CHAPTER-IX
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Many studies and researches have shown the existence of the universal phenomenon of the scavengers/sweepers/waste pickers in the world. But there are no researches and studies have examined the problems confronted by waste pickers engaged in urban areas. It is a socio-economic problem in the society. It is a social responsibility to provide full opportunity for the physical, psychological, emotional, intellectual, social, educational, economical, moral and spiritual development of these scavengers.

Scavengers are as much a part of our society as we are just that they do not have the most respected or a dignified job. It is a rag pickers pride that he is not a beggar or a thief. No, it’s not a food that they are after, but they are on a constant look out for plastics, clothes, metal pieces, boxes and a host of other things that we throw away every day.

The present study was designed to find out the socio-economic and livelihood conditions of the waste pickers in Gulbarga city. The specific objectives were to find out their social status, living arrangements, working condition, exploitation of rag pickers, economic condition, perception of their work, education and their rights etc. For the present study, Gulbarga a backward city in Karnataka was selected.
In the present study, the qualitative information obtained during the interviews, using a pre-coded questionnaire. Quantities information obtained from the structured interview schedule was edited carefully. The data were processed by SPSS package. Analysis of quantitative information consisted of producing simple frequency. In order test the hypothesis statistical technical of Chi-square is calculated. The data related to profile is presented in the form of percentage.

The major thrust of this study was to examine the nature of livelihood and social status among the scavengers in Gulbarga city. The context of this exercise was the process of modernization initiated by the independent Indian state and the continued significance of caste in everyday life of a historically marginalized caste community in an urban area. It was assumed that the institution of caste remains a significant factor affecting the life chances, especially of the marginalized caste groups. Further, it was assumed that caste continues to wield considerable influence on the socio-political and economic life of the citizens, even in modern urban India, albeit taking form and nature suitable to an urban context.

The study is focused on the livelihood conditions of scavengers/sweepers of Gulbarga city. Continuity and change are essential processes of social emancipation of the marginalized groups in India. The empirical evidences point out that the processes of modernization and urbanization have not transformed the conditions of the marginalized caste communities as expected in modern India. The realities of exclusion and marginalization of the caste groups at the bottom of social hierarchy. However, the marginalized communities have not remained
untouched by these processes. The process of social change among them has certainly been initiated. The modern context, in all its complexities has, in fact, contributed to the process of emancipation of the marginalized groups. It has also increased their vulnerabilities in social, cultural, political and economic domains.

The findings of the study illustrate that the community of the socially deprived is in transition. The transition becomes apparent when the community is seen as a unit. There is an upwardly mobile section within the community exhibiting the trends of emancipation, which are witnessed through positive changes in social, economic, political and cultural fields. Another large section of the community remains marginalized outside the 'improved environment', at the margin of urban society.

However, the upwardly mobile section of the community, experiencing change is small and not yet in a position to carry the majority of the scavengers community along. Thus, the progressive trends cannot be applied to the entire community living in the city of Gulbarga city where a large majority of them remain poor and marginalized.

Hence, generalization based on one particular section of the scavenger’s community might provide incorrect reading about the community as a whole. The "community" is taken as the unit of analysis; therefore, the complexities inherent in the life of the scavengers as a group are described as the characteristics of "community in transition and livelihood conditions". Some of these aspects are highlighted here,
One cannot overlook the fact that the street sweepers in urban areas have gained better social and economic position as compared to their counterpart in rural areas. However, it is observed that no radical movement or drastic community-based institutional change has taken place among them for social transformation. This study indicates that the scavengers as a group in the city of Gulbarga have not opted for any aggressive movement to overcome the conditions of marginalization. The trends of change observed among them in socio-economic spheres are gradual, initiated by individuals and taking a collective shape over the years.

The population of scavengers living in the city of Gulbarga belongs to the traditional caste of Holeya, Madiga and other backward communities, historically located at the bottom of social hierarchy. Their continued marginalization in economic, political and socio-cultural realms in rural areas has led a large number of them to migrate to urban areas for better opportunities. Thus, they have come along with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds to the city from different socio-cultural regions of the state.

The examination of day-to-day life of this group as a whole in the city unfolds a community of multi-layered composition based on regional, religious, relational and occupational grounds. The primordial ties like caste, kinship, region and religion draw them together, re-establishing immediate and close-knit interactions, forming "communities within community". These primordial ties often act as existential support mechanisms in alien urban environment.
However, various manifestations of different segments within the community and differences among them are apparent. In fact, the community is divided into various groupings based on geographical boundaries, regional affiliations; affiliations to different sects and religious traditions; political alliances and association with party ideologies. Along with major groupings there are certain major differences among households in the community based on income, education and occupation.

