

CEC Working Paper

**CURRENT TRENDS IN
CHILD LABOUR:
A Case Study of Beedi Industry in
Tikamgarh, M.P.**

Surendra Pratap

2001



Centre for Education and Communication

CEC Working Paper

**CURRENT TRENDS IN
CHILD LABOUR:
A Case Study of Beedi Industry in
Tikamgarh, M.P.**

Surendra Pratap

2001



Centre for Education and Communication

© Centre for Education and Communication
November 2001

Conceived by **The Information & Feature Trust (TIFT)**

Published by

Centre for Education and Communication

173 A, Khirki Village, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi 110017

Tel: 91 11 29541858, 29541841, Fax: 91 11 29545442

Email: cec@cec-india.org , Website: www.cec-india.org

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	03
1. Introduction	04
2 Review of Literature	09
3 The Present Study and the Methodology	11
4. The Setting: Tikamgarh District	13
5 Labour Process and Labour Relations in Beedi Industry	15
6 Survey Findings	17
6.1 Demographic particulars	17
6.2 State of Schooling	17
6.3. Awareness about the Importance of Education	18
6.4. Occupational particulars	19
6.5. Occupational Mobility	23
6.6. Income Particulars	24
6.7. Income from beedi making	27
6.8. Indebtedness	30
6.9 Dwellings and other facilities	30
6.10. Welfare schemes for beedi workers- Awareness and Implementation	31
6.11 Industrial disputes	31
6. 12 Current Trends in Beedi Industry	31
7. Summary of the Findings and Conclusion	32
References:	33

Acknowledgments

This study was undertaken on the initiative of Center for Education and Communication(CEC). I am grateful to the Director,CEC for his keen interest, help and encouragement and also for providing all infrastructure facilities.I would like to thank Mr. Kailash, Mr.Harish and Ms Shashi. Without their painstaking efforts the data collection was not possible.

I am grateful to Mr. Nasir Ateeq, the project coordinator, for his active involvement at each step of the study. He read through the entire draft and offered relevant suggestions. I would like to thank Dr. M.M.Rehman for his support and help in in conducting the household survey. I had useful discussions with him on working and living conditions of beedi workers in Tikamgarh.

I would like to thank Mr. Pawan Dixit, a trade union activist, for providing relevant information regarding the beedi industry of the region.

I am grateful to Mrs. Anitha who cheerfully typed the report and did the data entry. I would also like to thank the library staff of CEC for their help in providing relevant reference materials and Xeroxing the copies of the report. My regards are also due to the staff in computer systems department of CEC, for their timely help in sorting out computer related problems.

Lastly, I am indebted to my wife Anita, who spared me from all day to day household responsibilities. Without her support and cooperation it was almost impossible for me to conduct this study.

Surendra Pratap

22 November, 2001

1. Introduction

The issue of child labour has gained enormous importance in the post liberalization era. Administrators and academicians both have suddenly started showing their increasing concerns about the child labour problem, particularly in third world countries. Probably, one of the important sources of impetus to growing concern on the issue was generated by the social clause of the WTO. However, the major impetus came from the UN Convention on the rights of the Child 1989.

In India, children were always working and participating in economic activities with their parents. But this was participative type of work which helped children to develop skills required to handle the traditional family occupation, so that intergenerational transfer of occupation was smooth. (Usha and Radha Devi,1997) Whereas in modern times, extreme poverty compels children to join the ranks of wage workers to support their family. (ILO, 1983) This exploitative child labour therefore, becomes the issue of real concern.

According to the Census 1981, out of total population of 203 million in the age group of 5-14 years, approximately 13 million child labourers were recorded. 93 million were to be enrolled as students, while the rest, 97 million, were recorded as 'neither working nor at school'. Out of these 13 million working children 10 million worked in agriculture and allied activities. (Out of which 5 million were engaged as agricultural wage workers).

If we search these 97 million so called 'no where children', we may find many of them also in the labour market. There can be only two possible explanations of 'neither working nor at school': One, majority of them may be from the age group of 5-9 years. Generally, the working class families don't engage their children in any economic activity at this age. They call this age as 'Khelane Khane Ki Umar (Age of playing and eating)'. During our field survey we heard this statement many a times. Two, a significant section of this 97 million might be engaged in wage work but not reported by the parents. In any case, this category of 'nowhere children' indicates that the magnitude of child labour is higher than the estimates of the census.

If we compare the 1981 census to 1971 one, it is clear that child labour has increased in almost all states and union territories, both in relative and absolute terms. However, this trend was reversed by 1991. A declining trend in child labour can be detected when results of the census 1991 and 1981 are compared. This decline is visible in almost all states and union territories except West Bengal, Nagaland, Delhi, Mizoram and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (Table 1). The decline is also significant in nearly all industries typically engaging child labour. However, beedi industry is one of the industries which does not show the signs of this trend.

<i>Table 1</i>						
State- wise Distribution of Working Children According to 1971, 1981 and 1991 Census						
S.No		1971	1981	1991		
	State/Union Territories	Workers	Workers	Main Workers	Marginal workers	Total Workers
1	Andhra Pradesh	1627492	1951312	1537293	124647	1661940
2	Assam	239349*	**	259953	67645	327598
3	Bihar	1059359	1101764	795444	146801	942245
4	Gujrat	518061	616913	373027	150558	523585
5	Haryana	137826	194189	89030	20661	109691
6	Himachal Pradesh	71384	99624	30771	25667	56438
7	Jammu and Kashmir	70489	258437	**	**	**
8	Karnataka	808719	1131530	818159	158088	976247
9	Kerala	111801	92854	28590	6210	34800
10	Madhya Pradesh	1112319	1698597	997940	354623	1352563
11	Maharashtra	988357	1557756	805847	262571	1068418
12	Manipur	16380	20217	13478	3015	16493
13	Meghalaya	30330	44916	30730	3903	34633
14	Nagaland	13726	16235	16106	370	16476
15	Orissa	492477	702293	325250	127144	452394
16	Punjab	232774	216939	132414	10454	142868
17	Rajasthan	587389	819605	490522	283677	774199
18	Sikkim	15661	8561	5254	344	5598
19	Tamil Nadu	713305	975055	523125	55764	578889
20	Tripura	17490	24204	13506	2972	16478
21	Uttar Pradesh	1326726	1434675	1145087	264999	1410086
22	West Bengal	511443	605263	593387	118304	711691
23	Andaman & Nicobar Island	572	1309	758	507	1265
24	Arunachal Pradesh	17925	17950	11632	763	12395
25	Chandigarh	1086	1986	1839	31	1870
26	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	3102	3615	2677	1739	4416
27	Delhi	17120	25717	26670	681	27351
28	Daman and Diu	7391	9378	741	200	941
29	Goa			3938	718	4656
30	Lakshadweep	97	56	17	17	34
31	Mizoram	****	6314	6391	10020	16411
32	Pondicherry	3725	3606	2565	115	2680
	Total	10753985	13640870	9082141	2203208	11285349

*Includes figures of Mizo district also which then formed part of Assam ** Census could not be conducted
Source:Census 1971,1981,1991(as in Devi Saini 1998)

Bidi industry in India provides direct employment to more than 75 lakh workers (Anchan, 2000). According to Labour Bureau estimates nearly 41,42,400 persons are employed in beedi industry (Table 2). A large number of workers (nearly double to direct employment) are indirectly dependent on beedi industry. Despite huge variations in estimates by different agencies, it is an undisputed fact that one of the biggest job spinners for the weaker economic sections working in unorganized sector is poor man's smoke.

It is also important to note that the beedi industry is concentrated in relatively backward states and regions. The highest number of beedi workers is in Madhya Pradesh followed by Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu (GOI, 1995). MP alone accounts for almost 15.93 % (approximately 6,60,000) of total beedi workers in India.

Table 2.			
Employment in Beedi Industry by State			
<i>Sl.No</i>	State	<i>Employment (,000)</i>	
1	Andhra Pradesh	625.1	-15.09
2	Assam	7.7	-0.19
3	Bihar	@391.5	-9.045
4	Gujarat	@50.0	-1.21
5	Karnataka	238.3	-5.75
6	Kerala	136.4	-3.29
7	Madhya Pradesh	@660.0	-15.93
8	Maharashtra	@256.0	-6.18
9	Orissa	151.4	-3.66
10	Rajasthan	@100.0	-2.42
11	Tripura	@5.0	-0.12
12	Tamil Nadu	621	-14.99
13	Uttar Pradesh	@450.0	-10.86
14	West Bengal	@450.0	-10.86
	Total	4142.4	
@ Approximate Source:GOI (1995)			

If we look at the percentage distribution of home based beedi workers, Labour Bureau data show that women workers represent the major section of beedi workers. In Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat the proportion of women workers is above 85%. However, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar are exceptions to this rule. In these two states the proportion of women workers is only 17.3% and 29.3% respectively (Table 3). Systematic studies at micro and macro level are required to provide further explanations for these phenomena .

