CHAPTER - III

METHODOLOGY: FIELD AND PLANNING OF STUDY

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The study was conducted in the urban informal sector of Rohtak city with a view to understand the position of female workers in urban informal sector, as it exists today and the factors which affect them. The generalisations and findings are based on empirical data collected from women workers who were engaged in different occupations in the urban informal sector. It is also our objective to study, the interrelationships between the employers and workers, workers and middle men, workers and brokers. But before we study such interrelationships, it is desirable to know the historical background and the demographic character of the city of Rohtak.

The urbanization process started picking up after 1990. In 1981 percentage of urban population was 34.41 which increased to 38.44 in 1991. Before 1970, the urbanization process was slow. According to the census of 1971, new opportunities of employment got opened up in the big cities, due to the advent of better means of transportation and increased availability of electricity. So the rural people started migration to the cities.

Rohtak city has also not remained untouched from the process of urbanization. Rohtak city is the largest
commercial, educational, political and Cultural centre of the state. There is a Medical college and Hospital in this city. Rohtak is situated only 75 Km. away from the capital of the country, Delhi.

From 1950 onwards, the town has made considerable progress in the industrial sector especially in light engineering, pottery, rubber goods, food processing, paints and varnishes, cotton and textiles. The industrial expansion opened up employment avenues and attracted landless persons from villages. Women, who came here after partition started working in sewing, knitting, embroidery and lacemaking industries. And some other women, belonging to lower segments of society, started working as ragpickers, sweepers, maid servants, construction workers etc. All these workers (except the sweepers of Municipal Committee) come under the unorganised sector. The growing volume of this female working population attracted our attention towards studying their position in the urban informal sector of Rohtak City.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES:

Complete and reliable data on the informal sector
employment has been elusive. The only source of data that is available is, of course, the decennial census reports. Even in that case, conceptual variations from one census decade to the other mar the usefulness of data. Nevertheless, since we are aiming at very approximate estimates, the census figure, it is hoped will serve our purpose.

We may first begin by looking at the demographic profile of Rohtak city with a view to get some clues on the nature and extent of migration. We shall then pass on to the more specific issue of estimating the size of urban informal sector which actually amounts to an exercise of estimating employment in this sector as a proportion of the total urban employment and their interrelationships.
After partition, urban refugees came to this town to pursue their normal vocations. These displaced persons had a catalytic effect on the residents of Rohtak. With the arrival of these people, a new system and competitive spirit came into being. These people were hard working and introduced their superior skill in agriculture and trade. Their female population started the work of sewing, knitting, lace making and embroidery. Today also, all these works are done in the city by the female population of refugees with majority of such workers settled in the Gandhi Nagar (commonly known as Camp) area of the city.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

For this study, three categories of women workers in this sector were selected (1) Construction workers, (2) maid servants, (3) Sweepers. The present study attempts to find out their (i) socioeconomic background, (ii) the conditions that led them to be in these occupations rather than others, (iii) the conditions which do not facilitate women's education and instead forced them to do physical work for supplementing family income. We are also interested to know the difference in socialization pattern of these females and males during childhood, and to know
the feelings of women who were deprived and not gratified at this current stage and also the social relations they have in the family because of irregular schedule of their job which results in the neglect of their children and spouses because of their long absence from the domestic environment. We also discussed their aspirations, and the problems they face in every day life and mental and physical exploitation that they are subjected to. We would also study the nature and extent of their exploitation by the employer and the middlemen. An attempt would also be made in this study to find the ways in which the women workers are socially and economically abused in the informal sector.

This study made an attempt to collect information about several features of the informal sectors in Rohtak city's economy. The study collects information about various aspects of women's employment, especially poor women's experiment. Most studies which have been conducted in informal sector relate only to the economic situation. This study attempts to find out interpersonal relationships between their economic and social status. In present study, it is tried to know interpersonal relations between
worker and employer and their relations with middle men who provide them work. They accept these works because they are unable to get good job.

The area of my study is Rohtak City in Haryana State. Haryana is predominantly an agricultural state. It is the second most prosperous state of India, next only to Punjab. Seventy eight percent of its population is dependent on agriculture, though in recent times, industry is also fast coming up. Rohtak was selected for this study for the following reasons:

Rohtak is more or less a representative city of the state of Haryana with a large segment of population living in slum areas and working in informal sectors. Aquaintance with the language and cultural traits which make the task easier in many ways, also inspired me to select Rohtak rather than any other city of Haryana or India itself. There are several studies in unorganised sectors in metropolitan cities in different states like Bihar, west Bengal, Kerala, Gujrat, Maharashtra but there is none in this field in Haryana. Rohtak city is close to Delhi and its population is more educated than the other districts of Haryana even though most of the women are working in
unorganised sectors.

More and more people migrate to cities from villages. And being economically and educationally backward, they are unable to get employment in formal sectors. Therefore, these people start living in unauthorised colonies or Jhuggies and start working in the informal sectors.

