0.5
Without child labour	169	88.0
Total	192	100.0

Table 3.11: Number of households by Samurdhi welfare benefits receiving

Household status	Samurdhi welfare benefits			Percent		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Child Labour in Firework industry	10	12	22	45.5	54.5	100.0
Child Labour in Other sectors	1		1	100.0	0.0	100.0
Without child labour	102	67	169	60.4	39.6	100.0
Total	113	79	192	58.9	41.1	100.0

Place of work and type of work

As given in Table 3.12 it was reported that 32 children were working in the firework industry and almost all of them, except one child out of 32, were working at home. Only one was working outside home. They were not working in factories and in hazardous works.

There were three children who were not going to school and two of them were employed and one is unemployed.

(With regard to place of work 32 child workers were reported (Table 3.12), while with regard to employment status of the working children this figure dropped to 29 as three had not responded (Table 3.13).

Table 3.12 Number of Children by Place of work

	Age group			
Where does the child work?	5-9yr	10-13 yr	14-17yr	Total
Home	4	7	20	31
Shops/boutique,				0
Field			1	1
Total	4	7	21	32

Employment status

Employment status of working-children is given in Table 3.13. There was one child who was self employed and another two were working outside home on casual basis for a pay. All the other 26 children were engaged in firework at home.

Reason for working

The reasons for working is given in Table 3.14. It is clear that 27 out of 29 worked voluntarily at home to improve the family income.

Table 3.13

Number of children engaged in household firework by age and employment status

	Age group			
What is the child's employment status?	5-9	10-13	14-17	Total
Self-employed			1	1
Un-paid family worker	4	6	16	26
Paid employee-casual			2	2
Total	4	6	19	29

Table 3.14

Number and percentage of household members (Children) by reason for working and age

Main reason for child working	Age group			
	5-9	10-13	14-17	Total
Family need income	3	2	8	13
No opportunity to do a other job			1	1
Children help family business voluntary	1	4	9	14
Family need income and Child has reached working age			1	1
Total	4	6	19	29
Percent				
Family need income	75.0	33.3	42.1	44.8
No opportunity to do a other job		0.0	5.3	3.4
Children help family business voluntary	25.0	66.7	47.4	48.3
Family need income and Child has reached working age		0.0	5.3	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Payments and Household income

Children are not paid directly by the factory. The payment for the work is given to the mother, who takes the responsibility of taking over the raw materials and handing over the work done. The household income from firework industry is less than Rs. 5,000.

Children are not paid directly by the factory. The payment for the work is given to the mother, who takes the responsibility of taking over the raw materials and handing over the work done to the factory. The household income from firework industry is less than Rs. 5,000.

Monthly total household income from all sources and individual income from firework industry is given in Table 3.15 and Fig 1, with regard to all households in the villages. Monthly income from firework refers to individual income and there were more than one person working in firework industry in a household as there were 237 household members working in firework industry in 196 households.

It seems that as the household income rises the number of members who were engaged in firework dropped, indicating that household firework activities were limited to low income houses, as shown in Table 3.14 and Fig 1. In these households, the proportion of

households receiving a monthly income of more than Rs. 10,000 was 71% compared to 15% of individuals receiving more than Rs. 10,000. 85% of the individuals in the firework industry received less than Rs.10,000. All the children engaged in firework industry were from low income households, as they received less than Rs. 5,000 per month from firework. (Table A55).

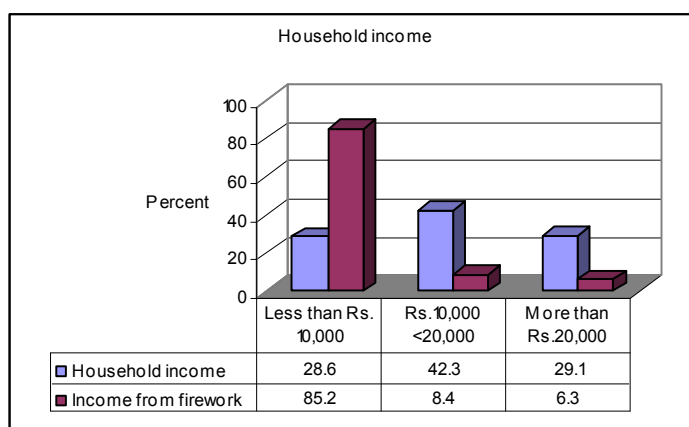
Table 3.15

Number and percentage of household members by Household total income and income from fireworks.

	Number		Percent	
	Household income	Income from firework	Household income	Income from firework
Less than Rs. 10,000	56	202	28.6	85.2
Rs.10,000 <20,000	83	20	42.3	8.4
More than Rs.20,000	57	15	29.1	6.3
Total	196	237	100.0	100.0

Fig 1

Household income from all sources and firework industry



Number of hours a child works in firework

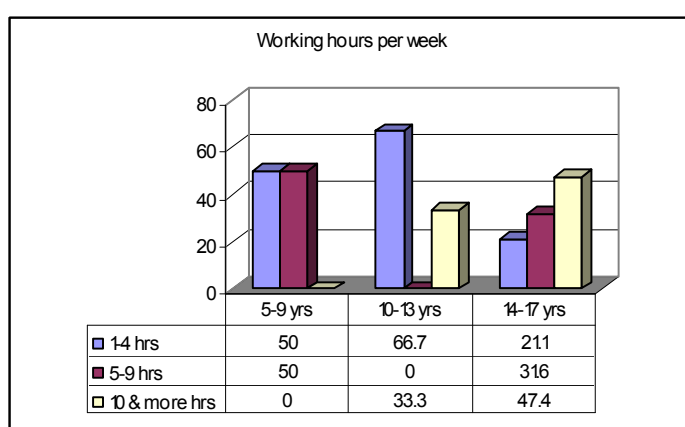
As almost all the children, who were engaged in firework industry were students attending school and worked as unpaid family workers in the household, a majority of the children worked less than an hour a day (Table 3.16). None of the children aged 5-9 years worked more than 10 hours a week. However, more than 47% of the children aged 14-17 years worked more than 10 hours a week.

Table 3.16: Percentage of Children by Number of Hours worked per week and age

Working hours per week on average	Age group			
	5-9 yrs	10-13 yrs	14-17 yrs	Total
Percent				
1-4 hrs	50.0	66.7	21.1	34.5
5-9 hrs	50.0	0.0	31.6	27.6
10 & more hrs	0.0	33.3	47.4	37.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Fig. 2

Number of hours worked per week by children



Impact of child stopping work

Parents were asked about the impact of child stopping work. Only 28% of the households admitted that it would affect their monthly household income, while a majority, 65% said that it has no impact. A very small proportion of households were of the opinion that they could not afford to live if the child stops work. The impact was high at age 14-17 years of the child, as they worked more than 10 hours a week adding more income to the family.

Parents did not force children to work, as they worked voluntary. Anyway a majority of parents, 72%, was happy about their children, who worked for the family. Almost all the children, 97%, worked at home and only one child aged 14-17 years worked outside home.

Work hazard

Unlike in any other industry, the type of work given to children working at home in firework industry did not expose children to work hazards. Only 10 out of 29 responded to this question and 7 said that they were exposed to chemicals. Three others said that they experienced dust, bad smell and loneliness. Out of 29 child workers only one was hurt at the work place. When asked about the health risks at work only 19 out of 29 responded and only two of them admitted that they were exposed to high health risks. They were asked whether they were tired after a day's work. Only 22 out of 29 responded and only three admitted that they felt very tired. Others said that they were not so tired.

Out of 29 children 23 responded to the question on acceptability of work conditions and the majority 91% said it was acceptable. This was not much relevant to them as their place of work was at home.

Internal-Migration

Out of 196 households there were only 26 migrant families and out of these 26 only two had child workers. With regard to reason for migration, marriage and employment were major reasons. Only one family with working child in firework reported that they migrated due to insufficient income.

Quality of house

The quality of the house was an indicator of the quality of life. In general one out of three houses in the villages was said to be poor, while the other two were fair or good. With regard to household with child labour, only 10 out of 29 responded and three said it was poor.

Qualitative study

Around 10 in-depth interviews were carried out interviewing subcontractors, teachers, factory owners, Grama Niladharins (GN= village headman), householders and priests. Analysis of the qualitative data is presented here.

Nature of firework industry:

Firework industry in Sri Lanka commenced just after the Second World War, by a Sri Lankan soldier, who served in the British Army. When he returned home he brought some Chinese firework (crackers), and studied the techniques and developed a national industry with his son. This industry was handed over from father to brothers and sons and the whole family worked for the industry. The younger generation did not follow higher education but improved the industry with dedication. At that time there was no law to control or regularise the industry, but today with the presence of terrorism new laws have been introduced.

This industry is a traditional one and today no new entrepreneurs join the trade, as it involves hazards and life risks. Earlier many had died, but today it is controlled. The nature of the industry needs labourers to sit on the ground and do the job and they cannot wear clean cloths. Village youth look for alternative jobs in garment factories or abroad, where they have a better recognition and better job facilities.

There is a severe shortage of labour in this industry, at present. Most of the factory workers come from far off villages and they are given accommodation and other facilities. Tamil youth coming from Badulla were turned back due to risks involved with terrorism. Today work, not involving gun powder, is distributed among village households and the industry has become a sort of cottage industry. Although the firework industry is highly profitable, workers are paid poorly. Females in households, with their school going children helping them after school, are engaged in this industry.

Firework subcontractor:

“I am working as a subcontractor for a firework factory at Kimbulapitiya. I undertake contract for most of the work relating to crackers, excluding the part of gunpowder, which is done at the factory. I get this work done through villagers. Children too help their parents, but I never pay children directly. It is not good to give them money. We pay elders in the house. During off seasons parents pick cloves and they take their children to climb trees and pick cloves. They earn Rs.10 per kilogram. Parents earn around Rs. 800 a day, but they give only Rs. 200 to the wife for household expenditure

and spend the balance for alcohol. The women find it hard to manage and engage in firework industry to feed their children.”