The 51st round of National Sample Survey revealed some information regarding child labour in beedi industry. It has divided child workers in three categories : hired child workers, paid child workers, and unpaid child workers. These data indicate around 330 hired child workers per thousand hired workers at all- India. Paid household child workers are estimated to be 669 per thousand paid household workers, and unpaid household child workers are 209 per thousand unpaid household workers. Therefore, it is evident from the above that child workers represent more than 50 % of paid household workers (Bhattacharya, 2000). If we recall here that more than 80 % of the workers in beedi industry are home workers, it makes one realize that the beedi industry is actually riding on the shoulders of poor children. Beedi making involves rolling, labeling

Table 3

**Percentage Distribution of Beedi Workers
(Industrial and home workers by Sex)**

S.N	State	Percentage of workers in										
		Industrial Premises			Home Workers				Total			
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Children	Total	Men	Women	Children	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	2.9	15.8	18.7	-	81.3	-	81.3	2.9	97.1	-	100
2	Bihar	4.1	0.1	7.2	67.1	28.1	0.6	95.8	71.2	28.2	0.6	100
3	Gujarat	67.7	4.2	72	4.2	23.8	-	28	72	28	-	100
4	Karnataka	3.2	0.1	3.3	22.4	74.3	-	96.7	25.5	74.5	-	100
5	Kerala	20	29.8	49.8	6.6	43.6	-	50.2	26.6	73.4	-	100
6	Madhya Pradesh	9	2.4	11.4	73.3	15.3	-	88.6	82.3	17.7	-	100
7	Maharashtra	3	7.9	10.9	12.8	76.3	-	89.1	15.8	84.2	-	100
8	Orissa	4.9	-	4.9	41.5	51	2.6	95.1	46.4	51	2.6	100
9	Rajasthan	4.9	0.1	5	24.6	70.4	-	95	29.6	70.4	-	100
10	Tamil Nadu	12.2	0.1	12.3	34.3	53.4	-	87.7	46.5	53.5	-	100
11	Uttar Pradesh	3.8	-	3.8	28	68.3	-	96.3	31.7	68.3	-	100
12	West Bengal	5.5	0.2	5.7	18.3	72.3	3.7	94.3	23.8	72.5	3.7	100
	Total	5.1	5.1	10.1	28.1	60.9	0.9	89.9	33.1	65.9	1	100

Source: GOI, 1995

The NSS provides another interesting information regarding the gender-bias in child labour involved in beedi industry. According to NSS estimates, almost 100 percent paid household child workers were girls, and among the unpaid household child workers girls outnumbered boys four times (Bhattacharya 2000).

The Labour Bureau Report on beedi workers gives no reference to the beedi industry child labour in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The Census Report on child labour reveals that a total of 17,730 child workers were involved as tobacco prepares and tobacco-product makers, out of which 4770 were boys and 12960 girls. This is in tune with the national trend- i.e. girls outnumbering boys .

However, data regarding the number of child workers seem to be unreliable and underestimated . Bagchi and Mukhopadhyay (1996) question the reliability of child labour data: according to them, a survey conducted by DRDA reveals that proportion of child labour in Mursidabad district is nearly 15 % of the total workers, whereas in the GOI 1995 estimates it is only one percent. Though, the GOI, 1995 report accepts its limitations by observing: "Children are noticed working in labeling and packing jobs in factories and in beedi rolling works at homes". Their employment was, however, not shown in the records, nor the employers of child workers reported them as workers on the pretext that they were only helping their parents .

and packing operations; child labour is engaged on each stage of these operations. Majority of them are household workers. Around 90 %of the working children are based in rural areas.

In MP, almost all home workers are employed through contractors. Majority of home workers are engaged in beedi rolling operations, and (almost all of them) are based in rural areas.

The contractors (Sattedars) and their agents are ruthless exploiters. They find employing child labour highly profitable, as they believe that a child can roll more beedies a day on an average, than an adult .

The Indian beedi industry is growing, and is a profit-making industry. It has a total annual turnover of more than Rs.19000 crores, foreign exchange earnings of Rs.80.6 crores, and excise revenue of Rs.650 crores. (B.L., 2000)

The Indian export of beedi industry has increased from 89, 000 kg in 1994 to 1.1 million kg in1997-98 (Bhattacharya 2000). In the meantime, the size of area under tobacco cultivation has also increased from 384, 800 hectare in 1993-94 to 463, 000 ha in 1998-99 (CMIE, 2000). Therefore, the number of beedi workers may have also increased drastically, and since there is no evidence to suggest any positive change in the proportion of child labour in this industry, it is very likely that child labour has also increased in absolute terms, while in other sectors it has been decreasing as we discussed it earlier.

But the problem can be looked at from a different angle too. Presently, the beedi industry- probably for the first time in the history of tis existence- is facing intense competition in the market with mini-cigarettes of MNCs. Therefore, the increase of child labour in the beedi industry may also be an sign of the “beedi kings' ” hunt for cheap labour with the intensification of the industry and the market.

The earliest studies about the working conditions of beedi workers were prepared by the Royal Commission on Labour (1929-31), and thereafter, by the labour investigation committee (1944). These reports revealed the inhuman working conditions prevailing in the beedi industry for the first time. It is to be noted that during this period, beedi production was carried out in workshops, where workers rolled beedies from early morning till late night. The employers were compelled to improve the general working conditions after the factories Act (1948) was extended to the beedi industry as well. Perhaps this was the turning point, from which a gradual shift has started from a factory-based production to a putting out system. (Prasad- Prasad, 1990)

The first survey of the beedi industry in Independent India was conducted in 1965-66 by the Labour Bureau, Government of India. However, the home workers were not covered under this survey. The report revealed that women workers accounted 49% of total workers in the industry. The National Commission on Labour (1969) for the first time took into account those beedi workers who were hired through contractors, and were paid on piece rate basis. The report revealed heavy deductions in wages on account of substandard quality of beedi and misuse of tobacco. 'The Beedi industry in Murshadabad District', a report released by the Department of Labour, West Bengal in 1973, provided systematic information about the contract-system and

2. Review of Literature

paid on piece rate basis. The report revealed heavy deductions in wages on account of substandard quality of beedi and misuse of tobacco. 'The Beedi industry in Murshadabad District', a report released by the Department of Labour, West Bengal in 1973, provided systematic information about the contract-system and various ways of exploitation of home workers. According to the report, in the putting out system "the companies are freed of all direct responsibility for the welfare of the workers. On paper their workers could consist of only their office staff. Neither the Factories Act is applicable to those companies nor are they obliged to give the workers any bonus etc. It is, therefore, no wonder this contractor system is the universal feature of the beedi industry in India." (Prasad-Prasad, 1985)

The Labour Bureau in 1979 came out again with a report on the working and living conditions of workers in beedi industry. This report revealed that "At many centers; various social security measures were not being implemented fully by the employers" and that "20 per cent families suffered from one disease or another", also that the income of beedi workers was very low (Rs. 209 per month).

A clear cut picture of the putting out system emerges from a recent survey on the living and working conditions of beedi workers conducted by the Labour Bureau in 1995. According to this report, home workers constituted about 90% (39.97) of total workers in the beedi industry. Women workers constituted more than 60% of total home workers, and child workers accounted for about 1% of home workers. It has already been discussed that the magnitude of child labour is underestimated in this report. It has also confirmed that an intensive exploitation of home workers has continued. There seemed to be no sign of any significant improvement.

Among the research studies on beedi industry, very few have made serious attempts for in-depth analysis of living and working conditions of workers in beedi industry based on sample surveys.

Mohandas (1980) in his study of beedi workers in Trichur district of Kerala considered various aspects of living and working conditions of both factory and homebased workers. He pointed out that there is "virtual absence of any uniform or standard work norm due to multiplicity of independent branches and differences in the system of work"; this is one of the major causes of exploitation of homebased beedi workers. He also points out that this trend of growing disorganization has effectively reduced the bargaining capacity of workers.

In his study of beedi workers in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, Purushottam (1983) reported poor earnings and little alternative income avenues.