Census enumerates Rohtak as Class-I city. Therefore, it fulfils the requirements of a city. The city has large number of professional groups i.e. the lawyers, the teachers, the doctors etc. who employ the maid servants and sweepers in their houses. So far as construction work is concerned, a great deal of the construction workers have migrated to Rohtak city because of its proximity to Delhi and U.P. Needless to say that the city is also a part of the National Capital Region. Therefore, the communication facilities and its proximity to Delhi is quite intense. Considering the features mentioned above, I decided to concentrate on Rohtak itself because it also meets all the requirements of heterogeneous characteristics which are regarded as essential features of the city culture. Rohtak is also a representative of
Haryana because its features are different from Delhi. Faridabad, and Gurgaon, have their urban character mixed with Delhi’s culture and has also become part of Delhi. Therefore, it was presumed fit to choose Rohtak.

There were several studies on informal sector in Metropolitan cities but there is a dearth of such studies in Haryana. Moreover, unorganised sector of Haryana was also not covered by the commission of self-employed women and women in the urban informal sector which was instituted in 1988. There were many informal sectors in Rohtak as Rickshapullers, Shoe shine boys, self-employed women and rag pickers. We have selected three interactive situations representing these three occupation i.e. Sweepers, Maid Servants and Construction workers.

Rohtak City is basically a trade centre for cloth, timber and food grains. As already said, with the arrival of displaced persons in Rohtak town a new system and competition spirit came into being. And since 1950's the town has made a considerable progress in industry especially in light engineering, pottery, rubber goods, food processing, paints and varnishes, cotton and textiles.
The present study is an exploratory one. The general nature of the present study is empirical. It is apparent from the beginning that all empirical research in the field must necessarily be exploratory not only because of the problems of definition but also because of the lack of adequate statistics and literature. It will not therefore, be possible to make use of hypothesis oriented research design. Data have been generated from the field which consists of urban informal sector. We have taken Rohtak city of Haryana as our universe of the study. Being close to the union territory of Delhi, there is a general awakening among the people to respond to developmental Changes. With a considerable number of workers in the urban informal sector, Rohtak is one of the best laboratories for the exploration and verification of some of our objectives of the study. Our universe was confined mainly to the municipal limits of Rohtak city. The field work data was generated during the year 1993-1994.

Before proceeding on to the data collection work, several visits to the respondents' houses were made with a view to establish rapport with them. While making
frequent visits to their houses, their life style was also observed. Besides observing their lifestyles, an insight was made about what time would be more suitable for conducting informal interviews. With this purpose, an interview guide was also prepared and their houses were visited as per their convenience, for recording the data through these interview guides.

**SAMPLING:**

To find out these objective, we have collected data from primary and secondary sources. We fixed 75 respondents from each category through purposive sampling method. We adopted snowball technique for collecting information from these workers till we got 75 respondents. This was about 15 per cent to the total universe of these workers though we have not taken any proportionate sample from different segments of the occupational groups.

**TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION:**

After having selected the sample groups, we had to use methods of data collection. For this purpose, interview schedule was used which was pretested and administered by
The researcher. Informal interviews were conducted with contractors and employers, to see the relationship between employer and workers and contractor and workers. After striking a rapport with these workers the informal interviews were conducted in a cordial atmosphere to acquire the best possible information about their perceptions. We are aware of the fact that talking to these women about their problems was not easy, especially, when they are at their work place. They can be only observed while they are working. I visited their houses for more detailed information. But when they come home after a day's hard work and become busy with their domestic chores, it was the rapport with these workers that made them talk. Due to the lower education or at times the complete illiteracy of these women, questionnaires are not suitable for such a situation. Therefore, interview schedule method for data collection was used. We also used quasi-participate observation method also on few from each category.

**TABULATION OF DATA:**

After the collection of data, code design is prepared to transfer the qualitative information into a quantitative form. The information collected from
employers, middlemen and workers, is hand tabulated which has been represented in the chapters to follow. We have not made use of any sophisticated statistical calculations because we feel that presentation of the data in this form would help other researchers to test our results and compare their findings with that of ours and this was a comprehensive theoretical explanation that could be formulated subsequently.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

No study could be termed a perfect one. It also applies to the present study. The main issues which are raised and sought to be answered in our study are: whether the women workers in the informal sector work for survival motives or women work in informal sectors in comparison of their male counterparts? How these women workers are exploited in this sector? What are the factors which push these workers in low paying occupations. Is there difference in socialization of these women right from childhood?

We have our own limitations which are partly pedagogical and partly personal and financial ones. Some of
such constraints have limited the scope of our study. Its field could also have been expanded to the neighbouring states and union territories for much wider comprehensive analysis. But we have not moved behind the frontiers of a single city. This has also limited the scope. Further intensive study of urban informal sector spread in rural areas also. In some situations, it is also found that some respondents have been partial to one or other occupations yet another constant limitation of the study which has puzzled us all the time has been somewhat secretive behaviour of workers. They tend to keep close about the sexual harassment information which pertains to their present and past works. However even with these difficulties, we have tried our best to elicit as much information as possible.

In view of these facts, we feel a study of women in the urban informal sector in a small city of Haryana like Rohtak will throw some light on few new aspects of informal sector. Further, unlike most earlier works in India, which have concentrated on some activity or aspect, our study will deal with the sociological aspects of all the activities in the urban informal sector.
Notes and References:


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