Deputy Principal of the school:

Nearly 90% of the households and 75% of school children in the Kimbulapitiya GN division are engaged in firework industry. Performances of these children are poor as they give preference to help parents to earn a few rupees engaging in firework industry. During festive seasons school attendance is very poor, as children engage in fireworks. Most of these children spend on eating short eats and other unnecessary things. School drop out is high as family disruptions are high. Children live with grand parents. Some children continue somehow or other up to 11th year in school and stop and join garment industry. Because of poverty some mothers migrate. Some children bring mobile phones to school and play with it with other children. I took some of these phones and asked parents to come and collect it, but they never come. There is a severe labour shortage in this industry. People come from very far off villages to work in firework factories and they are poorly paid; often Rs. 2500-3000 a month. Children are good, but poverty and parent’s ignorance are having an adverse impact on their education.

As a result of children being employed in firework industry they are prone to make even bombs and I have seen them trying. Children are unsafe.”

Traditional

Quantitative data shows that firework industry at household level as a cottage industry and it is not traditional. The qualitative data indicates that firework industry at factory level is traditional. All the entrepreneurs interviewed said that they inherit the industry from their parents.

The owner of one of the large firework factories at Kimbulapitiya:

“Since 1960 the factory is handed down from father to sons, as a heritage. Our father worked here since he was a child. Our family members too helped him from their school days. Children of firework entrepreneurs do not continue their higher education. They leave school after 10 years of schooling and join this industry. Father usually assigned us some work and we have to complete it.”

Poverty:

All those who responded to the interviews pointed out poverty as the major reason for child labour in these villages. Except firework they have no alternative employment. Although parents want their children to attend school everyday, because of poverty they keep quiet if the child stays home and help parents doing firework activities at home. The Vice Principal in the village school, who has first hand experience in how poverty affects pupils' education said:

“Nearly 90% of the pupils in the school come from very poor families. Parents find it difficult to send their child to school everyday as they have no books, uniforms etc. Employment in firework industry does not bring a good income, as they are poorly paid. Because of poverty most of the families get disrupted and some females migrate out. Children do not get parents affection, encouragement and leadership to continue their education.”

Another teacher said: “Males have no permanent employment. They are daily paid labourers, but they cannot find jobs daily. Females tend to work in firework industry and supplement the family income.”

Alcoholism and poverty:

GN and a firework subcontractor pointed out that males in these villages come home late after liquor. If they earn Rs. 800 a day, they give only Rs. 200 to wife to run the house. She manage somehow or other working in firework with children. Firework brings them an income not more than Rs. 3000 a month.

Child labour

Child labour in these villages could be found mainly in household work and firework industry.

- a). It is customary in villages, mainly children in low income families, to help parents in their daily household work such as bringing water, collecting firewood, washing cloths and looking after sibling after school. Some children help their parents in their economic activities as unpaid family workers.
- b). In Kimbulapitiya 90% of the families do various functions relating to fireworks at home without going to factories. It seems to be a cottage

industry in which all household members, including school going children, jointly work.

- c). Very often subcontractors distribute the raw materials to households in the morning and collect the completed products at the end of the day. Money is paid to the mother, often weekly, and she in turn gives some money to children.
- d). During festive seasons employers open up 'cracker huts' (r;s[a[d uvq) in villages and children often find work in these huts during New Year and Christmas seasons, without attending school. One of the teachers said that most of the pupils were not attending school during festive seasons as more than half of the pupils in the school are from families engaged in fireworks industry. As there is a severe shortage of labour, employers encourage children to come to huts to work, saying that they will give school books, cloths and money.

On other days they deliver raw materials to households and children work after school to support the family. One of the teachers said”

“Child labour is not utilized directly in this industry. Children are not employed continuously, as they attend school. They stay out of school only during festive seasons, during which time they can earn a few rupees. Some children drop out after attending 10 years of schooling and find employment in garment industry and earn Rs. 8,000 – 9,000.”

One mother explained how her daughter, who is very keen to continue her higher studies, voluntarily works in this industry, till late night.

“My eldest daughter, 14 years of age, is very keen to study. Unlike other children she understands our hardships. She goes to school wearing even old cloths. We have no electricity. She studies till late night. Now a teacher has started a private tuition class, charging Rs.1000 a month. She asked me whether she can take more fireworks and work hard to collect money to pay the tuition class. Employers ask parents to send their children to

“huts”. I am not sending my children; but most parents sending their children, saying that they can at least buy covers to their books.”

One important thing to notice in this industry is that all of the children working in firework industry attend school, sometimes, of course, intermittently.

Impact of Child Labour

According to the respondents, child labour in fireworks industry is having short term as well as long term impacts on child behaviour. Some of them are:

a). Short term impacts:

- Children attend school intermittently and avoid school during festive seasons and engage in firework activities to earn a few rupees.
- The money they earn is spending on short eats and other unnecessary things, such as mobile phones.

b). Long term impacts:

- Children handling money deviates them from education,
- Intermittent school attendance lead to high school drop out,
- Children's priority to education is replaced with money and looking for employment untimely,
- Loosing parental control leads a child to violence and socially unacceptable behaviour.

Attitude change

A factory owner was of the opinion that the attitudes of the villagers had changed during the last few decades.

“Now villagers are not willing to work in this field. They are reluctant to sit on the ground and work. They want clean suits and work in office like environment. That is why girls prefer garment industry or else they want us to deliver raw material to their households and attend to work as a cottage industry.

GN of the area said

“Generally all the children attend school. But they go to school unwillingly and not to learn. Their intention is just to reach 10th year in school and leave. Thereafter they find employment in garment industry. Parents also take least interest in teaching their children.

A Buddhist priest:

“Parents must change their attitudes and encourage their children to continue their higher studies. Now their intention is just to eat and drink and spend the day. They can do nothing with the little money that they earn. Some parents want their daughters to marry early. In this village it is a customary that after marriage husband stays in the wife’s house.”

3.8 Conclusion

Today, Sri Lanka, in the process of globalization and industrialization, is rapidly transforming into a consumer society. People say that ‘everything is getting commercialized’ and every one is running after money. This attitudinal change is attributed to the open economic policy introduced in 1977. The open economic policy was introduced with the intention of solving the grave problem of unemployment among educated youth promoting tourism, out-migration, foreign capital and free flow technical know-how into the country. It brought in advantages as well as disadvantages. With the promotion of tourism, commercialism, modern electronic communication (porno DVD, video, computer, internet cafes) and mother migration, many forms of child abuses have been introduced. Child sex trade, child trafficking, child labour, children serving as domestic aids, domestic work, cruelty and sexual abuse by relatives or neighbours in the absence of mother’s protection (mainly mother migration) and lack of parental affection are some of the problems that Sri Lankan children face today.

This study has been limited to child labour in firework industry. Firework industry is confined only to certain areas in the country. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been collected through a purposively selected sample of 197 households in two GN divisions of Kimbulapitiya in Gampaha district and Halloluwa in Kandy district, where

firework industry is mainly located. In these two villages 185 children aged 5-17 years were enumerated. Out of these children 89 help parents in their household work, such as bringing water, cooking, washing cloths, collecting firewood and looking after sibling. Though they attend to day to day work in the household, helping parents, they attend school. Another 29 children in this age group help parents attending activities relating to firework, while attending school.

During festive seasons children continuously work in firework without going to school. Other days they attend school intermittently, as they give priority to help parents in their economic activity. Labourers in firework industry are poorly paid and parents earn less than Rs. 5,000 a month from firework.

Child labour in firework industry is limited to certain locations in three districts of Kandy, Gampaha and Puttalam in the country. There was no evidence of children going to a firework factory and work, but they worked at home as unpaid family workers. Activities in a firework factory are hazardous and risky not only for children but also for adults. Working with gun powder requires experience and skill. Therefore none of the children are given that type of work. Only those activities which do not involve gunpowder are given to households. The factory distributes raw materials, such as preparing rolls and sealing with mud, which are not risky mainly among females in the households closer to the factory. All the members in the household, including children work voluntarily, like in a cottage industry. Once their part of the work is completed they hand it over to the factory and collects the payment. Mother who take the responsibility collects the payment and pay household members.

The nature of firework industry had changed considerable during the last two decades. Earlier, employees went to the factory and worked seated on the ground. This industry involves a risk in life, as few died of accidental explosions. At present youth are not willing to sit on the ground and work, as they prefer to work in clean environment wearing clean and smart looking cloths. Now there is a severe shortage of labour in this industry and employers tended to distribute raw material to neighbouring households in the morning and collect the products in the afternoon. Members of the household,

including children work together. Payments are made to the mother. Activities relating to gunpowder are not given to children or households, as that part of the job is done at the factory level by experienced hands. In an indirect way, child labour in firework industry is promoted as substitute, to face labour shortage.

Children who work in the firework industry in households attend school and spend less than 10 hours a week. Qualitative data indicated that there was a labour shortage in the firework industry and employers promote household members and children through paying them in time. The income an individual gets from firework industry is less than Rs. 5,000, which is not a significant income. Even if a child stops working parents said that it has no significant impact on their family income; but children aged 14-17 years stops working, it has a significant impact on the family income, as they worked more than 10 hours a week.

Another feature in this industry is that there are no new comers to the industry, as it involves hazards and restricting laws due to security reasons. Shortage of labour is also another factor that contributes to this, due to attitudinal changes in the younger generation.

The nature of child labour in firework industry is not similar to that found in other industries. Firework industry in these villages has become a sort of cottage industry. Children are not directly involved, as they are not going out of the house to work in a central place, except during the festive seasons. It should be noted that all these children are students attending school. During festive seasons, employers put up huts, called 'cracker huts' (रसवाड) and they promote children to come to these places for work promising them money, school books and school uniforms. During festive seasons of New Year and Christmas, rate of school attendance drops drastically. Other days they work one to two hours a day as unpaid family workers.

The firework industry at cottage level is having short term as well as long term impacts on children. The involvement of child in firework directly affects child's quality of education, as they go to school intermittently and do not play an active role in education.

Although parents want their children to attend school their poverty and ignorance do not allow it.

With regard to long term impacts, once these children are exposed to earning money and using them at an early stage of their life, they give priority to working for a pay rather than going to school, changing their attitudes. After 10 years of schooling majority of these children stop schooling and join the labour force and work in the firework industry. Parents tolerate this type of children's attitudes due to poverty and economic constraints on family.