The concentration of the community in various residential localities visibly indicates the difference in various aspects of life within the community. The traditional caste-based areas are occupied by the resident scavengers/street sweepers who have been in the city for long. Those of the scheduled caste who have managed to get employment as scavengers in organized sector and in public institutions are residing in quarters provided by the government and the respective institutions. Those among the community who are economically well-off and have mostly moved into other occupations have established themselves in housing societies of the better residential localities. A large majority of the scheduled castes, mostly new migrants in the city, who live in transit or periphery settlements in slums and in poor conditions, are deprived of the basic amenities and facilities required for a decent living.

The women form an important component of the community. As part of the work force, they make significant contribution to the income of the household. Similarly, they not only take care of all the household work but also often shoulder
responsibility of taking care of the family. However, the gender equations in the community have not changed drastically. The community, which by and large believes in female deities and goddesses, does not give equal status to women. The traditional ways of living often demand that women carry out the entire household work even if they are working outside the house; they should respect men (they have to cover their head with veil) and cannot participate freely in socio-cultural activities of the community.

Nevertheless, women of the community in the city do not feel as restricted as in the rural society. A number of them, now being educated are seen exploring socio-political and economic spheres beyond the traditional roles of housewives and as sweepers.

Thus, the scavengers in the city of Gulbarga have come a long way as far as the construction of community identity is concerned. The traditional "birds view" identified them all as scavengers, lowest untouchables in caste hierarchy and perceived them as one category 'the community of scavengers'. However, a "bottom view" from the perspective of the scavengers themselves is different. The 'paternalistic' nomenclature "Harijan" addressed to all untouchable caste groups by Gandhi is being disliked and rejected by other Dalit groups today. However, a section of the scavenger’s community prefers to call themselves as "Harijans", especially those residing in slums and those who have recently migrated from rural areas. They indicate a close emotional bond with the nomenclature expressing their identity. One of the reasons for the group to
associate with the title is that they feel being recognized and accepted by figures like Gandhi. Similarly, this section claims for their "right" over the nomenclature so to say, and protest the use of it by other Dalit groups.

The study reveals that the very process of urbanization has played a significant role in establishing socially marginalized groups as scavengers. The state through its local bodies and public institutions has contributed a great deal in the process. The process indicates a tacit support of the state and the civil society. For example, the Corporation and other local bodies do not have open recruitment for employing workers for the specific work of "scavenging". They are employed only from the SC community through the policy of inheritance (compensatory employment).

Secondly, in organized as well as in informal sector the most degrading and dirty jobs, which "other ex-untouchable castes would not do", are "reserved" for the scavengers of the SC community. Similarly, the traditional occupations related to death, like post-mortem in the hospitals, disposing of the dead bodies and burial of the dead, are carried out by the scavengers of the scheduled caste only.

The following other findings of present research as bellow

1. Majority of children engaged in rag picking activity are 20-32 years age group.

2. Majority of women’s are engaged in manual scavenger activities.

3. Many of rag pickers reside in slums areas of Gulbarga city.

4. Large number of respondents belongs to Hindu religion.
5. The largest portion of scavengers belongs to Schedule Castes. (SC)
6. Larger portion of scavengers are belong to Holeya and Madiga communities.
7. Very high percent of waste picker’s mother tongue is Kannada.
8. Large number of scavengers has not attended any school.
9. Vast majority of waste pickers are illiterate.
10. Very high percentage of pickers is school drop outs.
11. Parent related factors are main reasons for drop out of scavengers.
12. Larger number of scavengers acquires no training in any skills.
13. Larger number scavengers were born in place of Gulbarga.
14. Larger number of scavengers engages in this job due to poverty.
15. Larger portion of scavengers resides tin shed house.
16. Very high percent of scavengers belong to small families.
17. Majority of scavengers come from elementary family.
18. Majority of scavengers belong to single parent family.
19. Majority of scavengers do not live with both parents.
20. Very high percent of scavengers are deprived of parental security.
21. Many of scavengers are having male siblings.
22. Majority of scavenger’s fathers got elementary education up to 5th standard.
23. Majority of scavengers mothers are either illiterate or can barely read/write.
24. Majority of scavengers fathers are engaged in Hamali work.
25. Many of scavengers father’s yearly income is below poverty line Rs. 11,000.

26. Majority of scavengers fathers are drunkards.

27. Many of scavenger’s mothers are engaged in rag picking.

28. Majority of scavengers mothers yearly income is below Rs.11,000.

29. Majority of scavenger’s total family income is Rs.20,001 to 30,000 only.

30. A vast majority of scavengers are deprived of hygienic living conditions.

31. Vast number of scavenger’s families does not have adequate assets of modern entertainments and communication facilities.