Prasad and Prasad (1985) made an in-depth study of working and living conditions of beedi workers in Sagar district of M.P and Bhandara District of Maharashtra. The major findings of his study were:

- (1) Incidents of high level of exploitation of workers due to informal relations of production at every level, unorganized nature of workers in the production process.
- (2) "No fixed norms about disbursement of raw materials on wage cuts or wage rates given to workers" and "wage rates lower than the existing minimum wage rates" have been observed.
- (3) In Sagar, "42 per cent of the households reported having children (up to 17 years of age) involved in beedi work", and in these households "25-50 per cent of the beedi labour consisted of children". In Bhandara, "in 14 per cent of the households 50 per cent beedi workers were children."

Usha and Radha Devi (1997) in their study, based on fields survey of Mukkudal village in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, focused their attention on the problems of child workers in beedi and agarbathi industries. They suggested that parents' education and occupation played important role in whether or not their children become wage earners at an early age. They reported that "on an average, they (children) earned only Rs.215 per month. But their earnings formed about 20 percent on the total household income."

Rekha Pande (1996) in her study on "child labour in beedi industry of Andhra Pradesh", based on a sample survey of 1000 households, reported that beedi making operations were dominated by girls. According to her, children who regularly attended school and made beedies after school hours rolled 100-250 beedies per day. Those who rolled more than 250 beedies were either dropouts or they never went to school. (Mishra, 2000)

Karunanidhi (1995) in his study on working conditions of beedi workers in North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu pointed out that the contractors and their agents in beedi industry were ruthless exploiters. In their establishments, the punishment to a child for not complying with their orders varied from oral abuse to harsh physical assault.

3. The Present Study and the Methodology

The present study was conducted by the Center For Education and Communication (CEC), New Delhi. The aim of the study was to highlight the living and working conditions of beedi workers in general, and child workers in particular, to unveil the social and economic realities that force the children to start beedi rolling at an early age. This study was limited to the Tikamgarh district of Madhya Pradesh. Since the majority of beedi workers in Madhya Pradesh are homebased workers and majority of them are based in rural areas, this study was focussed on homebased workers in rural areas.

The major objective of the study was to understand the current trends in child labour in beedi industry, and to find a proper explanation as to why child labour in beedi industry is growing (or not declining), while it is showing a clear cut decline at national level as a general trend.

Methodology

Based on our understanding of the beedi industry and the region from the available literature and on our personal experiences, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed for the sample survey. Village wise data on the number of beedi workers were not available. Therefore, a field visit (three days duration) was made in the second week of September, 2001 for selection of sample villages and for a pilot survey. The pilot survey and field testing of the questionnaire was conducted in Teherka village of Newari block. Thereafter, in consultation with the project director and coordinator in CEC, the final schedule was prepared in Hindi for sample survey proper.

Selection of Villages

The selection of the villages was made on the basis of the information gathered from a trade union activist who had worked among the beedi workers in the Newari block of district Tikamgarh. Initially, we selected seven villages from the two blocks namely Newari and Prithwipur. But this could not be materialized due to the non-cooperation by the beedi workers of the Prithwipur block. We had selected three villages i.e. Khristone, Jewara maura and Madia for our sample survey in Prithwipur block. We visited all the three villages with the local investigators. When we entered to these villages and started listing the beedi making households, workers started questioning the objectives of the survey, and told us that an officer from the labour department visited these villages about six months back, who also inquired about beedi workers. According to them, within a month of the visit, child labour cases were registered against the sattedar and some workers, whose children were found in beedi rolling activities, also these workers received summons to appear before the relevant authorities. As a result, a fear psychosis developed among the beedi makers, and they were, at any cost, refusing to cooperate in our household survey. They requested to be left alone, "don't do any good to us and don't do any survey." Therefore, the Prithwipur block was dropped, and we decided to take all the samples from Newari block.

We came across the same problem in one of the sample villages in Newari block, in Tarichar. But beedi workers in this village were well-known to our local investigators, who were actually trying to organize the beedi workers. Therefore, the beedi workers not only happily cooperated with us in conducting the household survey, but they also provided us details about the child labour cases registered in the village. They told us that about six months back an officer from Labour department visited the village and found that some children were involved in beedi rolling. Without knowing anything about the officer and the purpose of his visit, the women workers gave him all the relevant information. Six child labour cases were registered in this village; half of these cases related to child labour in beedi making, and half of them were related to powerloom, which involved children learning the skill from their parents.

Beedi workers in this village told us that after these cases were registered, the Sattedar of the Pyal Beedi Company asked them to give an affidavit stating that : "we don't involve our children in beedi rolling and if in future we do so, we will be solely responsible for it." They showed us the draft of the contents circulated by the contractor among the beedi workers of the village.

Finally, we conducted the household survey in Newari block with seven sample villages. In this way, around 40 % of the beedi making villages of the block have been covered. The basic criteria for selection of these villages was the presence of approximately 100 beedi workers in the village. The villages selected were Teherka, Dhamna, Thana, Tarichar, Ubor, Murara and Patharam. Approximately thirty percent of the total beedi making households in each of these villages were randomly selected for our sample survey.

Data Collection

With the help of three local investigators, who were familiar with the beedi workers of that area, we collected data in 150 schedules from seven villages in Newari block. Field investigators were trained before they started data collection. The data collection was monitored by a researcher in every village. The actual data collection took 15 days, extending from the last week of September to the second week of October, 2001.

At the end of the survey, schedules were checked individually for all details, and the incomplete ones were filtered out before the final analysis took place. All the data were computerized, consistency checks were made to ensure that data has been correctly entered, and that the entries were logically valid. Thereafter, the data were used for the final analysis.

4. The Setting: Tikamgarh District

Tikamgarh District of Madhya Pradesh is surrounded by Jhansi district of Uttar Pradesh in the north, Chhatarpur district of MP in the east, and Sagar district in the south. It is part of the Sagar revenue division, and located in the central northern part of the State. It was a princely state in the pre-Independence period.

The total area of the district is 5,048.89 sq.km and the total population is 940,829 persons according to the 1991 census. The decennial growth rate of was 27.63 per cent of the population in the period of 1981-91 in Tikamgarh, which is higher than that of Madhya Pradesh state (which was 26.75 per cent for the same period of time).

The major area of the district lies in the level plains stretching from Betwa to Dashan Doab, two important rivers of the region. Several lakes have been constructed in the district in the past to store rainy water for irrigation purposes. A large portion of the cultivated area here is rain-fed. (Rehman-Pratap, 2000)

The total population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the district was 214,064 and 38,850 respectively according to the 1991 Census. According to same census, Tikamgarh accounted for a total of 19,290 child workers out of a total of 704,563 child workers of 5 to 14 years of age in Madhya Pradesh (Table 4).

Child Labour in Tikamgarh and MP.											<i>Table 4</i>
	Main +Marginal workers of 5-14 years of age						Total population of 5-14 years of age				
	MP			Tikamgarh			MP		Tikamgarh		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	M	F	
R	619719	665933	1285652	10040	7770	17810	6740417	6244194	111868	95431	
U	43973	22938	66911	1020	460	1480	1951703	1804333	22415	19200	
T	115692	688871	704563	11060	8230	19290	8692120	8048527	134283	114631	

Source: Census, 1991

According to the sources in the Head quarters of the Welfare Commissioner, Ministry of Labour, Govt. Of India, there were about 1,050 registered beedi workers in Tikamgarh district.

Newari

The district Tikamgarh is divided into five subdivisions and six development blocks. Newari is a subdivision, which consists of three blocks i.e. Newari, Prithwipur and Palera. Newari block makes the northern border of the district, and is adjacent to Jhansi district of U.P. The block is dotted with hills and ravines.

A large portion of the cultivated area of the block was either rain fed or irrigated by wells and tanks (lakes). Out of the total cultivated area of 32,266 ha, only 17,155 ha was an irrigated area. The average size of land holding

was 2.972 ha. Wheat, Rice, jwar, gram, peanut, and soyabean were the major crops of the region. (Rehman-Pratap, 2000)

Out of the total population of 126,378 (male 67,733 and female 58,645), scheduled castes constituted 26.02 per cent and scheduled tribes only 3.64 per cent of the population. Out of total population, only 24.61 per cent males and 7.89 per cent females were literate (Census 1991).

There were 129 inhabited (19 uninhabited) villages under 69 gram panchayats.

According to the block education office at Newari, only 139 government primary schools, 35 middle schools, and 15 secondary schools functioned in the district. There were only two hospitals and 3 PHCs in the block. Since most of the interior villages were not connected by roads, in any emergency they had to walk 1km to 5km to reach the hospital, or to pick up a connivance to reach the hospital. Very serious drinking water problem existed in the area too.