The quality of education at school level too dropped. Once the children as well as the parents do not take any interest the teachers too keep quiet and show a negative attitude towards these children. There are children who are highly interested in education in these villages. They are coming from migrant families with a satisfactory income level. Parents send these children to higher schools out of the village.

All those children of school going age were attending school up to age 13 years and thereafter children tend to drop out and at the time of the survey only 79% of the children in 14-17 year age group were attending school. Those who left school in this age group were employed or looking for employment. After 10 years of schooling majority of the children tend to drop out. A very few students in these villages continue their higher education up to GCE A/L or university level.

Parents are poor and ignorant and have no idea about the quality of their children. In these two villages educational level of villagers was very low, as 90% of them had only less than 10 years of schooling. 11 of the villagers had no formal education and were illiterate. Because of parent's low level of education and poverty, parents were in favour of children contributing to family income, rather than continuously attending school, which they cannot afford. Primary education is given to every child, but the quality is very low as teachers, parents and children do not take active interest in education.

In locations where firework industry thrives, a considerable proportion of children of school going age is engaged in firework industry as unpaid family workers. Due to poverty and ignorance parents tolerate and appreciate children's contribution to family income, though it affects the children's education and quality of life.

Chapter 4: Tile Industry

4.1 Background and Scope of Study

Tile industry in Sri Lanka is spread out in several districts in the Western and North Western provinces. This survey studies the industry in Vaikkal GN division in Puttalam district in the North Western Province and Katana GN division in Gampaha district in the Western Province. It is assumed that many children are employed in the tile industry, at factory level, as it is not a cottage industry and as families with children were given residence within the factory premises. The type of child labour, their family background, reasons for children to be employed, its implication on child's education etc. are studied here. All the Tables are given in the Appendix and numbered with a letter T.

4.2 Objective

The objective of the study was to estimate the size of the child labour, directly as well as indirectly, involved in tile industry and study the risks and hazards that working children face in this industry.

4.3 Methodology

For the study of child labour in the two villages selected, 400 households were enumerated, 200 from each village. The selection of the villages as well as the houses were done purposively. A list of tile factories or a list of households with child labour in the tile industry was not available and to prepare such lists might take a considerable time and money.

Table 4.1 Sample Size

Tile Workers	Gampaha	Puttalam	Total
	Katana	Vaikkal	
No. of respondents	200	200	400
No. of in-depth (case) studies	5	5	10

4.4 Limitations

The best approach to study child labour in tile industry was through factories, as children should go to the factory to work. However, it was not possible as factory owners do not allow researchers to enter their premises as employing children is prohibited. Therefore, a household approach was adopted.

4.5 Child Labour in Tile Industry: key findings

Demographic, social and economic characteristics of the household population will be discussed in this section, as a guide to understand the child labour problem in these households.

Household size

The two districts of Gampaha and Puttalam have been selected purposively for the study, considering the prevalence of tile industry. Altogether 400 households were enumerated with a population of 1446, amounting to 3.6 members per household. It is also clear that 93% of the population belonged to nuclear families consisting of parents and children. (Table T1). The dependency ratio was around 56%.

Age and Sex ratio

The sex ratio (number of males per 100 females) given in Table 4.2 indicates that there were more males than females in age groups of 10-24 years and the sex ratio was highly in favour of males in 15-17 years age group.

It is also clear that, as given in Table 4.3, the size of the child population aged 5-17 years, which is vulnerable to abuse and child labour, is 23% of the total population. The proportion of male population in this age group was considerably high in age group of 10-17 years. There is more than one child aged 5-17 years for every five persons in these villages.

Table 4.2

Number and Percentage of Household Members by Age, Gender and Sex ratio.

Age group	Sex			Percent			Sex ratio
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
0-4 yrs	53	54	107	7.2	7.6	7.4	98
5-9 yrs	55	57	112	7.5	8	7.8	96
10-14 yrs	71	62	133	9.7	8.7	9.2	115

Age group	Sex			Percent			Sex ratio
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
15-17 yrs	56	32	88	7.6	4.5	6.1	175
18-24 yrs	107	102	209	14.6	14.3	14.5	105
25-59 yrs	358	360	718	48.8	50.6	49.7	99
60& above	33	44	77	4.5	6.2	5.3	75
Total	733	711	1444	100	100	100	103

Table 4.3

Number and Percentage of Household Members by Gender and Age

Age	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4 yrs	53	54	107	7.3	7.7	7.4
5-17 yr	182	151	333	24.8	21.2	23.1
18-59 yr	465	462	927	63.4	64.9	64.2
60& above	33	44	77	4.5	6.2	5.3
Total	733	711	1444	100	100	100

In this population there were 333 children aged 5-17 years, and 55% of them were males and 45% were females, as given in Table 4.4 below. (see also Table T1 in appendix).

Table 4.4

Number of children by age and gender

	Male	Female	Total	%
5-9 yrs	55	57	112	33.6
10-14 yrs	71	62	133	39.9
15-17 yrs	56	32	88	26.4
Total	182	151	333	100.0
%	54.7	45.3	100.0	

Civil status

Civil status of the household population is given in Table 4.5, below. Frequency of marriage increased after age 25 years and widowhood was higher than separation and divorce cases. There were some teenage marriages, mainly among girls, as there were 17 girls and 3 boys, who had married at the age of 17-20 years.

Table 4.5

Percentage of Household members by Civil Status

Marital Statues	Age group							
	0-4 yrs	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	18-24 yrs	25-59 yrs	60 & above	Total
Never married	107	112	133	86	141	85	6	670
Currently married				2	66	549	40	657

Marital Statues	Age group							
	0-4 yrs	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	18-24 yrs	25-59 yrs	60 & above	Total
Separated					2	36	2	40
Divorced						6	1	7
Widowed						43	29	72
Total	107	112	133	88	209	719	78	1446
Percent								
Never married	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.7	67.5	11.8	7.7	46.3
Currently married	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	31.6	76.4	51.3	45.4
Separated	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	5.0	2.6	2.8
Divorced	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.3	0.5
Widowed	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	37.2	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Birth certificate:

Only 5% of the household members had no birth certificate and majority of them were adults. Largest proportion of those who had no birth certificates, nearly 7%, were reported in age groups of 0-4 years and 25-59 years. On other hand out of school-going-age-population of 326 in 5-17 years, only 7 children or 2% had no birth certificate. Birth certificate is one of the key documents that is required to admit a child to a school, in Sri Lanka. Therefore almost all the children of school going age had their birth certificates, as parents insist that their children should attend school.

Activity

59% of the household population was employed and only 3% were unemployed. 19% were students, 7% were engaged in household work.

Activity of children

As given in Table 4.6, below, there were 333 children aged 5-17 years and out of them only 83% were attending school. Others had joined the labour force, either employed or looking for a job or engaged in household work. 29 of them were directly reported as employed and another 7 were seeking employment. That is 11% of the children aged 5-17 years were employed.

Out of the 29 non-school going children 25 gave reasons for not attending school. 8 children (32%) were not willing to go to school, while 5 (20%) were not attending

school as parents found it difficult to afford. Only 2 aged 15-17 years stayed at home as they failed in the examination, probably GCE O/L. Others did not give a specific reason.

Table 4.6

Number of children by age and activity

Main activity	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	Total	%
Employed		6	23	29	8.7
Unemployed		1	6	7	2.1
Student	101	121	55	277	83.2
Household Work	1	2	3	6	1.8
Other	10	3	1	14	4.2
Total	112	133	88	333	100.0

Education attainments

With regard to the educational attainments of the household population nearly 8% of those aged 10 years and above were illiterate and illiteracy was high among adults aged 25 years and above. Over half of the household members aged 25 years and above had only primary education. The proportion of those who had higher educational attainments among this population was very low. In the adult age groups of 18 years and above only 2% to 11 % had more than 10 years of schooling while all the others (over 90%) had less than 10 years of schooling indicating that the educational level of the household population as very low.

Occupation

As majority had a low level of educational attainments, economically active population found employment mainly in tile industry and other manual works. Over 58% of the household population was engaged in some economic activity. The majority of them (69%) were engaged in the tile industry. As shown above 29 children had dropped out of school and were engaged in some economic activity and only 9 children were in the tile industry. It is also clear that majority of the adults aged above age 18 years had entered the labour force by age 15 years. A very of these employments were engaged in family enterprises and majority of those who were employed elsewhere had verbal contracts with their employers, as they worked in informal sectors in the village.

Almost all of them reported that they received their payments in time. Saving among them (only one out of four saved some money) was very poor as their pay was hardly enough to support them.

Because of low education, due to early dropping out from school, the older generation tended to start working at their early stage, majority at the age of 10 to 15 years. Unlike firework and coir industries, tile industry is not a cottage industry. Therefore, tile industry is not often a family business. As these people were labourers and were daily paid, they were not in the habit of saving in savings banks. Only one out of four saved some money, mostly in banks.

With regard to economic and other benefits that employees received, a significant proportion of employees (42%) had received accommodation and 10% said that received meals also. 33% did not receive any benefits other than the pay.

Migration

When there is no employment in the village to their satisfaction, villagers tended to migrate out, sometimes they go abroad looking for better job opportunities. In these villages very few only 6% of the family members had migrated out and 65% out of migrants went out in search of employment opportunities. In addition 17% had migrated for higher educational purposes. It is interesting to note that out of 77 family members who migrated out 25 were children in the age group of 5-17 years. Out of these 25, only 3 had gone finding jobs in construction and garment industry and they were aged 10 years and above.

Individual and Household Income

As majority of these workers were daily paid labourers, 58% received less than Rs. 5000 per month, 31% received Rs. 10,000 or more. More than half of the tile workers received less than Rs. 5,000 per month, while one out of four in the tile industry had received more than Rs. 10,000 per month.

In general the majority 65% of the households were of the opinion that their income was sufficient for them.

Indebtedness

Nearly one out of three households were in a state of indebtedness. Indebtedness was high among households with a monthly income of less than Rs. 10,000. They were indebted mainly for consumption purposes and not for investment.

With regard to the quality of houses, more than 70% of the houses were ranked as low. 29% as medium. Less than 1% had high quality houses. Although the quality of the house was low 91 % had electricity and only 35% had received Samurdhi.

