

Child labour

10.28 The problem of child labour is a major social concern. The number of working children in the country declined from 2 percent of the total population and 6 percent of the total workforce in 1981 to 1.34 percent of the population and 3.59 percent of the total workforce in 1991. The estimated number of working children in the country as per the 55th Round of the NSSO Survey (1999-2000) is 10.4 million. Children continue to be employed in the unorganized and home-based industries and domestic services. The state with the highest child labour population in the country is Andhra Pradesh. Other states having a child labour population of more than a million (as per 1991 Census) are Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

10.29 The policy of the Government is to ban the employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines and hazardous employment and regulate the working conditions of children in other areas of employment. There are currently about 100 National Child Labour Projects (NCLPs) covering 2.11 lakh children in 13 States where child labour use is relatively high. Major activities undertaken under the NCLP is the establishment of special schools to provide non-formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition, etc, to children withdrawn from employment. Under the scheme of NCLPs, so far about 1.5 lakh children have been mainstreamed to a formal education system.