According to the 1991 Census, the industry-wide categories show that out of the total of 43,918 workers, 71.35 per cent were cultivators, 15.43 per cent agricultural labourers, 2.16 per cent worked in household industries, 1.6 per cent workers were engaged in industries other than household industries and 4.05 per cent workers were in other services.

A significant number of people from the Kori caste lives in Newari block. This caste was traditionally involved in hand loom weaving. In some of the villages, weavers who managed to purchase the powerlooms continued in the weaving business.

There were no industries worth referring, except a few FCI godowns, where some hundred people get employment occasionally. The stone quarries of Jhansi district are adjacent to Newari block near Orchha. In these quarries, workers from 8-10 villages of Newari block are engaged. According to the information from local sources, in some roadside villages, almost 50% of workers work occasionally as palledars in Jhansi. Madhya Pradesh government has a Tendu leaf collection center and Goddamn at Newari block headquarters.

In Newari, the majority of beedi workers comes from the Kori caste. According to the information gathered from beedi workers and trade union activists, beedi rolling is done in about 18 villages of the block. The highest concentration of beedi workers was in Newari block headquarters, where around 800 households (about 1600 workers) are engaged in beedi making activities.activities.

5. Labour Process and Labour Relations in Beedi Industry

Beedi production is a labour intensive industry. The beedi industry has long back shifted from factory production to home based production by using putting out system. The factory owner, the principal employer, is able to use the labour of a whole family of workers by using the system, and in the meantime, he can evade the strictures passed on the establishments by the Factories Act. In this way, he are free from any obligations towards his labour, while exploiting them to the maximum.

In general, the principal employer operates through a number of branches of the company within the state. These branches employ sattedars. Branches supply raw materials to beedi workers. Beedi workers take these materials to their homes and make beedies involving family members, including children. Beedi making involves several stages, all of which are time consuming. It is impossible for a beedi worker to perform all the work alone and to roll a required number of beedies. Therefore, usually those members of the family, who are not directly involved in beedi making, also put in their labour by helping the beedi workers in some of the operations- e.g. cutting the leaves and making bundles of beedies.

First, tendu leaves are cleaned and cut as per the size of the brand of the beedies to be rolled. Then, cut leaves are soaked in water to make them more malleable. Thereafter, beedies are rolled by putting the tobacco in rolled leaves, edges of the rolled beedies turned in and tied with cotton threads. In the next stage, beedies are tied in bundles. Then bundles of these beedies are returned to the sattedars. Sattedars check the quality of beedies, substandard beedies are put in rejection basket, and deductions are made from the wages according to the number of rejected beedies. Rejected beedies are not returned to the workers. A payment slip is given to the worker, and the actual payment is usually made 15 days after depositing the bundles of rolled beedies.

Sattedar stacks the bundles and sends them to the branch office. The worker gets raw materials for next fifteen days or next weak after returning the rolled beedies to the sattedar. This is how the cycle goes on.

However, smaller companies don't employ sattedars-- beedi workers collect raw materials and return rolled beedies directly to the company office. Formally, they are not engaged by the company. During our field survey, we came across one such company i.e. Gopal Chhap beedi, which operates directly, and does not engage sattedars. It is a small company which has no other branch.

Finally, the branch office or the company itself, as the case may be, checks again the quality of beedies supplied by the sattedars, or directly by the workers, and defective beedies are removed from the bundles. Thereafter, beedi bundles are stacked in mesh trays and cured by placing them in tandoors or furnaces. Cured beedi bundles are labeled, packed, and dispatched to the marketing centers.

In this way, as one can see, the factory needs only a few workers at its office, while the major portion of beedi

production process is carried out outside the factory premises by the workers, who are not considered as workers of the factory, who do not interact with the company as its employees, and who cannot put any obligation on the company.

The workers are scattered in their villages, and are not at all organized. Therefore, they are mercilessly exploited by sattedars and the company. Sattedars or the company exploit them in many ways. They supply lesser quantity of raw material than required for the beedies, and if workers deposit less beedies due to shortage of raw material, deductions from their wage payment are made. Sattedars/ companies are making heavy deductions from the payment to workers by increasing the rejection rate in the name of defective beedies. Recently, sattedars and companies have started demanding extra beedies over and above the amount which goes to the payment basket. Sattedars and companies in the region are not paying the minimum rate of wages to their workers. The existing minimum rate of wages is Rs. 36 per thousand beedies, while the workers are paid at the rate of Rs 30 per thousand beedies.

6. Survey Findings

6.1 Demographic particulars

A total of 150 households were surveyed from 7 villages of Newari block. An average size of a household was 5.35 members. The size of the households ranged from two to 10 members. More than 25% of the households had between two to four members. More than 65% households reported four to six members, and only two households had nine to 10 members (Table 5). In our sample, the relatively smaller size households dominated, which was probably due to the fact that the joint family system is no more dominant in the working class families. More than 58% of the households had only 2 to 5 members.

Table 6 shows the caste composition of the sample households. It is interesting to note that in Newari block, majority of beedi workers (76.67%) were from the Kori caste. Second largest group is workers from Ahirwar caste, which accounted for about 12.67% of the beedi workers (Table5). Traditionally the Kories were weavers and Ahirwars were attached agricultural labourers (Halwaha). They both represented scheduled caste category. In our sample, 3.33 per cent of the households were Muslims (General category) and 3.33 per cent were from Vishvakarma caste (OBC), the rest represented scheduled caste categories.

6.2 State of Schooling

The state of schooling in each household is presented in Table7. Out of all household members, 8.09% were in the age group of 0 to 4 years, they naturally were neither studying nor working. A total of 98 members were in the age group of 5-9 years, and 140 members were in the age group of 10-14 years.

In the age group of 5-9 years 8.16 percent members were neither studying nor working and 87.75% were studying and not working, while 3.06% were studying and working and 1.02% members of this age group were working and never went to school. In this age group, out of those who were either studying and working or working and never went to school, 100% were females. Out of those studying and working in all age groups 100% were females.

In the age group of 10-14 years, female children constituted 22.25 % of total female members in all age groups. Out of this 22.25 %, a majority of 10.73% were studying and working, 2.88% were working and dropped out, and 3.66% were studying and not working. In other words, we can say that out of total 85 females in the age group of 10-14 years, a total of 66 members i.e. 77.64% were enrolled in schools (48.23% studying and working + 16.47% studying and not working + 12.9% working and dropped out). Therefore, the rate of dropout was 15.71% in female children in the age group of 10-14 years. No dropout was reported in the age group of 5-9 years. However, if we look at the figures on dropouts in the age group of 15-18 years, out of a total of 27 female children in this age group, only 74.7% got enrolled in further classes and out of total

21 enrolled only 60% were continuing their studies (10% studying and not working and 50% studying and working). The rate of dropout for female children in this age group was 40%, which is alarmingly high.

If we look at dropouts by educational level, the majority of the dropouts were at the 6th to the 8th standard. During the field survey, a dropout girl child reported that in her area generally the girls were allowed to study only up to the 8th standard. According to her, one of the reasons for this was non availability of schools in or near the villages, and parents' unwillingness to send their children to schools far away from their villages. However, her mother sitting beside her told that after the 8th standard a girl child becomes grown up and parents do not want to take risk by sending them to schools. Besides this, as the mother told, girls usually get married at the age when they reach up to the 8th standard.

As far as male children's schooling is considered, they evidently were more privileged than female children. Male children of 10-14 years of age constituted 13.06% of the group of all male children. Out of this, the majority (12.11%) was studying and not working, 0.24% of them were working and never went to school, and 0.24% were working and dropped out. In the other words, out of total 55 male children in this age group, 94.5% were enrolled and 98.07% of the total enrolled were continuing their studies (all of them studying and not working). The dropout rate of male children in the age group of 10-14 years was only 1.92%. However, male children in the age group of 15-18 years reported alarmingly high dropout rates. Out of 48 children in this age group, 93.75% got enrolled in further classes, and only 66.6% of the enrolled continued their studies. The rate of dropout for male children in the age group of 15-18 years was 33.3%. But, here also they were more privileged than female children, whose dropout rates, as we have already discussed, were at 40% in this age group. Moreover, 53.3% of the drop out male children in the age group of 15-18 years, dropped out in the 9th and the 10th standard, while 100% dropout female children in the age group 10-14, and 94.4% from the age group of 10-18 years old dropped out up by the 8th standard. (Table 8).

Female children who were studying and working (in the age group of 10-14 years) represented more than 50% of child workers in the beedi industry.