Working Children

Out of 333 children 29 were engaged in some economic activity and 9 of them were in tile industry. 155 of them were doing household work, such as brining water, collecting firewood, going to the boutique and assisting mother in her household chores.

Place of work

Majority of the working children, 13 children, said that they were working in factories, while 8 were working in the field. 3 were working in the employer's household.

Table 4.7

Number of children by Place of work

Place of work	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	Total
Factory		4	9	13
Shops/boutique,		2	3	5
Field		1	7	8
Employer's House,	1	1	1	3
Others			2	2
Total	1	8	22	31

Household work and children

Out of 333 children, 155 children or 46% aged 5-17 years said that they were doing some household work while attending school.

More than half of the children aged 10-17 years were engaged in household work, while most of the children aged 5-9 years did not work, probably as they were too young.

There was no significant child sex preference in household work. Both girls as well as boys were engaged in bringing water, cooking and washing cloths, though there were more girls than boys involved in this type of work. More boys than girls were engaged in going to boutiques. It is clear that irrespective sex both girls as well as boys were helping their parents in household chores.

Table 4.8

Number of Children in household work by Sex and type of work

Type of work	Number			Percent		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Bringing water	10	18	28	14.9	20.5	18.1
Collecting firewood	2	2	4	3.0	2.3	2.6
Cooking	14	33	47	20.9	37.5	30.3
Washing clothes	10	9	19	14.9	10.2	12.3
Child care	1	4	5	1.5	4.5	3.2
Go to the boutique	12	13	25	17.9	14.8	16.1
Cleaning house	17	8	25	25.4	9.1	16.1
Assisting for family economic Activity	1	1	2	1.5	1.1	1.3
Total	67	88	155	100.0	100.0	100.0

Child Employment, income and hours worked

Out of 333 children, only 31 or 9% were engaged in paid employments. Out of these employed children 26 were boys and 5 were girls. All the 5 girls were aged 15-17 years. It should be noted that no girl aged less than 15 years was employed. Majority of these children had worked more than 35 hours a week. Girls in the garment industry had worked more than 40 hours a week.

The majority of the children, who worked collected their payment and a very few mothers intervened to collect child's payment. Most of the children who collected their salary tend to spend by themselves. Although mothers were not interested in collecting their children's payment, more mothers tend to interfere in spending them.

Unlike in the case of firework and coir industry, in the tile industry children had to work out side home. 13 children worked in factories and 8 in the field. Five worked in boutiques. Three worked in employer's house as domestic workers.

Out of 31 children worked outside home 28 children reported the amount of payment they received from their employment, as given below:

It is clear that majority of the children had received an income of less than Rs. 10,000 per month.

Table 4.9

Average monthly income

Income	10-14 yr	15-17 yr
Less than RS. 5000	0	9
5000-<10,000	6	11
10,000 +	0	2
Total	6	22

Reason for Child Employment

Parents were asked about the reason for sending their children to work for a pay. The majority, 17 out of 31 said that they could not afford to send them to school and they had dropped out of school. After dropping out there was no alternative other than working for pay, supporting their family income. Another 8 said because of poverty they wanted their children to work as family needed money.

Parents were also asked about the impact on the family if the child stops working. The majority, more than three out of four parents, said that if the child stops working it would directly affects their family and standard of their living would decline. Only 3 said that it would not affect their family.

It was also asked about the person who had asked the child to work. 22 out of 31 children, that is 71%, said that the child had decided him/herself. There were six instances where the mothers had asked the children to work considering their family income and the child's dropping out of school. Most probably if the child is not willing to go to school, mothers might have preferred them to work for a payment considering their poverty, rather than idling and roaming in the village.

Hazards in employment

Children pointed out some of the common hazards that they had to face in working. Very often they had to work long hours and had no adequate sleep, which is essential for their growth as a child. Some said that they had to carry heavy things. At the same time they felt loneliness and had faced risks in the work environment. Seven children complained about injuries they received while working. Often they experienced breathing problems, fatigue, headache and body pain.

None of the working children complained about ill-treatment by employers. Children said that employers' treatments were good or moderate. Only one child said he was paid a higher salary and others said that their salary was moderate or low. It seems that majority of the children were not paid properly.

Majority of the children, 23 out of 31, said that the working environment was acceptable and eight said it was not good.

Parents attitude towards child labour

Parents approved children working for a payment, considering their inability to afford child's education and low income of the household. If the child is not going to school they had no alternative, other than asking them to find employment. However, only five out of 31 households having child workers were not happy about the child engaging in paid employment. All the others, the majority, were happy about children getting employed.

Households with working children

Households may be grouped as households with working children in tile industry, households with working children in other sectors and, households without working children, as given in Table 4.10. Only 3% of the households had children working in tile industry, while 4% of the households had children working in other sectors. A majority of the households, 93% had no child labour.

Table 4.10

Number of household by status of child labour

Status	Total	%
Child labour in Tile industry	11	2.8
Child labour in other sector	17	4.3
No child labour	368	92.9
Total	396	100.0

Then ownership of land indicates that majority of the households in the tile industry had no land of their own (Table 4.11) and they were occupying the land and houses provided by the factory. Landlessness seemed to a common factor in these villages as 63% of the households had no land of their own. At the same time none of the households with children working in tile industry had good or fair houses, as all of their houses were ranked as low.

Table 4.11

Number of household by status of child labour and ownership of land

	No land	Less than 2 acres	2-3 acres	More than 3ac.	Total
Child labour in Tile industry	9	1	1		11
Child labour in other sector	11	6			17
No child labour	227	113	16	10	366
Total	247	120	17	10	394
Child labour in Tile industry	81.8	9.1	9.1	0.0	100.0
Child labour in other sector	64.7	35.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
No child labour	62.0	30.9	4.4	2.7	100.0
Total	62.7	30.5	4.3	2.5	100.0

Qualitative data

Several in-depth interviews were also carried out in these areas interviewing key informants. According to the qualitative data very few villagers work in tile factories as they think the prestige attached to tile industry is very low and mean. The villagers though poor try to keep their family status and preferred to work out side tile factories. As a result there is a labour shortage in the tile industry and the factory owners promote migrant labour from out side the village. Unemployed, low educated and unmarried labourers from adjoining districts like Kurunegala, Kegalle migrate to Puttalam and

Gampaha districts looking for employment in tile industry, as the factory owners provide accommodation in line-rooms. Most of these labourers marry female labourers working in the factory and occupy a line-room. Their children too live in the same room. Very often there is free sex life within the factory premises and the owners of the factory too encourage this type of behaviour to keep the labourers in the factory without moving away to another factory. They are paid better as there is a labour shortage.

Most of the children are exposed to adults' private lives, as all of them occupy the same room. The GN of the area pointed out that even the language that these children speak is vulgar and filth.

“None of these parents want to send their children to school. They earn money, eat and drink. Males are used to alcohol. Some males keep two or three females. As they have poor accommodation, they sleep together and children are exposed to adults' sex life. These children speak filth. Work in the factory. With the help of the DS office, we could send some of these children to school, giving them books and other school materials. I know one girl, who received our assistance, ran away with a boy working in the factory at the age of 14 and now work in another factory. Recently a boy in the eighth year in school raped a Montessori girl.” GN –Waikkal N.

A Development Officer told us that

“Majority of these children have no birth certificates, as their parents were not legally married. Most of these labourers are Tamil migrants from plantation districts and even have no national identity card. If they earn Rs.300 a day they spend half of this for illicit liquor and smoke. Children's behaviour is very bad. They speak filth even in school. At home they are subjected to sexual abuse, homosexual. They occupy a single room and children watch adults' sexual behaviour and they try these things with their friends. These children have no books, bags, cloths or shoes to go to school. The white gown (school uniform) has turned yellow. Their life is really miserable”.

Child labour in these villages needs to be addressed immediately and it should be a realistic approach. The only way that this could be eliminated is through ameliorating the living conditions of the poor, providing them with better pay for the work they do. Eliminating child labour is associated with eliminating poverty.

a. Discussion and conclusion

In order to study the child employment in the tile industry, it was decided to select villages which have a large proportion of households engaging in the tile industry. This survey studies the pattern of child employment in tile industry and it cannot estimate the size of child-workers in tile industry in the island as a whole.

This survey studied 400 households with a population of 1446 in two villages in Gampaha and Puttalam districts, where most of the villagers worked in the tile industry. 69% of the village work force found employment in the tile industry in the selected villages. Educational attainment and unemployment were very low. Majority were daily or weekly paid labourers. Majority of the households were poor as 69% of the households received a monthly income of less than Rs.10,000 and the quality of 70% of the houses were rated as low.

With regard to ethnicity and religion 91% were Sinhalese, 8% were Tamils and others were Moors. Out of the Sinhalese 69% were Sinhala Buddhists and another 30% of the Sinhalese was Roman Catholics.

There were 333 children and nearly half of them were engaged in household work attending to household chores, helping the mother. These children attended school while doing household work, like cooking, washing, cleaning, looking after siblings and going to boutique. Only 31 of the children aged 5-17 years were engaged in paid labour out side home.

Most of these children over worked and faced many hazards. They also had health problems and were paid very low. Parents allowed them to work because they dropped

out of school as the parents could not afford to send them to school. Once they dropped out, parents were of the opinion that they had no alternative other than sending them for work and support the family.

Chapter 5: Coir Industry

5.1 Background and scope of the study

In Sri Lanka, although coconut cultivation is mainly confined to the coastal belt, coir industry thrives in Kalutara, Galle and Matara districts in the South-West wet zone coastal belt. For this study, districts of Galle and Matara have been selected purposively, considering the prevalence of this industry.

Coir factories in the Southern province have been registered with the Southern Province Coconut Development Board (SPCDB). However, a list of households engaged in coir industry is not available. Therefore, four coir factories for each district were selected randomly from the list of factories provided by SPCDB. Finally, 50 households engaged in coir industry adjoining the factory were selected in consultation with the factory. Thus 200 households were enumerated from each district.

Quantitative as well as qualitative data have been collected and Tables relating to quantitative data are given in the appendix and numbered with letter C.

5.2 Objective of the survey

The objective of this survey is to study the pattern of child labour in coir industry in selected districts. As this industry is mainly a cottage industry, its impact on household income, education of children and attitudes of parents will be studied.

