Findings and Suggestions

Major Findings

The investigator has reached to the following major findings after a deep examination of the problems of the unorganised workers engaged in retail trade of Modinagar town:

1. Maximum workers (28.2 per cent) are engaged in semi-durables while the lowest (19.9 per cent) in durables.
2. Mostly females serve in service shops whereas males in semi-durables.
3. Females do not like the job of sales girl/woman in general stores as they do not join as single female worker. If there is already one, she can be the second one. As the first woman worker, they do not prefer a general store.
4. Rurals outnumber urbans as sales workers (63 per cent to 37 per cent).
5. Majority of workers belong to nuclear families. It is true for both rural as well as urban workmen. However, the popularity of joint families is declining fast even in the rural areas of Modinagar.
6. Majority of workmen come from agriculture or allied activities.
7. The majority (90.7 per cent workers) belong to 15-39 age group.
8. Child labour is present but its incidence is declining 18/624.
9. Most of the male workers (in the age group of 15-39) earned their livelihood to support their education or in other words they wanted to be self dependent and also wanted to provide financial assistance to their families.
10. Unmarried were 58.3 per cent against 41.7 per cent married.
11. Only 4.2 per cent workers were illiterate.
12. About 10 per cent of the total were doing job to support their further education.
13. 47.4 per cent workers belong to medium size family (5-7 members).
14. Almost all the retail workers (96.8 per cent) get less than 5000 per month out of which 392 (62.8 per cent of total) get less than 3000 per month i.e. less than Rs. 100/- per day.
15. Out of such a low wages they have to spend about 1000 a month as their job expense.
16. Most of the workers spend a large part of their wages to meet out their family expenses so they have to take advance from their employers as they fail to fulfill their
family requirements. This is the basic reason due to which females and children have to work under exploitative or vulnerable conditions.

17. Respondents could not state that this is the amount they save, however, they knew about their family savings.

18. The work experience is not related to monthly wages.

19. Mobility among workers is quite high, as a shift from one shop to another involves no sacrifice. Only a very small percentage (20 per cent) has stayed more than five years.

20. Piece wage system prevails in tailoring and in beauty parlours otherwise there is time wage system.

21. Watch emporium, mobile gallery, furniture mart, cloth merchants and shoe shops pay wages higher than the rest of the employers.

22. The working hours are between 8-12 hours. There are only 34 workers who were working eight hours a day, rest all have more than eight hours.

23. There are only 8.97 per cent workers to whom the employer provides conveyance or conveyance allowance. There are 72 per cent workers who come by cycle, one per cent by scooter and motor cycle, and the rest by hired transport.

24. There is nothing like payment for overtime work despite the fact that 64 per cent work between 10-12 hours a day. There was no provision of compensatory leave.

25. In the name of incentive, out of 624, 36 workers were getting some kind of incentive. It was more popular in readymade garments, beauty parlours and mobile galleries.

26. If there is any injury during working hours at the workplace, medical aid is provided but no follow up expenses are met by the employer. The satisfactory medical aid reaches only to 4 per cent of the workers.