32. Higher number of scavenger’s parents is worked in childhood as a rag picker.

33. Larger number of scavengers is engaged in rag picking for a long period.

34. Nearly one third of scavengers start to work at their age of 5-7 years.

35. Very high numbers of scavengers collect the materials mainly plastics, cardboard, papers, and tin.

36. Majority of scavengers do not use any separate equipments during rag picking.

37. A small number (7.6%) of scavengers use equipments like a wooden stick during rag picking.

38. A vast majority of scavengers are picking up the wastes regularly.

39. Larger portion of scavengers work for a whole year.

40. Majority of scavengers work four to six hours daily.
41. Many of scavengers collect rags from 5 to 6 kgs per day.

42. Majority of the scavengers pickers are bought by junkyards.

43. Majority of scavengers consulted private doctor for treatment.

44. Only 8.8 percent of child rag pickers consult government hospital.

45. Many of scavengers spend themselves for medical treatment.

46. Many of scavengers do not go any private or government hospital due to lack of money.

47. 25.2 percent of waste pickers have some kind of disability.

48. Many of waste pickers are handicapped.

49. 28 percent of waste pickers are not taking bath every day.

50. Large number of scavengers takes bath in public places.

51. A vast majority of scavengers do not use soap for cleaning body and clothes.

52. Very high percent of scavengers do not drink pure drinking water.

53. A large number of scavengers use toilet in public place.

54. Sex has significant association with age at entry into scavengers.

55. There is no significant association between religion and age at entry into waste picking.

56. Caste is significantly associated with age at entry into street sweeping.

57. There is no association between the type of family and the age at entry into manual scavenger activities.
58. Structure of family is not significant associated with age at entry into waste picking.

59. There is significant association between the income categories and age at entry into scavenger activities.

60. There is significant association between sex and the type of job.

61. There is significant association between religion and the type of job.

62. Caste is significantly associated with the type of job.

63. There is significant association between level of education and the type of job.

64. There is no significant variation between type of family and the type of job.

65. There is no significant association between the structure of family and the type of job.

66. There is no significant association between the total family income and the type of job.

67. 29.6 percent of scavengers do not get meals twice every day.

68. There is significant association between the income of family and getting meals twice a day.

69. 11.2 percent of scavengers consume alcohol.

70. Majority of scavengers need good living facilities.

Waste picking should be institutionalized
➢ Waste pickers reduce the amount of waste that needs to be collected, transported and disposed of with public funds.

➢ In many cities, informal recycling is the only kind of recycling that occurs at all. It decreases the amount of virgin materials used by industry, thereby conserving natural resources and energy while reducing air and water population.

➢ To include waste picking as an evil practice among human labour.

➢ To formulate specific legislations related to scavengers.

**Suggestion for further studies**

- To conduct comparative study of male and female scavenger socio-economic conditions.
- To study the problems of women scavengers
- To conduct the study of health problems of female workers.
- To evaluate the implementation of government policies.

**CONCLUSION:-**

Waste picking is a severe form of scavengers activities. The findings show that child rag pickers are facing multivariate problems of shelter, health, security and exploitation due to their illiteracy. The main occupation of street sweeper’s family is rag picking itself. These children are found living with parents or guardians in Gulbarga city and their parents are also involved in rag picking. These children are working under unhygienic conditions just for sake of daily bread. Waste pickers have their dark future and their life is in danger by the point of view of health
degradation and polluted working environment. Even under such condition scavengers they are willing to work as waste collection and dumping activities.

According to findings, scavengers start to work at early age and for longer hours a day. Large number of child rag pickers had to leave school due to parent related factors. Consequently the scavengers remain uneducated and unskilled. It leads them to the limit of expectations and they are not aware of their future. It is loss to nation because today’s children are tomorrow’s strength for nation’s future. But if the scavenger’s future is dark, then we cannot expect nation shining.

Livelihood conditions of scavengers are faced very worst situations and also till them lived in slums area in this situations very common in urban family life. The work of waste picking is very easy to start, as they need no investment in this work. Once children are engaged in work there is no hope for them to gain education. They are deprived of education. Though these children desire to do better work alternately and if they got chance they will give this dehumanized work up, but they have no opportunity for that. The problem of scavenger is one that cannot be solved unless they are from disadvantaged families are given a way to fully enjoy their basic needs.

Government as well as other national and international non-government organizations are working and implementing various plans for child welfare in the country but it has not been successful to improve their condition. It seems that scavenger in other sector has been discouraged but in reality it is still not satisfactory.