5.3. Methodology

As there is no sample frame of coir factories or household engaged in coir industry, readily available two villages were selected purposively and households were selected with the assistance of the officers involved, in the Southern Province. A questionnaire was administered to the 400 selected households and ten in-depth studies were also carried out.

Unlike in the other two studies, the sample of households in coir industry is distributed in several DS divisions.

The distribution of the sample is given in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1

Number of household members by Districts and Divisional Secretariat Divisions (DS)

Name of the DS Division	District		
	Galle	Matara	Total
Hikkaduwa	449		449
Habaraduwa	401		401
Akmeemana	66		66
Waligama		684	684
Devinuwara		200	200
Total	916	884	1800

5.4 Profile of households engaged in coir industry. (Table C1-C9 and C29-C34)

Altogether 400 households were interviewed in the two districts of Galle and Matara, 200 from each district. In these 400 households there were 1800 household members and 86% of the household members belonged to nuclear families consisting of husband, wife and children. (Table C4 & 2)

The average size of a family was around 4.5 family members, with a dependency ratio of 45.4¹.

Table 5.2

Number of household members by Relationship to Head of Household

Relationship with Household Head	Total	%
Head of the Household	396	22.0
Wife/Husband	328	18.2
son/daughter	833	46.3
Parents	33	1.8
Other relatives	183	10.2
Other	27	1.5
Total	1800	100.0

¹ Dependency ratio = 0-14 yr population + 65yr and above to 15-64 yr. population

Age and sex ratio:

The age structure of the population indicates that the village population engaged in coir industry is an aging population, with a low fertility (0-4 yrs population being 6.6 % compared to 10% of 60 years and above) and a higher population living beyond age 60 years. Years of low fertility had reduced the dependency ratio to 45.

Sex ratio, that is number of males per 100 females, was in favour of males in the ages 5-24 years, as there were 118 to 125 males per 100 females. (Table 5.3 and 5.4) It is not known why the number of male children are much higher than the number of female children in corresponding age groups. On the other hand the number of males was much less than the number of females in the adult age groups of age 25 years and above.

Child population:

The vulnerable child population aged 5-17 years consisted of 435 children or 24% of the household population (Table 5.3 and 5.4 below).

Table 5.3

Sex ratio of household population by age

Age group	sex ratio
0-4 yrs	98
5-9 yrs	125
10-14 yrs	123
15-17 yrs	122
18-24 yrs	118
25-59 yrs	86
60 yrs & above	86
Total	99

Table 5.4

Number and percentage of children aged 5-17 years by age and sex ratio

Age	Male	Female	Total	Sex ratio
5-9 yrs	75	60	135	125
10-14 yrs	98	80	178	123
15-17 yrs	67	55	122	122
Total	240	195	435	123

Civil status of the household population

The civil status of the population indicates that there were some teenage marriages among female children, as shown in Table 5, below. A few male children got married at

the age of 15-17 years, but separated at the time of the survey. Widowhood among females was high at adult ages and family disruptions were not so high.

Table 5.5

Percentage of household members by Age and Civil Status

Male	Marital Statues					
Age group	Never married	Currently married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	Total
0-4 yrs	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
5-9 yrs	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
10-14 yrs	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
15-17 yrs	98.5	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	100.0
18-24 yrs	83.5	16.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
25-59 yrs	17.1	82.1	0.8	0.0	0.0	100.0
60 yrs & above	2.4	90.4	0.0	0.0	7.2	100.0
Total	53.6	45.3	0.4	0.0	0.7	100.0
Female						
0-4 yrs	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
5-9 yrs	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
10-14 yrs	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
15-17 yrs	96.4	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
18-24 yrs	66.1	33.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
25-59 yrs	16.1	71.9	2.3	1.4	8.3	100.0
60 yrs & above	2.1	50.0	0.0	0.0	47.9	100.0
Total	44.6	44.5	1.1	0.7	9.1	100.0

Birth Certificate

Birth certificate is a very important document at the time of getting children admitted to a government school. In these households all the children below age 15 years had their birth certificate, but 2 children aged 15-17 years said that they had no birth certificate. Nearly 8% of the household members had no birth certificate at higher age group of 60 years and above.

Educational status and Schooling

Schooling commences at age five years in Sri Lanka. It is compulsory that parents must send their children to school at the age of five and as a result school attendance in the primary classes seems to be very high. Up to age 9 the rate of school attendance was high (92%) in these two villages. Drop out rate seemed to increase gradually after age 10 years or after completing primary education, as the children are not been motivated to continue their education.

Activity

With regard to activity of the population in these villages, over 90% of those aged 25-59 years were employed, while unemployment was high (27%) among the youth aged 18-24 years, as employment opportunities are low in the village. Over 90% of the child population of school going age of 5-14 years were students attending school and nearly 5% of the school going age children of 10-14 years had joined the labour force, dropping out of school.

Educational attainments

As all parents are forced to send their children to school at least to get primary education, illiteracy was very low among the children and youth aged less than 24 years. However, illiteracy was high among the older generation. 3.5% and 14% were illiterate in the age groups of 25-59 and 60 years and above, respectively. Nearly 3% of older people, who were literate, had no formal education. More than half of the population aged 25-59 and 60 years and above had only less than 10 years of schooling.

Occupation

It was found that 55% of the household population aged 10 years and above was engaged in some economic activity. At age 25-59 years over 90% of the household members were employed.

Table 5.6

Percentage of household members by Age and Engaging in Economic Activity

Do you engage in an economic activity?	0-4 yrs	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	18-24 yrs	25-59 yrs	60 yrs & above	Total
Yes	0.0	0.0	1.1	9.0	52.5	90.6	62.0	55.2
No	100.0	100.0	98.9	91.0	47.5	9.4	38.0	44.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Household income

The majority of the households (47%) received a monthly income of Rs. 10,000 – 20,000, while 33% had an income less than Rs.10,000 (Table C 9). Nearly one out of five families had a monthly income of over Rs. 20,000. In general income level of a majority of the households (67) these households was somewhat satisfactory, as four out of five families received more than Rs. 10,000 a month. This is true with regard to the quality of their houses, as quality of majority of the houses was reported as medium. Only 10% of the

houses were rated as of low quality. (Table C 35). On the other hand 53% of the families accepted that their income was sufficient for them.

Indebtedness

In general middle class families tend to take loans, mainly for construction purposes, to build their houses, rather than the lower class families. Since lower class families had no permanent income, they were reluctant to take loans thinking that they might not be able to settle loan in time and fall into trouble. As majority of the families belonged to the middle class in these villages, a significant proportion of families, 46% said that they were indebt. (Table C 33 and 34). Their indebtedness was not so high, as more than half of the families that was in debt said that their indebtedness amounted to Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000. Indebtedness exceeded Rs. 100,000 only in 11% of the families.

Migration

Out of 392 households responded only 21 had migrated in. All the others were residing in these villagers since birth and were Sinhala Buddhists. (Tables C29 and C30).

5.5 Child Labour in Coir Industry

Out of 435 children aged 5-17 years 255 (58.6%) were engaged in various household work, while attending school. Only 17 children were not attending school in this age group and were engaged in various economic activities. As given in the Table 7, below, most of the children assisted parents in cooking, washing cloths, cleaning the house, bring water and going to the boutique.

Table 5.7

Number of children engaged in household work by type of work.

Task	Age group				
	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	Total	%
Bringing water	5	14	11	30	11.8
Collecting firewood	1	12	4	17	6.7
Cooking	3	28	36	67	26.3
Washing clothes	6	21	24	51	20.0
Child care	1	5	1	7	2.7
Go to the boutique	14	28	10	52	20.4
Cleaning house	6	18	6	30	11.8
Assisting family economic activity	0		1	1	0.4
Total	36	126	93	255	100.0
All children	135	178	122	435	

Task	Age group				
	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	Total	%
% engaged in Household work	26.7	70.8	76.2	58.6	

Child labour

On the other hand 78 children aged 5-17 years were engaged in some sort of economic activity (Table C11). 52 of them were unpaid family workers. Six children were in regularly paid employments, while 9 were doing casual work and all of them were aged 10-17 years. Another nine were self-employed. None of the children aged 5-9 years were in paid employment.

41 children aged 5-17 years were not attending school and out of them 26 were engaged in some economic activity.

Majority of the children working as unpaid family workers (60%) said that their payments were received by their mothers, as they were working as unpaid family workers. (Table C12). There were around 16 children, who worked out side home for pay and they received the payment themselves. It seemed that the money thus received by children was given to parents for household expenditure. 74% of the children said that the money they received was spent by mother and some of those who received money themselves had spent it themselves.

Parent's attitude

The main reason (51% - Table C14), why parents allowed children to engage in economic activities as unpaid family workers or otherwise, while going to school, was the need for additional income to support the family. At the same time some parents said that children helped household income generating activities voluntarily, and parents tolerated it. Children attending household chores were a common thing in these rural villages and never considered it as child labour.

Parents were asked if the child stops working how it would affect the family (Table C 15). Most of the parents, 49%, said that it would not affect the family, but 35% said that their family income would seriously get affected and their standard of living would

decline. It was also asked about the person who took the decision that the child should be allowed to engage in economic activities, while going to school. 76% said that the child him/herself had taken the decision, as they worked as unpaid family workers. Sometimes the mother (22%) had asked the child to work considering the family income level.

86% of these children worked in the household. Very few worked out side home (Table C18). As majority of the working children worked as unpaid family workers, in the household, while going to school, 88% of the parents said that they were happy about children working (Table C17). Any way, as shown above, nearly half of these parents were of the opinion that even if the children keep away from engaging in economic activities, it would not affect their family. Only 9% of the parents were not happy about their children engaging in economic activities. Most of the parents allowed their children to work because of poverty. 84% of the parents said that if they had enough income, they would not allow their children to work. (Table C28).