In the adult age group of 19-70 year old ones, the trend is the same. Males were more privileged than females. Only 20% of females in this age group had got schooling up to some standard, while 55.21% of males reported schooling up to some standard.

However, it is evident from our finding, that percentage of females getting schooling up to some standard in the present generation (10-18 years of age) was higher (76.78%) than at the previous generation (19-70 years of age), where it was only 20%. For male members we have experienced a similar trend. At the present generation (10-18 years age), 94.17% were getting to schooling up to some standard, while in the previous generation (19-70 years), only 61.73% received schooling up to some standard. Only very few males (4-5 members) in the age group of 19-70 years were graduates or post graduates.

6.3. Awareness about the Importance of Education

The responses of children and parents regarding their need for education can be summarized in a few statements, based on the findings of our research.

Almost in all the households with children in the age group of 5-14 years, children responded that they enjoyed going to school. Only two children responded that they never went to school. According to the majority (64%) of children, the importance of going to school was “to become educated”. Others responded that it was necessary for getting employment and for better future.

In 60% of the households, children reported that they did not face any problems in the school. However, 21% of the respondent children told that teachers did not take interest in teaching. Others cited problems of sitting arrangement and drinking water.

Almost all the parents considered necessary to educate their children. Only 2% of the parents were of the opinion that it was not necessary to educate a girl child. According to them, a girl child will not go for an employment as she had to take care of the household and children. All the others responded positively on the issue of the education of the girl child, reasoning that : (i) she will thus have a better future, (ii) she will be able to read and write, (iii) her marriage will be easier and (iv) she will have a better married life.

Regarding the infrastructure of the education, 100% of the households reported that they had no separate study room for their children.

Interestingly, only 4% of the household reported that they did not send their children to school, and there were economic reasons behind this decision.

Regarding the gender difference of children attending basic education, only 2% of the households reported that they sent only boys to school and not their girl children. Their reasons were the perceived lack of importance of educating in case of a girl child, and partially economic problems.

6.4. Occupational particulars

Out of 150 beedi making households, 73.3% households were landless, 14.6% households owned 1-5 beegha of land and 10% households owned 6-10 beegha of land, while 2% households leased in 1-5 beegha of land. Moreover, out of the total owner cultivators, only 62.1% possessed irrigated land, the rest, 37.8%, possessed unirrigated land. In Tarichar, the village with highest number of beedi workers, all the beedi making households were landless (Table 9)

Village wise Distribution of Households by Size of Land Holdings							Table 9
No. of families or households Own Land (1ha: 6 Bigha)							
Village	Size of landholding (bigha)	Own land Irrigated	Own land Un- irrigated	Lease in irrigated	Lease in Un-irrigated	Land less	
Teherka	1-5	3	2	2	1	15	
	6-10	2	0	0	0		
Murara	1-5	2	0	0	0	21	
	6-10	2	0	0	0		
Ubora	1-5	2	0	0	0	12	
	6-10	5	1	0	0		
Dhamna	1-5	4	3	0	0	4	
	6-10	3	1	0	0		
Patharam	1-5	0	1	0	0	13	
	6-10	0	1	0	0		
Tarichar	1-5	0	0	0	0	30	
	6-10	0	0	0	0		
Thauna	1-5	0	5	0	0	15	
	6-10	0	0	0	0		
Total		23	14	2	1	110	

Powerloom or handloom was another important occupation, as the majority of the beedi making households were from traditional weaver caste i.e. Kori. However, in our samples, only 14% of the households were running power looms, 2.66% households were engaged as hired workers in powerlooms, and 2% of the households were still running handlooms. Majority of the powerloom running households (80%) were from Tarichar village. According to workers in Murara, about 30% Kori households in the village were running power looms till recently. Both in Tarichar and Murara, many powerlooms were closed down in the last 10 years.

Majority of the beedi making households (58.6%) were engaged in daily wage labour market. Out of the total of 512 workers, in all households 21.8% were engaged in different types of wage works, ranging from agricultural labour, construction labour, to palledari. Sometimes they worked as palledars, sometimes they were engaged as construction workers and so on. Besides this, some of the households were also running small shops, doing stitching work, vending of readymade cloths.

It is evident from Table 18 that child labour exists only in beedi-making. Only one member in the age group of 10-14 years was engaged in stitching work. Children usually enter other occupations only after 14-16 years of age. However, during our field visit we found that most of the cultivator families engage children in farming activities. In most of the powerloom-running families, children started learning these skills at the age of 12-14 years.

Beedi Making

One of the major findings of this study is that the beedi industry in Newari block of district Tikamgarh is female dominated, unlike the general picture of beedi workers in the state of Madhya Pradesh, where male workers represent the majority of beedi workers. Unlike the picture presented by Prasad & Prasad (1985) in their study of beedi industry of Sagar district of M.P., we found that male household heads were not involved in beedi making activities in Tikamgarh. Here female adults were not only engaged in beedi rolling activities, they also went to company/ contractors offices themselves to collect raw materials, to deposit rolled beedies and collect wages.

Beedi rolling, being a time consuming work, often involved other members of the family too. Therefore, members other than those who were involved in beedi rolling proper, also helped in beedi rolling activities in terms of cutting leaves, making bundles of beedies and so on. We found that by and large only females, adults and children, were involved in beedi rolling activities. However, beedi workers told that usually male children and sometimes male adults also helped in making bundles of beedies.

Out of 150 beedi making households in our study, in 25.3 % households 3-5 members were engaged in beedi rolling, while in the rest, only 1-2 members were engaged. In more than 26% of the households, 50% or more

of its members were engaged in beedi rolling. There were on an average 2 beedi workers per household. (Table10).

<i>Table 10</i>								
Village wise Distribution of Households by No. of Beedi Workers								
Village	No. of households					Total No. Of households	Total beedi workers	Total Child workers
	No. of beedi workers							
	1	2	3	4	5			
Teherka	8	12	4	1	0	25	48	12
Murara	12	10	3			25	41	12
Uborā	6	9	4	1		20	40	9
Dhamna	7	5	3			15	26	9
Patharam	6	4	4	1		15	30	9
Tarichar	13	6	5	5	1	30	65	11
Thauna	3	11	4	1	1	20	46	12
Total Households	55	57	27	9	2	150		74
Total beedi workers	55	114	81	36	10	296	296	

<i>Table 11</i>					
Village wise Distribution of Households by No. of Child Workers					
Village	No. of Beedi Worker	No of Households with Child Workers			
		Age Group 10-14	5-9	Total No. of Households	Total No. of Child Workers
Dhamna	1	6	1	7	7
	2	1		1	2
	3				
	Total	7	1	8	9
Murara	1	10		10	10
	2	1		1	2
	3				
	Total	11		11	12
Patharam	1	3	2	5	5
	2	2		2	4
	3				
	Total	5	2	7	9
Tarichar	1	8		8	8
	2				
	3	1		1	3
	Total	9		9	11
Teherka	1	10		10	10
	2	1		1	2
	3				
	Total	11		11	12
Thauna	1	7		8	8
	2	2	1	2	4
	3				
	Total	9	1	10	12
Uborā	1				
	2	9		9	9
	3				
	Total	9		9	9
Total	1	53		57	57
	2	7	4	7	14
	3	1		1	3
	Total	61	4	65	74

In 43.3% households, child labour was engaged in beedi rolling. Out of these child labour households, in 16.20% households 2-3 child workers were engaged. In 40.66% households children from the age group of 10-14 years, and in only 2.66% households children from the age group of 5-9 years were working. (Table12).

Out of the total of 296 beedi workers, in all the 150 households, males represented only 3.71% of beedi workers. Majority of these male beedi workers were drawn from the age group of 19-70. They were either physically disabled, or old age people, who were incapable of joining any other wage rated occupation. Only one male child in the age group of 10-14 years was engaged in beedi making. (Table13).

Women represented 96.26% of total beedi workers. 23.3% of the total beedi workers were female children from the age group of 10-14 years, 1.35% were female children from the age group of 5-9 years, 8.44% were female workers from the age group of 15-18 years, and finally 63.17% workers were female adults. (Table13)

It is evident from the above that girl children constituted the absolute majority of child labour in the beedi industry of Tikamgarh. It is also interesting to note that the magnitude of child labour belonging to the age group of 5-9 years is insignificant. Child labour is predominantly drawn from the age group of 10-14 years. It is worth mentioning here that 81.17 per cent of female children engaged in beedi rolling were from the age group of 10-14. In the age group of 5-9 years only 8% females were found in beedi rolling activities. (Table13)

Data collected on the age of entry to the beedi industry confirms the above statements. Only 5.06% of total beedi workers (including adults and children) reported the age of entry to the beedi making industry at the age of 5-9 years. 41.55% of the beedi workers reported 10-14 years as their age of entry to beedi making. 40.20% said 15-18 years and 13.17% reported 19 years as their entry age. (Table14)

Table15 highlights the problem of registration of beedi workers in the district. It is evident from the table that 86.49% of the beedi workers (including children) were not registered, and they have not had any identity cards. Only 13.51% of the workers were registered. In four villages 100% of the workers had no identity cards.

