Women constitute about half of the world's total population and about one-third of its work force. It is crystal clear that the part played by women in all spheres of life is observed to be ever increasing. All the same, it is also a matter of common knowledge that women in many countries are still subjected to oppression and inequality. Human race, in general, has made tremendous achievements during this century on various fronts but the shadows of unresolved social problems still loom large. The women in the urban informal sector of Rohtak City have been described by studying three of the occupations that they are engaged in i.e. sweepers, construction workers and maid servants. During the last couple of years great emphasis has been laid on research works concerning women's problems. Women who constitute, one half of the entire population of mankind have been utterly neglected in most of the underdeveloped and developing countries of the world. An overwhelming majority of the research studies conducted by the social scientists in India is confined to the status of women, and urban women workers in organised
and unorganised sectors in metropolitan cities. The empirical base of the present study is, of course, the informal sector in a small city in Haryana viz. Rohtak.

There are a number of informal sector segments having women workers like construction, agriculture, vegetable selling, brick-kiln, quarries and mines etc. But it is found that the problems faced by women workers as maid servants, sweepers, and construction workers are more acute and complex in nature. Further, because of the cultural compulsions women in many places are not in a position to go out for work although they possess the necessary qualifications and training. The inferior status given to them and the poor facilities offered vis-a-vis the males, contribute in making the conditions more pitiable and thus push them in the informal sector where these women workers are employed as domestic servants, scavengers, sweepers, construction workers etc. The present study is confined only to the domestic workers, sweepers and construction workers in the urban informal sector.

In all, 225 women workers, 75 from each of the
occupational category constitute the sample of this study. The basic thrust of our enquiry is to identify the difference in the pattern of socialization in a family, to discriminate between males and females. In doing that, we have taken note of women workers about family of orientation and family of procreation. On the one hand we looked at their family life and at the same time, we have analysed their occupational life i.e. wages, working hours income and other facilities which are provided to them by the employer. Data for our analysis has been restricted to and generated from within the municipal limits of Rohtak City.

The data collected for this study has been organised into seven chapters. In the first chapter, we have prepared a theoretical background on the historicity of the evolution of informal sector and discussed the theoretical exercises in the field of urban informal sector. In the second chapter, we have analysed critically the trends of research found on women in the urban informal sector. We have proceeded further to answer some of the broad but neatly built questions which are manifest in the current trends. In the third chapter, we
have presented the field of study, demographic profiles of Rohtak City and the planning of the study. In the fourth chapter, we have discussed socio-economic background of the women workers. The fifth chapter deals with the course and consequences of socialization of female workers in urban informal sector i.e. (i) sweepers, (ii) Construction workers, and (iii) Maid Servants. It is desired to see the socialization pattern and their life pattern in this chapter. Sixth chapter shows the nature and perception of working conditions of the female workers in urban informal sector in the three occupations under study. We have attempted to see their working conditions, working hours, wages and their views about these things. In the last chapter, we have summarized some of the major conclusions which emerge from the study and which have some relevance for framing a policy for the welfare of these workers.

Before I close down my preface, I must express my great sense of gratitude to my Supervisor Prof. B.K. Nagla, Head, of Deptt. of Sociology, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak for providing me with proper guidance and
encouragement to complete this study. I, indeed, owe him much. I am very much thankful to Dr. Jitender Parsad, who has given me valuable suggestions.

I am also grateful to the Department of Sociology especially the faculty members for showing keen interest and helping me in my research work.

I also acknowledge with gratitude the help that I received from the staff members of our University Library.

I am also grateful to Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak for awarding me a Ph.D. fellowship to conduct this study.

I also express my profound thanks to my respondents — Sweepers, Construction Workers and Maid Servants and to a large number of other people who helped me a lot by providing me the data for the present study.

KRISHNA NAIN

KRISHNA NAIN