CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

We have studied the conditions of industrial women labour by considering the various aspects, viz., socio-economic profile; employer-employee relationship and working conditions, and political, social and organisational awareness. The main purpose of this study was to present a comprehensive account of the industrial women labour and to substitute actual research findings for speculative evaluation. Individual women labour was taken as a unit to analyse the condition of industrial women labour as a class.

Three areas were taken to make a comparative, but comprehensive analysis. The areas were — (i) New Okhla Industrial Estate of Metropolitan National Capital city, Delhi, (ii) Faridabad, an adjoining to Delhi and big industrial area of Haryana and, (iii) Rohtak, an industrially backward city of Haryana, bit away from Delhi.

The study, if judged on strict statistical basis, cannot be said to provide a representative picture of the condition of industrial women labour on a country-wide basis, because it is a very comprehensive study. Still, the results of the analysis do provide sufficient indication as to what are the conditions of industrial women labour in
India? But a lot remains to be analysed and studied. In this study, no particular type of industry was taken, rather various types of industries, with various scales and sizes were taken, so that a more general analysis can be made and it may be more broad representative in character. Some of the industries, where survey was conducted were electronics, electricals, medicine, watches, cotton textiles, garments, potteries, footwears etc. On the basis of various types of industries covered and different types of areas, where survey was conducted, it can be said that the results of this study are better representative of all India trend.

A majority of women labour were married. Area-wise there were wide differences. In Rohtak, there was no unmarried women worker. In Delhi the number of unmarried women workers was the highest. This showed that in Delhi, young girls were seeking job as industrial labour. The general prevalent view is that women's life aim is to get married and that too in India at a young age. In this survey, it was found that in Delhi, industrial workers were unmarried till the age of 35. One of the respondents in Delhi was vehemently opposed to the idea of marriage. This new trend was noticed particularly in Delhi. Young unmarried girls had come from as far away place as Kerala, to work here as factory labourer and staying all alone or with some girl friends.
In all the three areas surveyed, it was noticed that a big majority of industrial labour belonged to upper castes and only one-fourth belonged to scheduled castes. This is a very revealing aspect. Because the generally prevalent conception has been that upper castes do not allow their women to work outside the house and even in urban areas, where upper castes women have started working outside home, they take up only white collar jobs or what are called the jobs of high status, but in no case upper castes women are too as labour, even if their families are very poor. During this survey, the trend that emerged was entirely opposite. Though, to say that it is a representative of National trend is very difficult, yet the results compel to make a more comprehensive and wider based study at National level. The results cannot be ignored so easily.

During the survey, it was found that in Faridabad, most of the upper castes industrial women labourers were migrants from erstwhile Pakistan, who had settled in Faridabad area at the time of Partition. In the case of Rohtak a significant number belonged Jat caste, a dominating agricultural caste of the area. In Delhi, a good number of them were from Kerala and the number of young girls, seeking any means of livelihood was there. They were residing in nearby residential colonies.

Most of the women labour believed in Hindu faith, but there were differences in the three areas regarding the number of religious faith prevalent among
them. In Rohtak all were Hindus. In Faridabad, the big majority were Hindus; but there were Christians also. In case of Delhi also majority were Hindus, but there were good numbers of Christians and there were Sikhs, Muslims and even also who did not believe in any super-natural power. It is generally believed that Muslim women remained behind purdah and they do not come out of the home to work with other males. But here, Muslim women labourers were working in factories along with males. This is a new phenomenon.

In all the three areas, most of the women workers were in 9-10 standard level of education group. But there were regional differences. In Rohtak majority were uneducated. In Faridabad almost all them were educated and most of them were middle school passed and above. In Delhi, though there were some uneducated women workers, but there were some college level educated workers also. Most of the young unmarried workers were better educated than others. Almost all the Christians were educated. The level of education was no less among scheduled castes compared with upper castes. This aspect that upper castes women are highly educated did not apply here.

Majority of the industrial women labour belonged to nuclear families. this aspect is also contrary to the common belief prevalent, that most of the upper castes families are joint and those of the lower castes are
nuclear. In this study, though most of the respondents belonged to upper castes, yet they belonged to nuclear families. There were different trends in different areas also. It is generally noted that the metropolitan cities have more nuclear families than small cities and villages. But this study shows that in Rohtak, all the respondents belonged to nuclear families. The findings of the study also show that about one-fourth of the women workers were heads of their families. This is significant development in a patriarchal and traditional society of India. Another significant aspect was that in Rohtak the ratio of women labour as heads of the families was the highest of the two areas. Rohtak is not only comparatively backward industrial area, the ratio of uneducated respondents was also very high among the women workers. Another note-worthy aspect was that one-third women workers were manage their family budget and in this case also the highest ratio, where majority of them were managing their family budget was in Rohtak. It was also noted that in Rohtak, most of the women workers had enhanced their status in the family and developed self-confidence. This positive trend was noted in Rohtak, although the level of income was lowest there and it was very low compared with that of Faridabad and Delhi. In Rohtak, all those who were saving, were keeping their savings in
banks only. This shows the development of banking habits. In Delhi, a new trend of keeping their savings in illegally functioning 'Committee's' system was very prevalent. Generally, business men and shopkeepers in North Indian cities are engaged in 'Committee' system. Industrial women labour of Delhi were also found affected by this trend.

In all the areas under study, most of the workers did not feel any social discrimination. But majority of them had to do household chores for more than 3 hours a day. They did the dual role of earning and performing the domestic role of a wife, mother and doing all the domestic chores. Most of the women workers spent their leisure time mainly in gossips in all the areas. In Rohtak none of them was visiting their relatives and friends.

The findings of this study favourably compare with trends, generally, to be found throughout the country that it was the economic factor as the main consideration for industrial women labour to seek the factory job and to continue with it. A majority of the women workers got inspiration to seek job from self and this applied to almost all of them in Rohtak.

Most of the industrial women labourers wanted their children to do other job especially services. None of them wanted that their children should take job as industrial worker. Those who were having higher income were sending their children to public schools and arranging tuitions for them, so that they can make better career. This trend was
more prevalent in Faridabad, where income level was also very high.

Most of the workers were working in factories for a period of 6 to 10 years in the three areas. There were some regional disparities. In Delhi those who have been working for less than 5 years, the number was highest. This shows that young women are seeking factory job in larger numbers in Delhi. It was only in Faridabad that women workers were found to be working for 21-25 years period. This shows that there was less discrimination on the basis of sex in case of factory job and this realisation has also developed that length of working period does not necessarily reduces efficiency of women labour.

In the findings most of the industrial women labour were satisfied with the working conditions at work place and the role of supervisors were normal. They were feeling that the behaviour of all the co-workers was good. Except in Rohtak they were not feeling that the work load was heavy. But all of them were grossly exploited, on one important score that except 4 women workers and that too in Delhi only, none of them was paid double rate of wages for overtime work. Irony of the fact is that they were not aware of this exploitation. Though, most of the respondents were members of trade union, yet they were ignorant of this facility, which is legally available to all the industrial workers. This was because, inspite of the existence of unions, in
Rohtak and Faridabad, none of the women workers was active in union activities. Most of the unions were not organising study classes for workers to make them aware of their rights as industrial workers. Most of the respondents were not participating in political, social or other organisational activities. But in Delhi the unions were organising the study classes but their the membership of union was comparatively less, but even then while only four workers were getting overtime and not others, was not clear.

In short, it may be noted that women in these areas are coming out of their homes, breaking all castes, religions and other restraints, to take up any job which can make them to get economic relief. Persuasion is not required. They are willing to earn their living and community at large is no obstacle. They want to have better status in the family and society at large.