We came to know from our discussions with beedi workers and trade union activists that there were several other villages where workers had no identity cards, or only 10-20% of the workers had it. These trade union activists conducted a survey in 12 villages in Newari block and 2-3 villages in Prithwipur block in July, 2001, trying to find out the number of beedi workers with identity cards. From the village list of beedi workers it was evident that in both the blocks less than 20% of them had identity cards.

On the basis of the above information, if we adjust our findings to the general percentage of registration (which is around 20%), we are able to make a rough estimate about the total number of beedi workers and child workers in the district. According to the sources in the headquarters of the welfare commissioner, Ministry of Labour, Government of India, there were about 4,278 registered beedi workers (and 5,500 total identified beedi workers) in the district of Tikamgarh. Therefore, according to our estimates, the actual number of beedi workers in the district must be around 21,390.

According to our findings, in the Newari block, 25% of the total beedi workers were child workers. Therefore, we can suggest that there may be around 5,348 child workers in the beedi industry of Tikamgarh district.

6.5. Occupational Mobility

We have also collected information about the previous major occupation of the households. 27.4% of them reported no occupational change, while 72.66% of total households reported change in their occupational pattern in the last few decades.

Out of the total households reporting change in occupational pattern, 93.57% reported handloom as their previous occupation. Handlooms, according to them, have been closed down during the period between 1980 and 1995.

Almost all the households reporting handloom as their previous occupation, were from traditional weaving caste, the Kori. In this area, the Kories were involved in running handlooms. They were engaged in making 'Janata' Cotton saris. Janata sari was a government business, and it was supplied on subsidized rates to poorer sections through government controlled ration shops. All the saris made by weavers were purchased by relevant governments, and cotton threads were also supplied to weavers by the government. In Murara and Tarichan, cooperative societies of weavers were run in close coordination with government departments. The Kori community remembers those times as their "good old days". After 1984 or so, a shift in government policy has happened, and the government stopped taking interest in supplying Janata saris to their controlled price shops. Weavers say that heavy corruption prevailed in those cooperative societies. Government officials and office bearers of the society both were involved. Therefore the societies finally recorded heavy losses, and it became impossible to run them. The other important reason for losses was the rise in cotton thread prices. Therefore, these societies collapsed and weavers stopped running handlooms in other villages i.e. Teherka, Dhamna, Thauna etc., where there were no cooperative societies, but they were working individually and independently. According to them, the most important reason for closure of handlooms was the rising prices of cotton threads and a change in governmental policy, which simply stopped the 'Janata sari business'.

The weavers told that in this area, no trader was interested in cotton cloths, as there was no local market for it. Cotton threads were so costly that no weaver could independently choose to make cotton cloths. The local market was for synthetic cloths. The cloth mandi was in Ranipur and Ranipur, which was famous for Ranipur Tericot.

The weaving of tericot threads could be done in powerlooms, which were fast and could produce 100 times more than handlooms in a day. Therefore it was unprofitable to weave tricot cloths in handlooms. Therefore, the handlooms were closed down forever. Whoever could purchase or hire powerlooms were weaving cloths, the rest lost their weaver occupation.

Therefore, the traditional weaving caste became engaged in other types of jobs, occupations. Only few of its members remained in the weaving business with the majority in powerloom and a negligible percentage in hand-loom industry.

We have already discussed that most of the beedi workers in the area were drawn from the Kori caste. Perhaps the ruination of the handloom industry contributed to the significant shift of female and child workers to the beedi industry. The fate of handlooms and beedi industry seems to be inversely related. Perhaps with the decline of incomes in handlooms, more and more female and child workers entered the beedi industry to compensate the losses in their family incomes.

The other 6.4% of the households reported their previous occupations ranging from agricultural cultivation to daily wage work, and stitching to government service. The one female beedi worker who reported previous occupation as casual daily wage work told that daily wage work was not regularly available, so she started rolling beedi. One male beedi worker reported that he left daily casual wage work, because his physical condition did not allow it, and hence joined the ranks of beedi workers.

2.75 per cent of the households reported agriculture as their previous occupation. According to them, their land got divided after split in the joint family unit. After the division of the landholdings and with the rising production costs, the income from land was not sufficient to support the family. As a result, they entered into the daily wage labour market and their family members started working as beedi workers.

6.6. Income Particulars

We have already discussed the average size of the households in our study, which was 5.35 persons. If we look at the occupational profile of household members, we come across an important observation. The average number of earning members per household was 3.41 persons.

We could identify four major occupations in which beedi making households of Newari were engaged. Beedi industry topped the ranking among other occupation in terms of providing employment to the members of beedi making households. 51.81% of total workers in all households were engaged in beedi rolling activities. 21.87% of the total workers were engaged in daily wage labour market. Powerloom was on the third place of the list of possible occupations. 7.81% of the workers were in the powerloom industry. Agriculture ranked 4th and it provided employment to 4.49% of the workers. (Table10)

Wages and days of employment available in the daily wage labour market is shown in table16&17. Out of total daily wage labourers in all households, only 1.78% reported a wage rate of Rs. 50-100 per day (skilled workers). 42.8% workers were getting a wage rate of Rs 40 per day, while 33.92% were receiving only Rs 30 per day. Workers getting higher wage rates (Rs 40 per day) generally came from villages, which were adjacent to a townships.

Moreover, the majority of daily wage workers (62.5%) were getting only 11-15 days of employment per month. 24.10% workers had 16-20 days of employment, while 13.39% workers reported only up to 10 days of employment per month.

Prospects of casual wage employment in the area were not too promising. Wage employment in agriculture is available only seasonally for about 3 months in the whole year. Therefore, wage workers were engaged in different types of trade activities. Many wage workers migrated to nearby towns like Jhansi (the wage rate in

Jhansi is Rs 60 per day) for a period of a day to one whole month.

In Newari town and nearby villages wage rate was Rs. 40 for male and Rs. 35 for female workers (Murara and Tarichar). But as we went geographically further, the wage rate dropped down. Availability of wage work (employment days) also decreased.

Wage Rate	No of Wage Workers in all							
	Teherka	Murara	Ubora	Dhamna	Patharam	Tarichar	Thauna	Total
40	10	20	3	0	1	2	2	38
35	7	0	1	0	5	0	0	13
30	1	2	1	8	2	1	13	28
25	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	7
50	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
100	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	18	24	4	8	9	4	28	88

Days of Employment available	No of Wage Workers in all Households							
	Tehrka	Murara	Ubora	Dhamna	Patharam	Tarichar	Thauna	Total
1-10	3	1	1	5	1	0	3	14
11-15	14	19	4	1	5	2	6	51
16-20	1	4	0	2	5	2	9	23
Total	18	24	5	8	11	4	18	88

As we have observed, only 24.6% of the households owned agricultural land, out of which 59.4% possessed only 1-5 begha of land, while the rest (40.5%) possessed 6-10 begha. Moreover, only 62.16% of these peasants had irrigated land and 37.83% had unirrigated land. Income from unirrigated land depended on the vagaries of nature. Therefore, we will discuss the general trend in income generated from agricultural activities in case of irrigated land. We calculated the total input costs and output in wheat on the basis of information provided by the peasants. In one hectare (6 bigha) of irrigated land, the total input cost was Rs 9,450.00 (excluding labour cost). The total production on this tract of land was 30 quintals of wheat or Rs. 15,000. If only two members were involved in cultivating the crop, the income per head came to be Rs 2,775 per head. The crop period was about 5 months, therefore, the income per head per month was only Rs. 555. This was not even the actual picture, as only two people can not cultivate one hectare of land. They have to hire a few

wage workers during the sowing and harvesting period. Therefore, the income could not more than Rs. 400 per head per month.

It is evident from the above that in these households, beedi rolling occupation was the only regular source of income for their daily needs. With the rising input costs in agriculture, smaller peasants needed more income from other occupations to support the family. Therefore, they were poised to engage their children in beedi rolling activities so that the income from beedi-making can compensate the losses in agriculture caused by the rising costs of input.