27. Compensation for permanent injury is not at all in practice.

28. There are 70.5 per cent workers who do not avail of even one weekly off.

29. There are no provisions for social security.

30. There were only 2.6 per cent (16 workers) who were given accommodation by the employer.

31. Provision of tea is a common feature and 410/624 get this benefit.

32. The nature of employment is irregular or temporary or seasonal in unorganised retail trade of Modinagar town.
33. The workers do not have regular employment or there is no question of job security.
34. There are 430 workers who get their payment in advance. But this advance wage payment should not be misunderstood. It is an advance against the wages of the month. Generally the workers fail to meet out their expenses for the full month and need money in between the two pay days. They request their employer to pay some amount in advance which may be adjusted with the wages of the current month. Such advance or a loan against pay is sought by 68.9 per cent of the workers.
35. Wages of the unorganised workers are deducted in case of breaking items, ignorance, late arrival at the workplace, and irresponsibility or any other mishappening with the stuff of the shop.
36. Job satisfaction level was very poor. Only 48/624 were highly satisfied.
37. Employers misbehave with a large number of salesmen and this percentage is as high as 65. They are maltreated and meet inhuman behaviour.
38. Only 17.31 per cent workers have a very good employer-employee relationship.
39. As per the recruitment system there is a general practice that employers simply ask their well known dealers or close friends or reliable employees about any suitable person in their contact, whenever there is any requirement.
40. While factors determining job preference are concerned, adequate income is the most important factor and employment security is second most important factor for determining job preference of the workers.
41. There is sex bias in wage rate determination.
42. There is a sex bias in appointment in different kinds of shops.
43. The size of family forces the female to go out to work.
44. Popularity of joint families is declining fast even in rural areas of Modinagar.
45. Distance of workplace from residence is not independent of mode of transport. It means that the hired transport is used by retail workers only when their place of work is quite far away from their residence.
46. Monthly income is not independent of work experience. It means that experience carries weight in determining income.
47. Monthly income is not independent of level of education.
48. Monthly family income is not independent of type of family.
49. Monthly family income is independent of rural-urban inhabitance.
50. Type of shops is not independent of rural-urban inhabitance. It means that there is bias in employing salesmen by rural-urban inhabitance.
51. Type of shops is not independent of type of family (nuclear or joint). It means that shopkeepers take cognizance to which type of family the salesman belongs.
52. Monthly family income is not independent of size of family.
53. Size of family is not independent of rural-urban inhabitance i.e. the common belief that rurals maintain bigger family size still holds good.
54. Level of education is not independent of marital status.
55. Level of education is not independent of sex. It leads to conclude that there is a sex bias in workers’ educational level. It is a simple observation that male workers are more educated than female workers.
56. Type of shops is not independent of level of education. It means that while appointing salesmen or women in retail trade the shopkeepers take note of the education of the candidates.
57. Monthly income is not independent of marital status.
58. Monthly savings are not independent of monthly income.
59. Monthly job expenses are independent of sex i.e. both have equal possibility of job expense.
60. Monthly job expenses are independent of marital status.
61. Monthly savings are independent of sex. It means we can not empirically substantiate the general belief that women are more frugal than men.
62. Wage system is independent of sex, i.e. employer does not take care whether it is a male or female employee for determining piece or time wage system.
63. Working hours per day are independent of sex i.e. there is no concession of working hours for female workers.
64. Payment of wages is not independent of sex.
65. Monthly income is not independent of work experience.
66. Monthly income is not independent of type of shops.

Testing of Hypotheses

A hypothesis is a claim or statement about a property of a population. Hypothesis testing is a method of making decisions using experimental data. In social science research, a result is called statistically significant if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Hypothesis tests are procedures for making rational decisions about the reality of effects. A statistic is computed from a survey or test result and is analysed to determine if
it falls within a preset acceptance region. If it does, the null hypothesis is accepted otherwise rejected. In the present study seven hypotheses have been framed and tested which are shown below:

1. **Hypothesis 1** which states that **the prevailing wage rates do not honour Minimum Wages Act, 1948**, has been tested by the researcher on comparing the observed data regarding wage rates of unorganised workers engaged in retail trade of Modinagar town with the prescribed wage rates under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. After making a comparison the researcher found that in Modinagar town 392 workers (62.8 per cent) are getting below Rs. 3000 per month. On an average they are earning less than Rs. 100 per day but according to Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the prevailing wage rate* in Uttar Pradesh is Rs. 146 for unskilled, Rs. 166 for semi-skilled and Rs. 185 for skilled labour per day (except in case of agriculture i.e. fixed at Rs. 100 per day). The data show that in Modinagar town the employers do not honour Minimum Wages Act, 1948. So, Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

2. **Hypothesis 2** states that **the employers are habitual of violating the different legal provisions protecting the retail trade workers** in Modinagar town. During the survey the researcher found that in Modinagar most of the workers do not have year round employment and even when employment is available the pay is very low. There are no rules and regulations and even the bare minimal provisions of law which are universally implemented are ignored. The working hours are more than 8 per day. Out of 624 workers 590 were working more than 8 hours a day. For a large number of workers, there was no provision of weekly off, no leave rules or compensatory leave, no compensation for injury and no provision for any form of social security.

   The survey reveals that for such workers there is no definite period of job, no agreement between the worker and the employer and no payscales as such, only an agreed wage differing from person to person is in practice.

   Where the worker is in job for a few years at the same workplace, the annual increment is negligible. The investigator found a few examples during the survey where the workers have been working for more than 10 years at the same workplace but despite passing a long period of time over there the annual increment in their wages is negligible. These examples are found in case of almost all kinds of retail trade under the study. Thus, Hypothesis 2 has been accepted.

