CHAPTER III

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METHODOLOGY
I. Need for the Study:

Though women have been working as maidservants from time immemorial, in the past they were a few working in the houses of the rich and the rulers. The twentieth century has witnessed a rapid development of the middle class, accompanied with the education and employment of women. As a result, these women are not in a position to effectively handle their traditional household tasks along with their new role as earners working outside the home. The result is that the maidservants have increased in number to take care of the household activities of such families, thus becoming a perceptible class of workers. Moreover, unlike in the past, they perform specific kinds of tasks, though the conditions of work are not well defined.

Assuming the role of earner, women find it difficult to perform both the roles as earner as well as housewife. When they cannot compromise with the former, which is formal and contractual, they have to compromise with the latter role. As a result, the housewife role is split and part of it is left to be performed by members from outside the family. This has led to the emergence of a class of maidservants who now perform a multitude of housewife role in addition to their own family role. When they perform part of the housewife role in other houses, they too face the same problem
of performing their own housewife role. However, poor as they are, they cannot afford to employ other women. Then, how do they manage? What are their problems? What are their working and living conditions?

When there are scores of studies on women working in other kinds of occupations, very few are there on the maidservants. The present study takes up the task of exploring this new class of women workers, especially their working and living conditions, thus being descriptive in nature.

II. Objectives:

As stated above, the main purpose of the present study is to have more knowledge about a section of women in society, engaged in a particular occupation, viz., domestic service, not much studied an area.

When they assume a common role as maidservants with presumably similar working conditions and when their occupation assumes a particular status in society among other occupations, the implications for an inquiry as to whether they share similar social background also assume importance. Hence, one of the objectives is to know the demographic characteristics and social background of the maidservants.

If the social background of the maidservants is similar, then it may also presuppose similar living conditions. On the one hand, the living conditions explain why these women take up employment
and, on the other, they also indicate the rewards out of their employ-
ment. Hence, it is aimed to know the living conditions of the maid-
servants.

When any occupational category is explored, it is important
to know about the nature of work, pay, working hours, leave facilities,
relations with the employer etc.. Thus, another important objective
of the present study is to know the working conditions of the maid-
servants.

Out of their employment the maidservants may also expect
to achieve something. However, given their presumably low income,
they cannot aspire much for themselves, but may seek to improve
conditions for their next generation. An attempt is made in the present
study to know the aspirations of the maidservants in terms of education
and occupation of their children.

Other objectives are to know whether they face difficulty
in performing their housewife role and how they manage it and
whether they get satisfaction in their job and if not, what the reasons
are.

When women of the better-off sections are not in a position
to perform their household tasks, they employ maidservants. Thus,
a knowledge about the women of the employer families is also important,
especially in terms of their demographic profile and their opinion
about their maidservants. This will also throw more light on the
working conditions of the maidservants. Thus the other important objectives are to know the socio-economic background of the female heads of the employer families, the reasons for employing maidservants, whether they are satisfied with their servants and if not, the reasons.

Having said this, the specific objectives of the present study are to know -

(a) the socio-economic background of maidservants
(b) the kinds of activities they perform in their work
(c) their working conditions
(d) their living conditions
(e) whether they are satisfied with their job and if not, the reasons.
(f) whether they face difficulty in performing their household tasks and how they manage it
(g) their aspirations regarding the education and employment of their children
(h) the demographic characteristics of the female heads of the employer families
(i) their reasons for employing the maidservants
(j) whether they are satisfied with their maidservants and if not, the reasons.

III. Locale of the Study:

The present study has been conducted in the city of Kolhapur which is the headquarters of Kolhapur district in Southern Maharashtra
bordering with Karnataka. The Kolhapur district lies between 15° and 17° North latitude and 73° and 74° East longitude with an area of 3,188.4 square miles. The district is bounded on the North by the district of Satara, on the West by the district of Ratnagiri, and on the South and the East by the district of Belgaum of Karnataka State.

While the district of Kolhapur has a population of nearly 30 lakhs (29,74,352 according to 1991 census), the city of Kolhapur, which is a Corporation city, has a population of more than 4 lakhs (4,05,118 according to 1991 census). Historically, industries began to develop in Kolhapur around 1925. Due to increase in irrigations facility and supply of electricity from the Koyana Hydel Project, sugar industry has become a major feature in Kolhapur. Other industries include textile, dairy, manufacture of mechanical devices and leather goods, especially footwears, and production of vegetable oil.