Hazards

As the children worked in the home environment, 76% of them said that they were not exposed to any hazards, but 10% of them experienced long hours of work and inadequate sleep (Table C19). At the same time almost all of them (96%) said that they never got hurt. As shown above very few of the children worked out side home and none of them said that their employers were bad to them. Employers treated them moderately. (Table C21). At the same time those who worked out side home also said that they were paid moderately. However, 18% said the pay was low. (Table C22). Their health risks were also low (89%). (Table C23). Very few of the children, 6%, said they were very tired. Others said moderately tired or not tired at all. (Table C24). Anyway with regard to the working situation a considerable proportion, 24% said that it was not acceptable. However, majority, 76%, said that their working situations were acceptable. (Table C25). Those who could not accept the working conditions, showed harsh conditions and psychological stress associated with their work as reasons. (Table C27).

As majority of the children worked as unpaid family workers they had no legal contracts with the employers. At the same time receiving payments in time also did not apply to these children. On the other hand though children were involved in earning they did not save any money. Their parents too were not interested in opening saving accounts in savings bank, as whatever money they earned was spent on family day to day affairs.

Households with Child Labour

All the households may be grouped as households with children working in coir industry, households with children working in other sectors and households without child labour. As given in Table 8, below, 36 households had children working in coir industry, while 19 had children working outside in other economic sectors. A large majority of households 85% had no working children.

Table 5.8

Number of households by employment status

Status	No. of households
Child Labour in coir industry	36
Child labour in other sector	19
Without child labour	329
Total	384

Indebtedness

Majority of the households in coir industry were indebted, than the other households, as given in Table 5.9 below.

Table 5.9

Number and percentage of households by indebtedness

Status	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Child Labour in coir industry	23	14	37	62.2	37.8	100.0
Child labour in other sector	11	8	19	57.9	42.1	100.0
Without child labour	145	186	331	43.8	56.2	100.0
Total	179	208	387	46.3	53.7	100.0

Quality of house

With regard to the quality of house, majority were ranked fair or good and poor houses were less than 30%.

Table 5.10

Number and percentage of households by quality of house

	Poor	Fair	Good	Total	Poor	Fair	Good	Total
Child Labour in coir industry	10	24	2	36	27.8	66.7	5.6	100.0
Child labour in other sector	3	12	3	18	16.7	66.7	16.7	100.0
Without child labour	73	226	34	333	21.9	67.9	10.2	100.0
Total	86	262	39	387	22.2	67.7	10.1	100.0

Place of work

As given in Table 5.11, the majority, 85%, of the children worked at home and as the coir industry was a cottage industry.

Table 5.11

Number and percentage of children by place of work of children

	Age group				
Where does the child work?	5-9 yrs	10-14 yrs	15-17 yrs	Total	%
Home	8	37	21	66	85.7
Shops/boutique,	0	1	1	2	2.6
Field	0		2	2	2.6
Employer's House,	0	2	1	3	3.9
Others	0	1	3	4	5.2
Total	8	41	28	77	100.0

Qualitative data

The qualitative data collected from some of these households indicated that children tend to drop out of school just because of poverty. Considering the hardships at home most of these children used to engage in coir industry helping the mother, after school and used to work full time on Saturdays and Sundays. None of these children went for higher education or private tuition. The aim of majority of parents and children was to sit for GCE O/L and stop going to school. Parents were not much aware of the child's higher education, as they had no high hopes for future.

The breadwinner of some of these households died of tsunami. After the father's /husband's death the whole family got into a terrible situation. Children tried to support the mother, earning a few rupees, dropping out of school. Mother engaged in coir industry assisted by children to support the family.

In these villages women engaged in coir industry used hand-machines and it needed three persons to operate it. If they get an outsider to help them they had to pay and the household income reduces. Therefore, mother preferred her children to help her, after school.

There were cases where the father had deserted the family. Then the mother and the children try to live engaging in coir industry and children often stop schooling.

In order to eliminate or control child labour, it is highly necessary to create awareness among parents about children's higher education and raising the quality of their children. At the same time it is necessary to stop exploitation that exists in the coir industry and introduce a suitable payment system.

5.6 Conclusion

400 households engaged in coir industry in Galle and Matara districts were enumerated and there were 1800 household members in these households. The size of the vulnerable child population aged 5-17 years was around 435. Out of them 58% were engaged in household activities and 18% in economic activities. In this vulnerable age group only 17 children dropped out of school and joined the labour force and worked out side home. All the other children of school going age of 5-17 years were attending school and some of them helped their parents in their home based economic activities and a considerable proportion of children helped their mother in her daily household chores.

Coir industry in the South is mainly a cottage industry and often it is not the main occupation of the household. Housewives in leisure time and children after school engaged in this industry to support the family income. The quality of majority of households was moderate and belonged to the lower middle class. Only one out of ten houses was treated as belonging to the lower class. In general economy of majority in these villagers were not bad, as more than half the households admitted that their income was sufficient.

Out of the working children a very small proportion of children, 17 children, worked outside home and did not attend school. All the other working children attend school and engaged in home based economic activities voluntarily. Parents appreciated children helping household chores and household economic activities. They did not take this type of work as child labour. None of these children were exposed to employment hazards and exploitation, as they worked at home. However, a very few children felt tired and exhausted and some experienced psychological stress.

Actually majority of parents said that even if children stop working it would not affect their household income. Some parents said that if they have a sound economic base they would not allow their children to work.

All the children assisting household income did not get money directly. The money they earned was taken by mother and spent on household needs. None of the parents were concerned about saving some money for the working children for their future use. At the same time parents were not much concerned about motivating their children for higher education. Once children get used to earning money at the school going age, they tend to drop out of school after around 10 years of schooling and enter labour market.

Chapter 6: Fisheries Sector

6.1 Background and scope of the study

Recruitment of children as laborers has long been practiced as a way of gaining access to cheap labor. Large scale child labor was reported in the Western world during the time of industrial revolution that transformed the western societies from agrarian to industrialized ones. The practice of child labor can also be found widely in the Eastern societies as well. Child labor was considered as a social norm and it became part of life. The modern societies recognize the right of a child and setup institutional and legal frameworks to minimize or eradicate the incidence of child labor. Yet the practice of child labor is prevalent in the developing world. Widespread poverty, illiteracy, and social attitudes towards child labor are some explanatory factors that have caused the practice of child labor in these countries.

Sri Lanka has an exclusive economic zone of 517,000sq.km. The country's continental shelf has an average width of 22 km and its total extent is 30,000sq.km. The coastline of the country is 1,700 km. There are 103 rivers that flow into the sea radially from the central hills of the country contributing to the productivity of the marine waters.

Inland water resources of the country comprise lagoons, estuaries, reservoirs, tanks, rivers etc. There are 45 major lagoons and the estuaries with the total extent of 158,000ha spread along the coastline. The area covered by mangrove zones, mud flats and salt marshes scattered along the coastal area is 71,000ha.

A total of 260,000ha of freshwater bodies comprising 155,000hactare of perennial reservoirs, 100,000hactare of seasonal tanks and 5000hactare of villas exist scattered all over the country, particularly in the dry zone.

Tere are 12 fishery harbours in operation. They are located at Mulwal, Panadura, Beruwala, Hikkaduwa, Galle, Mirrissa, Puranawella, Kudawella, Tangalle, Kirinda,

Trincomalee (Cod-bay) and Kalpitiya. In addition there are 35 anchorages and about 600 minor fish landing centres.

The fishing fleet comprises 32,000 boats of which, about 15,000 are non-mechanized traditional boats. Of the balance about 1,600 are multi-day vessels which are used for deep sea fishing. The contribution of fisheries sector to the national economy has been 1.53 percent in 2007 (CBoSL 2007). Being an island nation Sri Lanka could have tapped its marine resources optimally and contributed more to the national economy if there were peace prevails in the country. Yet a considerable proportion of the people have been employed in this sector.

Child labor is prevalent in the fisheries sector as there has been a wider room for informal activities that have not been recorded in the official records. An ILO-IPEC country paper on Sri Lanka published in September 1999, found that one of the most destructive forms of child labor in Sri Lanka prevails in the fishing industry. The report also observed that “children are recruited in the fishing ‘vaadiyas’. Vaadiyas are very remote and children are kept in conditions of virtual slavery”

This chapter of the report illustrates the results of the survey on child labor in the fisheries sector conducted by SPARC, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, sponsored and coordinated by the ILO.

Sri Lanka, as a country that has ratified ILO Coventions 138 and 182 related to child labor is now trying to implement the process of these conventions. Sri Lanka has identified the fisheries sector as one of the major source of child labor and therefore considers as a priority sector which require remedial actions. Among the other priority sectors are: children in armed conflicts, plantation tea/rubber sector, firework, motor garages, construction and domestic child labor.

Although there has been some ground work is done, through previous Rapid Assessment of some sectors, the size of the problem of child labor at the sub national level is not known. Hence the current research is intended to shed some lights on issues pertaining to child labor at sub national level.

The primary objective of this research is to estimate the size of the problem of child labour in the fisheries sector terms of the size of the sector, and the size of child labor at the sub national level. The survey estimates through a household baseline survey the size of the child workers population directly involved in the production process in the fisheries industry.

6.2 Administrative setup of the Fisheries Sector in Sri Lanka

The Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resource is the main administrative body of the Fisheries sector in Sri Lanka. Under the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resource, there are 15 divisional offices located along the coastal belt of Sri Lanka headed by Assistant Directors who are supported by a network of fisheries Inspectors.

The divisional area has been divided to Fisheries Inspectors' (FI) areas. GN division are under the fisheries inspector.

6.3 Sample Selection

The Galle and Matara district have been selected for the survey. The sample size is 400 households. The minimum sample size of 200 households for each districts has been assigned. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to select primary sampling units.

Step one: 4 Fisheries Inspector (FI) divisions are selected at random from each districts.

Table 6.1

Sample Selections

District	FI Division
Galle	Benthara
	Balapitiya
	Ambalangoda
	Unawatuna
Matara	Dikwella
	Kottagoda
	Gandara
	Devinuwara

Two Hundred PSU will be selected from each FI division as follows.

Step two: One landing site was selected at random from each FI division.

Step Three: Fifty households were selected from each landing site at random.