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*Wage rates as per Minimum Wages Act, 1948 in Uttar Pradesh are given in Appendix IV.*
3. Hypothesis 3 states that **job security is the prime concern of unorganised workers** which has been tested on the basis of the responses taken from the workers about the factors responsible for the selection of a job. From the observations the investigator found that there are 394/624 workers (63.1 per cent) who put ‘employment security’ at the second position. They consider ‘adequate income’ as the most important factor or it is the prime concern for the unorganised workers. Thus, Hypothesis 3 can not be rejected as next to wages, job security is the prime concern in all types of shops. (Page no. 149)

4. Hypothesis 4 which states that **working conditions of unorganised retail trade workers are deplorable**, has been tested while taking into account the working hours per day, conveyance, payment for overtime work, incentives/ bonus/ cut/ commission on sales promotion, medical facility, compensation and provision of leave.

As per the Uttar Pradesh Dookan Aur Vanijya Adhishthan Adhiniyam, 1962, the workers working in shops and commercial establishments can work only eight hours per day. But data show that only 5.5 per cent workers are working according to the law.

There were only 56 workers (8.97 per cent) out of 624 to whom conveyance was provided by the employers either in the form of a bicycle or in the form of money for daily up-down.

The survey revealed that the workers do not get anything as overtime despite the fact that they usually work for longer hours. However, some food or breakfast is provided so that the work does not suffer.

Only 5.8 per cent workers receive incentives/ bonus/ cut/ commission on sales promotion while the other 94.2 per cent do not receive any incentive.

The survey reveals that minor medical ailment expenses are met by the shopowners but if somebody is sick for a long time no medical facility is provided by the employer. The general ethics followed in the shops are that if the worker meets some injury during working hours immediate relief is provided by sending him to the doctor but the follow up expenses are not met. There are no norms or rules for providing medical aid to the workers. Only 3.9 per cent workers (24 workers) are helped satisfactorily by their employers so far as medical aid is concerned the rest are left uncared for.

Out of 624 workers, no worker has availed of the benefit of compensation for permanent disability from his employer that means compensation to the employees is not accepted by the employers of Modinagar town.
Out of 624 workers, 440 workers (70.5 per cent) do not avail of even one weekly off. The shop owners do not follow any rule regarding leave, may be weekly off, public holiday, festival leave or sick leave. There is no such entitlement.

On the basis of the above observations the Hypothesis 4 has been accepted that the unorganised workers are facing appalling or deplorable working conditions. (Page no. 137-141)

5. Hypothesis 5 states that **there is gender bias in unorganised retail trade employment as well as in wage rates.** To test this hypothesis $\chi^2$ test has been applied to test the independence of monthly income and sex which shows that the table value of Chi-Square is 5.99 at 5% level of significance and 2 degrees of freedom. Since calculated value of Chi-Square (i.e. 10.097) is more than its table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that monthly income is not independent of sex. It means there is a sex bias in wage rate determination in the area under study.

The $\chi^2$ test has also been applied to test the independence of type of shops and sex. The investigator found that the table value of Chi-Square is 7.81 at 5% level of significance and 3 degrees of freedom. Since calculated value of Chi-Square (i.e. 94.968) is more than its table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that type of shops is not independent of sex. There is a sex bias in appointment in different kinds of shops or the shopowners take the sex of the worker as a factor while giving him/ her employment. (Page no. 151-153) Thus, Hypothesis 5 is accepted.

6. Hypothesis 6 which states that **the incidence of child labour in unorganised retail trade sector is quite high,** has been tested on the basis of empirical study. The empirical results show that in Modinagar town out of 624 workers 18 workers (2.9 per cent) are below 14 years of age. This shows that even after introducing and implementing a number of legal provisions by the Central Government, State Government or local bodies, child labour has not so far been eliminated. However, its incidence has been reduced considerably. On the basis of this fact Hypothesis 6 i.e. the incidence of child labour in unorganised retail trade sector is quite high, has been rejected. (Page no. 123)