As far as the income from powerloom industry is concerned, it was also showing declining trends. As we have discussed earlier, 7.81 per cent of the total workers in our sample were powerloom workers. According to these workers, due to rising cost of yarn and slump in the cloth market in the recent decades, the powerlooms were suffering losses. Earlier, powerloom workers in this area were weaving many kinds of synthetic cloths, but now due to slump in the cloth market, traders in Ranipur were interested only in tericot towels. Yarn was supplied by the big traders in Ranipur. Most of weavers purchased yarn from traders on credit basis and they supplied the finished towels to the same traders. According to the information gathered from the powerloom workers, for running two looms only one skilled worker and a help of one unskilled worker was required. If the two looms ran continuously for 12 hours, 100 towels were produced per day. After deducting the cost of threads, powerloom workers received a net payment of Rs. 2 per towel i.e. Rs. 200 per day. Out of this payment they had to pay for some of the inputs i.e. power charges, loom rent, loom repair, payment to Tana karigar, room rent. They had also to cover the expenses of four visits per month to Ranipur. In the above heads, they had to make a payment of about Rs. 50 per day. Therefore, their income was only Rs. 75 per head per day. If the loom was owned and it was operating in their own room, than the income was Rs 85 per head. But they could get this income only when the power was available continuously for 12 hours, which was actually not the case. According to the workers, the real income of a powerloom worker was Rs 50-60 per day. Almost 100 % of the powerloom workers in our study reported their actual earnings only up to Rs 1,500 per month.

The decline in income was such a serious problem that one could observe the pain on the faces of these power loom workers while talking to them. The day we were conducting our survey in Tarichar village, the news came that the Madhya Pradesh government had increased the rate of power charges. The workers became agitated with the news. They were planning to send a delegation to the authorities with a request to withdraw the hike in power charge. They believed that the hike was not withdrawn, most of the powerlooms will be closed down. They were already paying more than Rs. 360 per month (a minimum fixed rate), after the hike they were supposed to pay more than Rs. 550 per month.

The above discussion leads us to conclude that along with the ruination of the handloom sector, the decline in incomes of the power loom sector was one of the important factors in accentuating the child labour problem in the beedi industry of the region. Since most of the powerloom workers were landless, making more beedies by engaging their children was the only and easiest way to enhance their incomes to compensate the

declining income in power looms.

6.7. Income from beedi making

As we have already discussed in the previous chapter, we studied a total of 296 beedi workers in all the sample households. The average number of beedi workers per household was roughly two persons, and in more than 26% households, 50% or more members were involved in beedi rolling. Moreover, 43.3% of the households engaged child labour.

Table 18 presents the age group wise picture, and the average number of beedies made per day by these workers. It was observed that on an average 312.85 beedies were made per day by child workers in the age group of 10-14 years, while the child workers in the age group of 5-9 years, on an average rolled 237.5 beedies per day (50% of them rolled only 100-150 beedies). Beedi workers in the age group of 15-18 years made on an average 444 beedies, while the number of average beedies made by the workers in the age group over 19 years of age was 530 per day.

The study revealed that more than 58% of the studying and working children were rolling more than 200 beedies per day, and more than 12% were rolling more than 400 beedies per day. Therefore it seems that in order to continue their studies they had to work till late hours in the night. (Table 19.)

Table 19. Distribution of households by state of schooling and beedies made per day

Age Range	State of schooling	Beedies made per day					Grand total
		1-200	201-400	401-600	601-800	801-1000	
10-14	Neither studying nor working						
	Studying and not working						
	Studying and working	17	19	5			41
	Working and dropped out	2	6	3	1		12
	Working and never went to school	2	14	1			17
	Total		21	39	9	1	
15-18	Neither studying nor working						
	Studying and not working						
	Studying and working	1	7	2			10
	Working and dropped out		1	7			8
	Working and never went to school		2	4		1	7
	Total		1	10	13		1
19-70	Working and dropped out	1	7	32	4		44
	Working and never went to school		27	88	37	1	153
	Total	1	34	120	41	1	197
5-9	Neither studying nor working	1					1
	Studying and working	1	2				3
	Total	2	2				4

In the age group of 10-14 years, 37% child workers rolled up to 200 beedies per day, 47.14% rolled 2001-400 beedies, 14.29% rolled 401-600 beedies and only 1.43% rolled 601-800 beedies. (Table 20).

Almost 100% of beedi making households, irrespective of the company who engaged them, reported that the beedi companies/ contractors had increased the rejection rates. According to them, on an average 150 beedies per 1000 were rejected in the name of defective beedies. Workers told that on account of these rejections, contractors/companies are looting workers by making deductions from their wages.

Moreover, the companies/contractors were demanding 200 extra beedies per 1000 beedies, without any justification. Therefore, the workers were paid for only 850 beedies (1200-200 extra beedies-150 rejected beedies) when they deposited 1200 rolled beedies. Besides, almost all beedi workers reported that the raw materials provided by companies/contractors were sufficient for only 1000 beedies, while they demanded 1200 beedies from the same amount of raw materials. If they supplied less beedies and reported shortage of raw material, deductions were made from their wages at the rate of Rs. 2 per 100 beedies for tendu leaves and Rs 1 per 100 beedies for tobacco. To escape from this cut in wages, workers often purchased tobacco and tendu leaves. Some beedi workers in Dhamna and Teherka also reported that contractors regularly asked their workers to purchase the major portion leaves themselves. In such situations workers usually went to the jungle near Prithwipur and illegally purchased tendu leaves at the rate of Rs 20 per kg, and illegally transported it to their house. The bus which carried these leaves for them to a particular destination charged about Rs. 250 per 40kg of load. The companies, probably, were committing this crime of pressuring the workers to get the tendu leaves by illegal means, so that they remained in the category of small manufacturers in the government records. The government had given the benefit of complete tax exemption to the persons manufacturing less than 20 lakh beedies per year. Since the tendu leaf business was nationalised and companies had to purchase tendu leaves from the government departments, they probably purchased far lesser amount of leaves than required for the beedies actually produced by them.

In spite of facing all these problems, the beedi workers did not get minimum rate of wages. Almost all of them reported that they were getting wages at the rate of Rs. 30 per 1000 beedies, while the existing minimum rate was Rs. 35 per 1000 beedies. If we don't consider the deductions made in terms of shortage of raw materials, the actual payment to workers for 1200 beedies was Rs. 25.50 i.e., they were paid only for 850 beedies (1200-200 extra beedies- 150 rejected beedies). Therefore, the monthly payment for a worker making 100 beedies per day was Rs. 64.50 or roughly Rs. 65. A worker making 1000 beedies per day, was getting a monthly wage of Rs. 650.

This intense economic exploitation of beedi workers was the major internal factor leading to accentuation of child labour problem in beedi industry. With such low incomes, there was no other way but to roll more beedies by engaging children.

It is evident from the table 18 that the average income of a child labour in the age group of 10-14 was Rs 222.43 per month, while the average earnings of beedi workers in the age group of more than 19 years was Rs. 371.57 per month. In 16.39 % of the families, where 2-3 child workers were engaged, the contribution of

child labour to family income was Rs . 444.86 to Rs 667.29 per month; while in the rest where only one child was engaged, the contribution of the child labour to family income was Rs. 222.43 per month.

If we look at the total income of the households in Table 21, 50% households were in the income group of 1001-2000 and 24.6% were in the income group of up to 1000. Hence, 74.6% i.e., almost three fourth of the households, were in the income group of up to Rs. 2000 per month. Only 25.3% household, were in the income group of more than Rs 2000 per month.

Lastly, the average income in different occupations (Table 22) makes clear why female workers dominated beedi industry. The average income in beedi is the lowest among all occupations in which these households were engaged. Therefore, male workers preferred occupations other than beedi making. Females preferred beedi as their occupation since they can attend their household responsibilities along with rolling beedies at home. Moreover, the women of Kori caste prefer not to go out and join the ranks of daily casual wage workers. The majority of households in our sample were drawn from the Kori caste. Most likely, this is why no female reported daily casual wage work as their occupation.

6.8. Indebtedness

The magnitude of indebtedness of the households is presented in table23. Out of total 150 beedi making households only 21.33% reported indebtedness. 46.87% of the indebted households had taken loans for running handlooms, for purchasing hand loom, or for purchasing yarn. 21.87% had taken loans for running cloth shops or vending business, 15.62% for running power loom, and 6.25% for business, sewing machine etc. Out of these indebted households, 37.5% had taken a loan of Rs 2001-5000, 25% had taken Rs. 5001-8000, and 21.8% had taken more than Rs 11000 (table23). Moreover, 84.37% of the households had taken these loans from Gramin Bank, and 15.62% from the State Bank of India.