Table 6.2

Percentage Distribution of Sample by Fisheries inspector Division (FI)

FI Division	District		Total
	Galle	Matara	
Benthara	.25 (50)		.125 (50)
Balapitiya	.25 (50)		.125 (50)
Ambalangoda	.25 (50)		.125 (50)
Unawatuna	.25 (50)		.125 (50)
Dikwella		.25 (50)	.125 (50)
Kottagoda		.25 (50)	.125 (50)
Gandara		.25 (50)	.125 (50)
Devinuwara		.25 (50)	.125 (50)
Total	100(200)	100(200)	100 (400)

6.4 Child Labour in Fisheries Sector

Socioeconomics Background of the Population

Table 6.3

Gender of Population

Gender	Percentage
Male	51.7
Female	48.3
Total	100.0

The survey population comprised 51.7 percent of male and 48.3 percent of female members, a typical gender distribution of Sri Lanka where the male population remains at 52.4 percent and that of female is at 47.6 percent (CBoSL 2006).

Table 6.4

Distribution of Population by Age

Age	Percentage
0-4 Years	9.0
5-9 Years	8.5
10-14 Years	9.6
15-19 Years	9.3
20-24 Years	10.6

Age	Percentage
25-29 Years	9.4
30-34 Years	8.3
35-39 Years	6.1
40-44 Years	7.1
45-49 Years	6.0
50-54 Years	4.9
55-59 Years	3.9
60-64 Years	2.6
65-69 Years	2.0
Above 70 Years	2.6
Total	100.0

The majority of people surveyed falls under 50 years of age. And the age distribution within 50 years seems to be almost equal for each class intervals of age. There's no significant concentration of a particular age group in the sample. Only the 20-24 age category occupy more than 10 percent of the sample, while other age groups fall below 10 percent of the population

Table 6.5

Distribution of Population by Education Level

	Percentage
Illiterate	2.0
No formal education, but can read and write	.6
pre-school	2.8
Primary school (class 1 to 5)	21.0
upper primary school (class 6-8)	21.3
lower-secondary school (class 9-10)	35.4
upper-secondary school (class 10 to 13)	8.3
Technical education and vocational training	.3

Table 6.5 reveals the level of education of the sample population. More than 5 percent of the sample has received either no formal education or a pre school level education. More than 42 percent of the population have received education up to grade 8. There is a significant proportion of population, who have schooled up to ordinary levels comprised more than 35 percent of the population. .

Table 6.6**Main Economic Activity of Population**

Main Activity	Percent
Employed	35.2
Unemployed	6.4
Student	23.6
Household Work	22.5
Retired/Unable to Work	2.4
Other	.5
Not applicable (Age below 5)	9.3
Total	100.0

The majority of the sample population is economically active. Over 35 percent of them are employed while another 23 percent is engaged in household work. Nearly one quarter of the population is students. Taken together, nearly 83 percent of the population is actively engaged in economic activities.

Socioeconomics Background of the Household Head**Table 6.7****Gender of Household Head**

Gender	Percentage
Male	91.5
Female	8.5
Total	100.0

Over 91 percent of household surveyed were male headed households which a typical reflection of the Sri Lankan male dominant society where the female take over the driving seat only if the male member is absent or invalid.

Table 6.8**Distribution of Household Head by Age**

	Percent
20-24 Years	1.8
25-29 Years	6.3
30-34 Years	10.8
35-39 Years	9.3
40-44 Years	17.5
45-49 Years	12.8

	Percent
50-54 Years	12.8
55-59 Years	10.5
60-64 Years	7.3
65-69 Years	5.8
Above 70 Years	5.5
Total	100.0

The majority of household heads are aged between 30 to 60 years. Only 8.1 percent of the house heads are aged between 20 and 29 years. Altogether 71.3 of household heads are in the working age. The rest of nearly 30 percent household heads are senior citizens who have passed the official age of retirement of 55 years.

Table 6.9

Education Level of Household Head

Level of Education	Valid Percent
Illiterate	4.0
No formal education, but can read and write	1.8
Primary school (class 1 to 5)	28.2
Upper primary school (class 6-8)	27.7
Lower-secondary school (class 9-10)	33.5
Upper-secondary school (class 10 to 13)	4.3
Technical education and vocational training	.3
University graduate and over	.3
Total	100.0

The level of education of the household head is a determinant factor of the quality and the nature of a household. The decision on child labor is greatly influenced by the level of education of parents who are often to be the household heads. Table 6.9, shows that nearly 6 percent of the household heads are illiterate or has no schooling. A huge majority of the household heads (89.4 percent) have received education up to class 10. Among them, than 28 percent have completed the primary school and another equal percentage (27.7 percent) have completed the upper primary and 33.5 percent have passed the upper secondary. Put it in a nutshell, one third of the household heads were relatively well educated and this should be considered as a positive trend in the fishing community.

Table 6.10

Main Economic Activity of Household Head

Economic Activity	Percent
Employed	88.3
Unemployed	0.3
Household Work	6.0
Retired/Unable to Work	5.3
Other	0.3
Total	100.0

Almost all household heads were engaged in some form of economic activities. Only a tiny proportion of 0.3 percent was unemployed.

Household Background

Table 6.11

Perception on Quality of House (in terms of space, privacy, roofs, walls, latrines)

Perception	Percentage
Poor	19.4
Fair	66.9
Good	13.6
Total	100.0

The basic conditions of more than 80 percent of the households surveyed were fair or good meaning the fishing community does not live in households with extremely poor conditions compare to the shelters in the slums and shanties in cities or the so called “line houses” in the plantations.

Table 6.12

Ownership of Land

Description	Percentage
No land	9.9
Less than 2 acres	87.8
2-3 acres	2.3
Total	100.0

An overwhelming 90.1 percent of the households possess their own land. Many of them own less than two acres of land and a little more than 2 percent own 2 -3 acres of land. Indeed, land ownership is an important factor that determines the economic and physical quality of life and social status of a individual as well as a family in the Sri Lankan society.

Table 6.13

Type of Fuel Used for Cooking at Home?

Type of Fuel	Valid Percent
Gas	14.4
Electric	0.8
Firewood	82.4
Kerosene	1.0
Gas and Kerosene	1.3
Gas ,Kerosene and cow dung	0.3
Total	100.0

The households mainly use firewood as a cooking fuel a typical observation among the low income communities in Sri Lanka. However, a fair proportion of households have also utilized gas as the main source of fuel for cooking purposes.

Table 6.14

Electricity Supply to Household

	Percentage
Yes	92.4
No	7.6
Total	100.0

Table 6.14 illustrates that almost all households surveyed have access to electricity. Nearly 8 percent of them do not have electricity connections. This percentage is indeed a higher record than the national average and in the regional averages. Perhaps the reason might be the type of area that has been selected for the survey. This long southern coastal belt has to be one of the fast urbanizing areas which gain access to all basic facilities including electricity.

Table 6.15

Dependency on Social Welfare facilities such as Samurdi

	Percentage
Yes	41.4
No	58.6
Total	100.0

It is quite interesting to note that, though the quality of the households as discussed previously was relatively good, the dependency of those households on government welfare handout seems to be very significant. More than 40 percent of the households were beneficiaries of Samurdhi welfare benefits. Table 2.4.5 also reveal that more than 88 percent of the household receive a monthly income of more than Rs.10,000 which is well above the income threshold which make an household to qualify for Samurdhi benefits. The obvious question then is how these 40 percent of households qualified for government welfare benefits. Only 1.5 percent of the households in the sample receive a monthly income of Rs.5000.00 or less.

Table 6.16

Income distribution of the households

Income Distribution	
	Valid Percent
Below Rs.2500	0.5
Rs.2500 to Rs.4999	1
Rs.5000 to Rs.7499	3.4
Rs.7500 to Rs.9999	6.5
Rs.10000 to Rs.12499	12
Above Rs.12500	76.6
Total	100

Socioeconomic Background of children

Table 6.17

Main Activities of Children

Percentage	
Employed	2.1
Unemployed	3.2
Student	91.7
Household Work	0.7
Other	0.7
Not applicable (Age below 5)	1.6
Total	100.0

Nearly 92 percent of the child population in the survey area were students. This coincides with the national average. Traditionally the Southern coastal belt has produced educated citizens, thanks to the Western missionaries operated in these areas in the 19th and 20th centuries. Hence the appetite for education is high among the people living

along the coastal belt. Table 6.17 shows that only 5.9 percent of the children surveyed were either employed or unemployed i.e., seeking for an employment.

Table 6.18

Distribution of Children by Marital Statues

	Valid Percent
Never married	99.5
Currently married	0.5
Total	100.0

Child marriages are uncommon in Sri Lanka including the fisheries societies as indicated in the table 6.18 only a tiny 0.5 percent of the children are currently married.

Characteristics of Working Child

Table 6.19

Age Distribution of Child Labourers

Age in Years	Percentage
Below 12 years	7.1
12- 16 years	50.0
16- 17 years	42.9
Total	100.0

The majority of child workers are more than 12 years old. Half of them fall under between 12-16 years of age. Another 43 percent are older than 16 years but less than 18 years. The number child workers below 12 years are very low as 7.1 percent of the total number of child workers.

Table 6.20

Distribution of Sex of Child Workers

Sex	Percentage
Male	78.6
Female	21.4
Total	100.0

Unsurprisingly, nearly 80 percent of the child workers are boys. When there is a need for child work, boys generally take up the challenge. Also there is a general trend that male children often dropout from schools while the female children are continuing with their education.

Table 6.21

Level of Education of Child Workers

Education	Percentage
primary school (class 1-5)	7.1
upper primary school (class 6-8)	35.7
lower-secondary school (class 9-10)	57.2
Total	100.0

A majority 57.2 percent of child workers have completed their lower secondary education while another 35.7 percent have gone school up to class 8. This goes in line with the general observation elsewhere in Sri Lanka that high dropout rates were observed in upper primary and lower secondary levels.

Table 6.22

Employment status of the Working Child

Age in Years	Percentage
Unpaid family worker	14.3
Paid employee (casual)	78.6
Others	7.1
Total	100.0

Child worker's main occupational category has been casual paid employee. Since it is legally banned to employ children in the formal sector and the implementation of a monitoring in the informal sector, it is difficult for children to find permanent employment even in the informal sector. A significant proportion of child workers are engaged in unpaid family work as well.

