Chapter 4

Sampling

Method of Sampling, Area of Survey, Sample Frame

Since samples of small engineering goods making and garment making were drawn from unknown number of population, quota-sampling method was used for collecting sample units. In a particular day during fieldwork, every fourth household on the right side or the left side of the lanes or by-lanes depending on establishment of households was chosen. If the fourth household was not a manufacturing unit, then fifth unit was chosen. As almost all households owned or rented had one or more manufacturing units, possibility for the latter was rare.

For the purpose of the study, a sample of 250 small engineering goods-manufacturing units from the cluster of Howrah, 150 garment-making units from the cluster of Metiabruz and another 100 units from the cluster of Bankra were taken.

The cluster of small engineering goods making is under Howrah Municipal Corporation (HMC) consisting of 58 wards with a population of 950,435 (1991 census). A concentration of engineering goods production in HMC is found in 11 wards (No. 5-7, 9, 10, 19-22, 49, 50). The total population and working males in these 11 wards is 241,533 and 74,800 respectively (1991 census). The exact number of small engineering goods-making units in this cluster is difficult to count because-

1. Not all units are registered under SSI or NSIC.
2. Many units are running under a single shade.
3. The mortality rate of the units is high so that total number of units is changing constantly.
So, it is difficult to say what percentage of these engineering units is covered in this sample.

The Metiabruz cluster of garment-making units is under Calcutta Municipal Corporation. The units are concentrated in 6 wards (No. 135-141). The total population and male workers in these 6 wards are 171,746 and 44,811 respectively (1991 census).

The Bankra cluster of garment making consists of three "gram panchayats" with a population and working males of 32,040 and 8326 respectively (1991 census).

In the sample, units producing similar types of garment viz. ladies and children wears are taken from both the clusters. In Bankra, most of the garments producing units are engaged in making these types of garments. But in Metiabruz, different types of garments are produced and there is geographical distribution of different types of garments. So, in collecting data from the sample unit, areas are selected at first where concentration of ladies and children wears is high in Metiabruz and sample units are drawn from those areas.

In comparison to small engineering industries, it is more difficult to get the exact number of garment-making units in these clusters because no unit is registered under SSI or any government agency. As a result, it is difficult to say what percentage of these garment-making units is covered in this sample.

However, a rough estimate of representation of sample in the population can be made through employment aspect. Since 99% of working people are engaged in the respective industries of the cluster, we can estimate the sample representation of working people from the population.

In the small engineering industries cluster of Howrah, number of workers is 782 while number of male workers is 74,800. Since the number of female worker is nil in this
engineering cluster, about 1.04% working males are represented in the sample of engineering industry.

Similar method can be applied to the clusters of garments making where number of female workers is negligible. In the cluster of Metiabruz the number of workers in the sample is 1,009 and working male population is 44,811. Therefore, the sample of Metiabruz cluster represents 2.25% of male workers. In the cluster of Bankra, the number of workers in the sample is 684 and the working male population is 8326. Therefore, the sample of Bankra cluster represents 8.21% of male workers.

At first, informal interviews were made with the unit owners. On the basis of this informal interview, the schedule was subsequently framed. It consists of five main parts:

1. Introduction of the Individual Unit.
2. Production Process.
5. Present Business Condition with specific reference to the Problems faced by the Industry.

The data was gathered by canvassing the schedule personally by the researcher in all the clusters, which enabled qualitative discussion with the unit owners about the condition of their business.

While information obtained through the schedules served well as primary data for the study, other supplementary methods were also used. In the early stages of the study, an intensive observation of entrepreneurs was undertaken. Then informal discussion with knowledgeable persons like members of local Manufacturing Association, members of Howrah Municipal Corporation, Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Local MLAs, Officer-in-charge of local police station was held in order to add to, or clarify, through the
schedule. During interview, additional information, which was thought to be relevant, was recorded.

The fieldwork took about six months from April 2000 to September 2000. A suspicion about government agencies such as the Income Tax and Sales Tax Department made some of the entrepreneurs reluctant in offering cooperation. The usual question asked by the unit-owners was of what use the study was to them and whether it would help them get orders and financial aid from banks or governments. Their reluctance also came because some of them avoided Factories Act by employing large number of labourers and are evading tax obligations. Latter are mostly the big garment-making units of Metiabruz and Bankra. As direct interview of those owners could not be made, information about them was gathered from the persons related to them viz. subcontractors, buyers, accountants and friends. In contrast, the owners of small garment-making units and small engineering goods manufacturers of Howrah came straightforward because they themselves wanted to express their deteriorating condition of business to acquire some positive help.