

CHAPTER III

M E T H O D O L O G Y

The image of women in society is fast changing, but it has been difficult to define clearly or describe the changing shape of the image. In the last forty years of independence, women have entered all fields of economic, social and political activities. Rapid industrialisation urbanisation and expansion of employment opportunities have attracted women folk to occupations both in the organised and unorganised sectors.

The present study is an attempt to throw some light on the problems of the housemaids who are employed in houses in Gandhinagar area. As this study was intended to be primarily a descriptive one, the need to develop or laydown hypotheses was not felt. As this is conceived of only a limited small sample in one town area; the study could give rise to hypothesis not really test them.

III.1 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the present study are as follows.

- 1) To ascertain the background of the housemaids and the host families.
- 2) To inquire into the occupational aspects of the housemaids.
- 3) To assess the daily chores and nature of work of housemaids.
- 4) To understand the relationship between the housemaids and the host families.
- 5) To know the relationship of the housemaids with their family members.
- 6) To study the occupational, educational and health status of the housemaids.

III.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the present study is limited to women housemaids who are employed as full-time domestic servants. Keeping in view the resources and the time limitations of the study, it was decided to interview 100 women employed in

houses in Gandhinagar colony of Gadhinglaj town in the Kolhapur district.

III.3 COVERAGE OF INFORMATION

To fulfil the objectives of this study, information regarding the background of the housemaids and the host families, occupational aspects, relationship of the housemaids with their family members, daily chores and nature of work, education, income and health aspects of the housemaids are covered.

III.4 UNIVERSE & SAMPLING

The present study was conducted in the Gandhinagar area of "Gadhinglaj town". Gadhinglaj town is a taluka place in the district of Kolhapur in Maharashtra state which has been developing very fast since ten years. The progress of this town in educational, industrial, social and political fields have contributed to overall development of the area. Due to the development of Gadhinglaj co-operative sugar factory and other small industries, the strength of the working class have been increasing rapidly. Gadhinglaj town includes people like big merchants, big landlords,

middle class and other lower class people. Large number of women are also employed in Government offices, banks, teaching and other professions. According to 1981 census the population of this town is 30,000 and the number of recorded houses with municipality are 5,000.

Gadhing^{gax}laj is a part of Gadhinglaj town and consists of people engaged in different activities. The number of families staying in this area is more than 400.

In order to study the problems of the housemaids, it would have been ideal to draw a sample from the total of such women who are employed in the Gadhinglaj area. But there were no complete and upto-date statistics regarding the employment of housemaids. It is not obligatory for any one to maintain a complete statistics covering the appointment of housemaids as no rules and regulations are followed in their appointment. Further, the housemaids are generally divided into two types, one those, who are whole timers who stay for 24 hours at their employers' house and perform all sorts of domestic chores and the others who are part timers, who stay during the day and return by the fall of darkness. Since this study focuses exclusively on the former and in the absence of any data regarding full time domestic servants, it was decided to identify the house

where full time domestics were appointed. The researcher identified 215 such houses fulfilling the above criteria in the study area. Considering the limit, 100 samples were selected on a simple random basis.

III.5 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data for the study were collected through interviews. A structural interview schedule was prepared for collecting information on matters pertaining to the study. Besides collecting information from the housemaids, the background of the host families was also collected.

Before finalising the schedule, it was pre-tested in a similar sample and based on that some questions were added and some deleted. The schedules were checked again for their efficacy and validity before actually putting to use.

The field work for the study was extended upto 3 months. Rapports were established with the respondents as well as with the host families by means of proper introduction.

Since the researcher also belongs to the native state there was no difficulty in conveying ideas and to get the facts in a clear manner. The interviews lasted for one hour in the initial stages, and depended upon the establishment of rapport and co-operation extended by different respondents.

The collected data were checked properly and were coded and transferred to a master chart. Later, tables were formulated from the master chart for detailed analysis and interpretation. The tables were explained through percentage distribution.

III.6 LIMITATIONS

The findings of this study are based on the information provided by the respondents which may have its own limitations. The objectivity of the author is naturally circumscribed by the extent of the respondents' readiness to give the real information. Hence possibility of concealing certain facts on the part of the respondents cannot be totally ruled out. Although, every possible effort had been made to collect authentic information.

The study is limited to a small segment of the housemaid population. However, environment, enlightenment, and problems are bound to be different from place to place and house to house. Hence, it may not be claimed to be the most representative sample and need not be accepted as the determinant for generalisation. The scope of the research is limited to the full time domestic servants. So the conclusions based on the study have their own limitations and can be made applicable with caution.

In spite of the above said probable limitations, the results of the investigation reveal the general trend and magnitude of the problems of the housemaids in the area under present study.