Table 6.23

Working hours per week on average

Hours per week	Percentage
7	7.1
10	7.1
12	7.1
30	7.1
40	21.4
42	7.1
44	7.1
45	7.1
48	7.1
60	14.3
80	7.1
Total	100.0

The working hours of child workers vary from 7 hours to 80 hours per week. A significant proportion of children work 40 hours a week more than 14 percent of children spend 60 hours a week to work.

Table 6.24

Income and expenditure decisions of child work

	Receipt of income by child work (percentage)	Spending decisions on income from child work (percentage)
Self	84.6	46.2
Mother	7.7	23.1
Mother & self	7.7	23.1
Grand parents	0.0	7.7
Total	100.0	100.0

The income from child work is received mainly by the child him/herself. In some cases mothers have received the payment. Interesting that father has no role in receiving the income earned by child work. Though it is the child who receives the money the spending decisions are taken by mother I consultation with the child.

Table 6.25

Main reason for child working

Reason	Percentage
Cannot afford Schooling	14.3
Family need the income	28.6
Child has reached working age	14.3
No opportunity to do a other job	14.3
Children help family business voluntary	7.1
Children do not like to go to school	7.1
Children like to work	7.1
Family need income and Child has reached working age	7.1
Total	100.0

A majority of the respondents have cited that either the family need the child's income or simply the household cannot afford schooling as the main reasons for child work. 14.3 percent of respondents believed that their children have achieved the working age and thus been employed. An equal proportion of the respondents have since there is no opportunity to do another job the children are employed at the current work.

Table 6.26

The Impact of stopping child work

Impact	Percentage
Household living standard decline	57.1
Household can not afford to live	7.1
Does not affect any way	28.6
Household living standard decline & can not afford living	7.1
Total	100.0

Many households believed that the living standards of the household will decline if the child stops working and do something like schooling. 7.1 percent of the households simply put it boldly that they cannot afford to live without the support of income generated by child work. Another similar percentage of 7.1 percent expressed that both can happen if the child stop working. For nearly 29 percent of households stopping child labor does not have a bearing. At policy making level, this last group can easily be handled but the former require additional support and guidance if available long lasting solution for child labor has to be found.

Table 6.27

Decision making on child work

Decision maker	Percentage
Him /Her Self	92.9
Father and him self	7.1
Total	100.0

In the fisheries sector the decision of child work has been taken by him/her self. Parents have played only a marginal role in the decision. Even in such cases the decision had not been taken exclusively by parents. In this community, when a child find it difficult to cope with studies he or she used to come up with an idea of doing a job. Even though parents resist to the decision initially, since the child show no interest in education they also have to agree to the decision. Since there is a window of opportunity for a child to do some odd jobs in the fishing industry the children drop out from school and take up works.

Table 6.28

Are you happy with your child/children working?

	Percent
Yes	85.7
No	14.3
Total	100.0

Majority of parents feel happy about their children's work partly because the children would have been doing nothing other than loitering with friends if they were not engaged in some form of economic activity.

Table 6.29

Place of work

Place of work	Percent
Home	14.3
Field	64.3
Others	21.4
Total	100.0

The majority of children work outside their homes either in the field or other places. Field in this case might be referring to sea and sea shore or places such as 'vaadiyas'. Since the children in the fishing community are also engaged in works not related to fishing industry such as construction, these are categorized under the category of 'others' in the table 6.29 on place of work.

Table 6.30

Main Type of hazards faced at work

Types of Hazard	Percent
Exposure to chemicals or pesticide	7.1
Exposure to dust	14.3
Long hours of work/ inadequate sleep	14.3
Lifting and carrying heavy things	7.1
Night work	21.4
Exposure to chemical and Long hours of work	7.1
No hazed	28.6
Total	100.0

It comes out from the research that the main hazard faced by child workers include long hours of work, inadequate sleep, night work, and exposure to dust. These have an adverse impact on the child's physical and mental conditions.

Table 6.31

Employer treatment of child

	Percent
Moderate	66.7
Good	33.3
Total	100.0

The study reveals that the employers of child labor treat them fairly well. This result seems to have contradicted the general perception on employers' treatment of child labor in the fishing industry. However, one third of the child workers in the sample have not happy with the salary they receive from employment. (Table 6.32)

Table 6.32

Wages received by child.

	Percent
low	33.3
moderate	66.7
Total	100.0

Table 6.33

Suitability of current working situation

	Percent
Yes	92.9
No	7.1
Total	100.0

The perception on current working conditions of child workers is positive for most cases. The majority believe the conditions are good and suitable for the children to work. This is an important observation because a general perception, particularly about the fisheries sector, is that the child workers are treated harshly even to the extreme of slavery. The results of this rejects this perception with a 92.9 percent of majority.

Case I Galle

A 16 year old male child has engaged in income generation activities. His father has died while he was very young. He had stopped schooling by his own wish. Even his mother had compelled him to go to school he had not shown any interest in studies. Initially his mother did not like him to go for work. But since he has shown any interest in studies mother had not objected to his decision to work. He earns money by selling fish. During vacations he engage in masonry as a helper. The child spends his earnings by his own and had

helped occasionally his mother by providing money. Since the income he generates is insufficient his mother wanted him to switch from his current job.

Case II Matara

A 17 year old female child is engaged in making dry fish with her mother. They are doing this work in their home. They generate an income as little as Rs 3000.00 a month from this activity. And the money is utilized for the household spending. She has sat for the O/L exam but failed to pass it. The mother concluded that the child had to engage in this activity because of her failure to pass the O/L exam.

Case III Galle

A 16 year old male child is engaged in sea fishing. In addition, he is also engaged in such economic activities as selling fish, washing fishing boats, and other jobs for daily wage. He has schooled up to grade 8 while he was schooling he had also engaged in selling fish in the roadside, which he earned by washing fishing boats. His school friends had started calling him by the nick name of 'fisher man'. Annoyed by this the child had stopped schooling rather than doing the other way around -stopping selling fish. Now he is also engaged in masonry as a helper. The parents are happy about his work as they feel that it is better for the child to engage in some economic activity rather than loitering in vain with unsuitable friends consuming cigarettes and alcohol.

Households having child labour

All the households may be grouped as

- a). households with child labour in Fisheries Sector ,
- b). households with child labour in other sectors and
- c). households without child labour

Access to social security programs such as Samurdhi

A little over 40 percent of the households with child labor receiving social security benefits such as Samurdhi and the rest are not receiving any support.

	Sufficiency of income		State of debt of family	
	sufficient	insufficient	Suffering from debt	Not suffering from debt
Households with child labor in the fishing sector	80.0	20.0	30.0	70.0
Households with child labor in other sectors	25.0	75.0	75.0	25.0
Households without child labor	62.3	37.7	43.2	56.8
Total households	62.3	37.7	43.1	56.9

Table 6.34

Sufficiency of income and the state of debt burden

The data in the table reveal that 62 percent of households with child labor consider their current income as adequate to support the family. More than 43 percent of the households with child labor are suffering from debt burden. This may lead us to the conclusion that majority of children who are employed not doing so because of reasons related to economic difficulties. It is interesting to note that 80 percent of the households with child labor have expressed that the current income is sufficient to meet the expenses. Only 30 percent of such households are indebted.

Table 6.35

Access to electricity and household quality

	Access to electricity		Household quality in terms of: privacy, roof, floor, walls, latrines		
	Households with electricity	Households without electricity	Poor	Fair	Good
Households with child labor in the fishing sector	100.0	0.0	20.0	80.0	0.0
Households with child labor in other sectors	100.0	0.0	25.0	75.0	0.0
Households without child labor	92.1	7.9	19.4	66.5	14.1
Total households	92.4	7.6	19.4	66.9	13.6

The perception data of households with child labor on household quality and connection to electricity also reveal that the large majority of households have supplied with

electricity. The household perception data also show that the quality of the majority of the households (80.5%) in terms of privacy, type and quality of roof, floor, walls and latrine facilities have been rated as good or fair. Less than 20 percent of the households live in poor quality households.

Table 6.36

Educational Qualification of the household head

Educational qualifications	Households with child labor in fishing sector	Households with child labor in other sectors	Households without child labor
Illiterate	10.0		3.9
No formal education but literate			1.8
Primary schooling (class1-5)	30.0		28.5
Upper primary school (class 6-8)	20.0	100.0	27.2
Lower Secondary school (class 9-10)	40.0		33.7
Upper secondary school (class 10-13)			4.4
Technical vocational training			0.3
University graduate and over			0.3

The highest level of educational qualification of all household heads with child labor in the fisheries sector has been the lower secondary school. However, the educational qualification of the house holds without child labor is almost the same i.e., 95.1 percent of the household heads.

6.5 Conclusions

The findings of the current research lead us to the conclusion that low income and resultant poverty has an impact on the practice of child labor in the fisheries sector. It came out from the household interviews that the living standards of household to fall in the absence of child labor or simply they cannot afford to live without the income support from child work. However, there has been no evidence found in the survey for forced child labor or slavery in the sector. In most reported cases of child labor the children themselves had made the decision to work. Even in cases in which the parents play a part in the process it was done with the consent of the child. Some children have started working while they were schooling as a part time job. Nevertheless, they had withdrawn themselves from schooling for a host of reasons including the need to support their family, difficult to cope with studies, different treatment by fellow students,

attraction of money over education etc. In this sector, majority of child workers were more than 12 years old and have received education up to grade 8. they mainly work in the field or in other places. A majority of them work 40 to 60 hours a week.

The income generated by child work has been utilized mainly by the children themselves. Parents have also spent the money to support family expenses. In some cases the income has been utilized to support education activities of younger siblings of the child worker.

The major problems the child workers face include long working hours, night work, exposure to burning sun and dust and the like. In some cases, the income generated from child work was very low, but many child workers and their parents feel that the employers treat the child workers fairly. And a wide majority of the child workers are satisfied with prevailing working conditions.

Another fact that surfaces from the research is that parents prefer that the children to be occupied themselves in work rather than wasting time with friends and invite unnecessary trouble for them. Parents believe that ideal place for a child is school but if the child was unwilling to continue with studies they have no choice other than keeping them occupy in a useful activity.

It is important to keep the children in the schools if child labour were to be irradiated. But it seems that the school drop out are not initiated by parents. Even the parents are willing and afford to educate their children; the children were not willing to do so. Hence, one possible solution to the problem should be making school education attractive to the children.

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