Table 23. Distribution of households by amount of loan

Village	Debt-range	No. of indebted households
Teherka	1. <2000	0
	2. 2001-5000	5
	3. 5001-8000	2
	4. 8001-11000	0
	5. > 11000	3
Murara	0	0
Ubora	1. <200	1
	2. 2001-5000	1
	5. > 11000	2
Dhamna	2. 2001-5000	1
	3. 5001-8000	6
Patharam	2. 2001-5000	1
	5. > 11000	2
Tarichar	2. 2001-5000	3
	4. > 11000	4
Thauna	2. 2001-5000	1

6.9 Dwellings and other facilities

The findings of the survey on dwellings and other facilities in sample households can be summarized in the following statements.

Only 18% of the total households possessed “pucca” houses. 54.66% of the households had “Kachha” houses. Others had “Kachh-pucca” houses. 3.33% were living in rented one-room accommodations. 74.66% of the households had one to two rooms (32% had only one room and 42.66% had two rooms). 64.66% of the households had houses with no windows and no ventilation.

All the households reported that they had no separate room for beedi making. 52.66% of the households were not provided with electric light facility. Out of the households who had electric light facilities, the majority (85.9%) lived in three villages- Teherka, Tarichar and Ubora.

50.66% of the households were getting drinking water from wells. In three villages 100% of the households were getting drinking water from wells. Only in Teherka and Tarichar portable water supply was available. In Teherka and Tarichar workers were getting drinking water from community tap water supplies. In Ubora, all the households were getting drinking water from community hand pumps. The distance of the source of drinking water and the house was between 0-50 meters .

Only six households in Tarichar village reported that they had toilet facilities in their houses. This village has come under Nagar Panchayat, and therefore a special scheme has been implemented to provide toilet facilities.

6.10. Welfare schemes for beedi workers- Awareness and Implementation

In all the sample villages, the majority of the responses revealed that beedi workers were ignorant about the schemes meant for them, and respectively, none of them received any benefits from such welfare schemes. The primary reason behind it was lack of information. Many of them also pointed out that they have not received their identity cards and this was the reason for not getting these any benefits. However, workers with identity cards were in an equally bad situation, they were also not receiving any of benefits and were equally ignorant about such schemes. No authority has approached them to help them to claim any of these benefits.

6.11 Industrial disputes

The responses of beedi workers regarding industrial disputes in the beedi industry of the region revealed that there was no dispute with contractors/ companies on any issue in last five years, and there was no organization of beedi workers in the area.

However, we found that there were at least two unions, one associated with BMS and the another independent one. During the time of the research, the BMS union was defunct and the other union was still trying to organize itself. (It was in the process of registration.)

6.12 Current Trends in Beedi Industry

The beedi workers indicated some significant trends in the beedi industry of the region.

56% of the households reported an increase in the number of beedi workers in their family in the last five

years, while only 14.66% reported a decline. In 29.33% of the households the number of beedi workers remained the same. Out of those reporting increase in the number of beedi workers, 59.5% of the households reported an increase in the number of girl child workers, while 35.7% said this increase was due to the increase in female adult beedi workers.

All the respondents in the sample reported an increase in the number of beedi workers in their village.

According to the majority of beedi workers, there was only an insignificant increase in their family income from beedi-making. It is due to the fact, as the workers reported, that the increase in the piece rated wages paid to the beedi workers in last 5 years was only Rs. 5 per thousand beedies.

The respondent beedi workers reported that beedi workers in the area were facing the following problems: (i) Low wage rates, (ii) High rejection rate, (iii) Extra beedies are taken without making any payment, (iv) Most of the workers were not registered, (v) Travel expenses to collect raw materials and deposit beedies, (vi) Short supply of raw materials (vii) Delay in payment and (viii) health problems.

7. Summary of the Findings and Conclusion

This study was primarily concerned with the analysis of working and living conditions of child workers in the beedi industry in particular, and of beedi workers in general. Our analysis of the collected data about beedi industry in general, and child workers in particular, revealed that this important segment of workers has not received a proper attention of the scholars and policy makers. In order to fill this gap, more extensive and in-depth studies are needed. The present study is an attempt to provide information on a few aspects of the working and living conditions of beedi workers. Our study has several limitations- it was based on a small sample and was conducted in selected villages of only one block of a district, Tikamgarh, in Madhya Pradesh. This study targeted rural home workers engaged in the beedi industry.

The findings of the study revealed a high level of exploitation of workers in terms of (i) high rejection rates, (ii) demanding extra beedies over and above the production for which payment is made, (iii) insufficient supply of raw materials, and (iv) a payment of less than the existing minimum rate of wages.

The majority of the beedi workers were not registered, and had no identity cards, therefore they were unable to make a claim for the benefits of welfare schemes originally meant for them. Neither workers with identity cards were receiving benefits of any of the schemes.

The ruination of the handloom sector, the declining incomes in the powerloom sector (mainly due to slump in the cloth market and exploitation by traders), and pauperization of peasants (mainly due to rising input costs in agriculture) were important external factors responsible for the swelling ranks of beedi workers, and among them child workers.

Low incomes in the beedi industry have created a pressure on beedi-making households to roll more beedies, which they fulfilled by engaging their children to enhance the family income.

The beedi industry in this area is female dominated as against the general picture of beedi industry in Madhya Pradesh..

Child workers in the beedi industry of the area are drawn mainly from the age group of 10-14 years, and all of them are female children. In the same time, the magnitude of child labour in the age group of 5-9 years was insignificant. The majority of child workers was either studying and working or s/he was a dropout. The rate of dropout was 15.71% in case of female children from the age group of 10-14 years. No dropout was reported in the age group of 5-9 years. In the same time, the rate of dropout for male children in the age group of 10-14 years was only 1.92%. However, male children in the age group of 15-18 years reported alarmingly high dropout rates (33.3%) .

Moreover, the dropout of male children in the age group of 15-18 years was 53.3% (from the 9th-10th standard), while all female children in the age group 10-14 dropped out, and 94.4% in the age group of 10-18 year old one dropped out (up to the 8th standard).

In absolute terms, the state of schooling was relatively better in case of the present generation of workers than in case of the previous generation. Female child workers in the age group of 10-14 years, who were studying and working, represented more than 50% of the child workers in beedi industry. However, out of these 41 girls studying and working 58.53% rolled more than 200 beedies per days. As it is generally not possible to roll more than 200 beedies after and before the schooltime, it has to be assumed that they were not attending their school classes.

The average income of a child workers in the age group of 10-14 years was Rs 222.43 as against an adult beedi workers wage, which was on average Rs. 371.57. The estimated actual wage in the beedi making was Rs. 21.50 per thousand beedies. Workers who rolled 1000 beedies per day received a monthly wage of only Rs. 650.00.

References

1. Usha, S. and D. Radha Devi (1997), Casuses and Earnings of Child Labour in Beedi and Agarbathi Industries. IILE. Vol. 40, No. 4. P.849
2. Prasad, K.V. Eswara & Anuradha Prasad (1985), Beedi Workers of Central India, Mimeo National Labour Institute, New Delhi
3. Prasad, Anuradha & K.V. Eswar Prasad (1990), Home Based Workers in India, National Labour Institute, New Del
4. Purushottam, P (1983): A profile of beedi workers, Social Change XIII:1
5. Mohandas, M (1980), Beedi workers in Kerala, Conditions of life and work, EPW, Vol XV, Sep 6, PP 1519-23.
6. Government of India (1969), Report of the National Commission of Labour, Ministry of Labour
7. Government of India (1983), Report of the Survey of living and working conditions of workers in beedi industry labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour
8. Government of West Bengal (1973) Report on the Conditions of Employment and Earnings of workers engaged in Beedi Industry in the district of Murshidabad, Department of Labour.
9. Government of India (1995), Report on working and living conditions of workers in Beedi industry in India, Unorganised sector Survey (series No.22), Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour
10. Rakesh, A. R (1997), An overview on child labour, labour and Development Vol.2. No.2, pp.59
11. Devi S. Saini (1998), Combating child labour in India: Compulsory primary education in the context of Conception of the Child Rights, Labour and Development Vol.3, No 1&2, Pp.144.
12. Census of India (1991) Primary Census Abstracts.
13. Mishra, LD. (2000), Child Labour in India, Oxford, University press.
14. Rehman, M.M. and Surendra Pratap (2000), Organizing Rural Labour For Effective Participation In Development; Mimeo, VVGNLI, NOIDA.