7. To test the Hypothesis that **the unorganised retail trade female workers are not pulled by the town rather they are pushed out from their home,** $\chi^2$ test has been applied. The idea behind this test is to ascertain whether size of family forces the female to go out to work. The investigator found that calculated value of $\chi^2$ is 8.074 whereas the table value at 2 degrees of freedom and 5% level of significance is 5.99. Since calculated value of Chi-Square is more than its table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means
that size of family is not independent of sex. Is it not embarrassing that even in 21st century women workers do not come for job (this conclusion is related only to retail trade workers) by choice, rather they come by compulsions and thus, it is safe to conclude that the unorganised retail trade female workers are pushed out from their home. Where size of family is large, women workers are coming out to work in urban areas to meet out their family expenses. So, Hypothesis 7 is accepted. (Page no. 153-154)

**Suggestions**

The findings of the study as has been summarised in the foregoing pages ask for the remedial measures so that policy formulators are benefitted. Therefore the following suggestions are being made for the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the unorganised sector workers of Modinagar town:

- **Honest Implementation of Legislative Measures:** The prerequisite of honest implementation is honesty itself which is a rare quality especially in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Creating Alternative Sources of Employment:** For creating alternative employment opportunities, cottage and small scale industries are to be revived in Modinagar town. Agro-based units in rural areas may also provide job for such workers.
- **Protection of Women and Child Labourers:** Deterrent punishment system and its wide publicity alone can protect honour of women workers and will keep the employer away from the children.
- **Public Work Programmes:** Public work programmes should be for longer period of time.
- **Improving the Working Conditions:** The Labour Inspectorates need to be strengthened as well as their services be made target oriented.
- **Regulation of Hours of Work:** Enforcement of payment for overtime will be helpful in regulating working hours.
- **Proper Training for Improving the Skills of Unorganised Labourers:** There is a great need for making education at lower levels more practical and more effective in skill building. Establishing Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) at rural focal centres will have far reaching consequences than establishing degree colleges.
- **Immediate action should be taken to alleviate the specific health problems of the women and child workers. Health programmes have to have direct linkages with programmes for protected water supply, environmental sanitation and hygiene, nutrition,
education, family planning, maternity and child welfare. Only when these issues are addressed, the unorganised workers will have any guarantee of a socially just life.

- Sometimes special health *melas* should be organised in co-operation with other development agencies in unorganised workers concentration area.
- The majority of workers are not conversant with the schemes. A massive awareness generation programme, therefore, has to be launched by using media and organisations like pamphlets, brochures, handbills, audio-visual media, newspapers; local cultural groups; trade unions; educational institutions, etc. In addition, all the schemes should be recorded into audio-cassettes. The same should be played through public address system. All the mobile dispensary vehicles should be fitted with the system; and while on mobile duty, the cassettes recorded in vernacular/locally understandable dialect/language should be played.
- Unorganised workers should be encouraged to form self help groups. Mobile staff should be trained to persuade the workers to understand the need for building organisation among them for availing of various facilities offered by the Government.
- On social events and occasions when unorganised workers are likely to be present in large numbers, special publicity campaign should be organised. Local cultural groups could also be requested to take up publicity activities. Some amount of honorarium should be provided to them for such activities.
- In many districts ‘Vigilance Committees’ have been constituted to keep an eye on whether eligible workers are receiving benefits without greasing palms of middlemen. The Vigilance Committees to be effective, should be properly oriented and also be requested to undertake ‘publicity blitz’ in the respective areas. Efforts should be made to involve civil societies to help the Labour Welfare Organisation to publicise its welfare activities and also to help the eligible unemployed workers of unorganised sector.
- Civil society organisations should be persuaded to take up the task of forming SHGs. For this, the workers themselves should also be persuaded by motivation and training.
- There are still a substantial number of unorganised workers who have not received any benefit, partly due to their lack of awareness or partly due to shrewdness of the employers.
- Lastly, it is clear that the scope for improvement in efficiency and administration of the schemes is considerable and needs to be initiated without any loss of time.
There is also an obvious need for Government and international organisations, as well as NGOs, employers and women themselves, to support implementation of national laws that will eliminate gender based violence from women’s places of work – including the home.

Campaigns to stop harassment and violation of women on the way to work and at work are needed.

Illiteracy has been the major hurdle in the way of unorganised workers preventing them in knowing and understanding their worth, rights and place in society.

To sum up it may be said that the economic conditions of the retail workers in Modinagar town are deplorable. The main cause for such tragic condition is indifference of the custodians of laws and until these custodians are not improved there is no hope for the improvement of the conditions of these workers.