Kolhapur is a rapidly developing city with increasing industrialization and commercial activities. As such, the city is drawing migrants from various parts of the country as well as from the surrounding rural areas. The affluence of the middle and upper classes, coupled with the education and employment of women, has opened up domestic service as a promising area of employment for the women of the poor sections, native as well as migrant. It is in this context that the present study has been carried out.
IV. Sampling:

With the objectives mentioned earlier, it was decided to study a sample of maidservants as well as a sample of the female heads of the employer families. Thus, there are two samples in the present study.

(a) Selecting the Maidservants:

Owing to the fact that domestic service is an unorganized activity, the servants are not geographically bound to any particular area in terms of either employment or residence. Though they are supposed to be poor, presupposing that they could be found in any particular residential area, say slums, would presuppose their living conditions, thus leading to bias. To know the universe of the maidservants in the city thus becomes difficult and it requires a census of the city which is a time-consuming exercise with other difficulties. Nor can the universe be easily obtained from the employers' houses, because they too are widely scattered. While obtaining the entire universe of the maidservants in the city from the employers' houses is difficult, a sample of a limited number of maidservants, however, can be identified from the houses which probably have employed maidservants.

Thus, when the sampling frame became unknown, it was decided to study 200 maidservants from all the five major wards of the city with a quota of 40 from each. To select these 40 was to be done with accidental sampling. In each ward, different middle
and upper class residential areas, which probably would have employed maidservants, were visited and those houses employing maidservants were identified. This task was carried out until it became 40. However, it was not always 40 houses because some of the houses were employing the same maidservants. So the target was rather to identify 40 maidservants. Their visiting times to the work were noted from the employers and accordingly they were contacted.

(b) Selecting the Female Heads of the Employer Families:

With the aim to throw some more light on the subject, it was decided to study another sample of 50 female heads of the employer families. In each ward the first 10 employer households employing different servants were selected.

Thus two samples of maidservants and female heads of employer families, 200 and 50 respectively, involving two stages of sampling, first a quota and then accidental sampling, were selected for the present study.

V. Data Collection:

(a) Tool for Data Collection:

Interview schedule was used in collecting the necessary data. The schedules were prepared bearing in mind the objectives of the study for the two samples separately. One meant for the maidservants contained questions regarding their demographic characteristics, socio-economic background, family particulars, living conditions, working conditions and aspirations. The other meant for the female
heads of the employer families, contained questions regarding their demographic characteristics, socio-economic background and their opinions about their maidservants.

(b) Pretest:

The schedules were pretested among twentyfive maidservants and ten female heads of the employer families and after a few modifications they were finalised for administration. Data collection was carried out during the period of January-June, 1992.

VI. Analysis:

The collected data were coded on master sheets separately for the two samples and the necessary frequency tables were drawn out of them. Since the present study is basically descriptive, percentage was used in interpreting these frequency tables. If the number of cases involved in a particular table varied from the sample size, a footnote explaining the variation has been given right under the table marked with an asterisk.

VII. Presentation:

The thesis is presented with five chapters, viz., Introduction, Review of Literature, Methodology, Analysis and Summary. The Analysis chapter contains five sections, viz., Demographic Profile and Social Background of Domestic Servants, Living Conditions, Working Conditions, Aspirations and Female Heads of the Employer Families: A Profile and Their Opinions. The detailed chapterization is as follows:

Introduction: This chapter introduces the subject-matter of the
study and the importance of the study.

**Review of Literature:** This chapter reviews a plethora of literature concerned with women working in unorganized sector with special emphasis on domestic service.

**Methodology:** In this chapter it is explained as to what the objectives of the study are, how the samples were drawn and how data were collected and analysed.

**Analysis:** This chapter presents the collected data in tabular form with interpretation in five sections under the headings:

- **Section I:** Demographic Profile and Social Background of Maid-servants
- **Section II:** Living Conditions
- **Section III:** Working Conditions
- **Section IV:** Aspirations
- **Section V:** Female Heads of the Employer Families: A Profile and their Opinions.

**Summary:** This chapter sums up the findings from analysis and evaluates the implications of these findings.

Apart from these chapters the thesis also has two Appendices as *Interview Schedules.*