

## **CHAPTER - 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The objective of the present research was to understand the position of working women in traditional family based occupations located in so called 'slums' in Mumbai and Kolkata. For this purpose two occupations were selected, viz., fishery and pottery/clay modelling.

Generally it is seen that slums are occupied by dwellers who have either migrated from other states or from rural areas of the same state, who mainly earn their livelihood from various kinds of informal sector jobs available in cities. However, if these areas are visited and studied, it can be found that there are a large number of dwellers who are not migrants and they earn their livelihood not from any upcoming industry or occupation which is the by-product of city life. They are either the original inhabitants of the land or are traditional family based occupation workers who have been forced to migrate from their original land due to unavoidable circumstances. They have settled in these slums out of necessity and have become a part of the community-based occupations. They pursue the same occupation that they used to do in their places of origin. Many characteristics of their work match those of the so called informal sector jobs, yet they do not enjoy the status given to such jobs. These traditional workers fall under the category of 'self-employment', which can be of two types -- home-based and non-home-based.

#### **6.2 Main areas of comparison**

This research is a comparative analysis of women workers in the two selected traditional occupations in two different cities in selected locations. The comparisons have been done under the following heads:

- Migrant traditional worker and original inhabitant traditional workers
- Home based and non-home based workers
- Comparison based on different geographical, cultural, political and economic contexts
- Paid and unpaid women workers

To repeat, the two selected cities are Mumbai and Kolkata and the two traditional occupations selected were fishery (non-home based) and pottery/clay modelling (home-based).

### 6.3 Main focus and observations of the research

This section will summarize the chapters with a view to pin-point the main deliverables of the current research. As noted, most of the work is empirical in nature and the findings are based on the researchers own findings which were quantified and tabulated.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of this dissertation and the reasons behind the selection of the topic for this present research. 'Power' is an important aspect of social relations and society is normally based on an imperfect balance of power. Empowerment is the process of gaining power, i.e, acquiring the capacity to make choices and influence others. One of the best examples of power disequilibrium in current social relations is gender relations. According to Margaret Wheatley, a person can be powerful if he has acquired a superior position in society; his issues are on top of the agenda for redressal, and he has the capacity to fight for his rights.<sup>1</sup> Various national and international organizations have come up with empowerment plans for women both in the public and private spheres, for instance, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), Self –Employed Women's Association (SEWA), International Labour Organization (ILO) etc. Earlier taboos on women regarding working in the public sphere, earning money, becoming visible in the society have largely been countered through these and other platforms as well as by the determination of women activists themselves. Yet it cannot be denied that women still face challenges, especially in informal work sector. There are many sub-categories and variations under informal sector work and there are innumerable numbers of workers working in this sector. This creates difficulties in organizing such workers.

There is no universal definition to describe informal sector work, which also includes unpaid helpers whose numbers go unrecorded. Whatever statistical data is available on these informal sector workers, therefore, are inaccurate. The current thesis focuses on some categories of informal sector women workers both visible and invisible, and pin-points a unique category of workers who have been an important segment of the market since early times and yet been officially neglected. These are the traditional family based occupation workers. They are caste based workers who stay in clusters or groups within the same locality. For them the family is the unit of production, either based at home or

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret J. Wheatley is a writer and management consultant who studies organizational behavior. Her approach includes systems thinking, theories of change, chaos theory, leadership and the learning organization: particularly its capacity to self-organize. For further reading access <http://www.margaretwheatley.com/>; Also read her book, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, Berrett-Koehler, Inc., San Francisco, 2005

outside; they mainly depend on family members for the running of their businesses. These occupations are closely connected to the management of common property resources like grazing land, water resources, fish, clay, etc. It should be noted that although these resources are available in ample quantities in rural areas and mainly rural workers are engaged in their management, they exist in big metropolises where urbanization and globalization created conditions that are very different from rural areas. Two occupations based on such common property resources have been selected for analysis for the current research, i.e., fishery and pottery/clay modelling. An important characteristic of these occupations is that women play an important role in the smooth flow of these occupations, mainly through their unpaid services. So, if Gender Inequality Index (GII) is used to measure the rate of women's participation in the labour market, the result would show high significance. Simple participation, however, cannot measure the hidden gender discrimination is present in these occupations, which includes gender bias, gendered division of labour, utilizing the unpaid services of wives, daughters and daughter-in-laws in the business, etc.

Amartya Sen's capability approach gives special emphasis on the unpaid nature of women's work.<sup>2</sup> According to him, agency formation and including women in them can empower women to fight against the three gender biases that he thinks the society suffers from -- male bread earner bias (keeping women financially dependent on men), commodification bias (ignoring women's unpaid labour) and deflationary bias (cutting public expenditure on basic services). Women's work is often considered as secondary and subsidiary in nature. Some other academicians have also contributed to the literature of this subject through theorization and to the overall development of the women workers through their activities. Maria Mies, Martha Nussbaum and Sara Longwe are among the many writers whose contributions are noteworthy in this area. Some modern Indian feminist scholars should also be mentioned, especially the contributions of Nirmala Banerjee, Samita Sen, asodhara Bagchi, Vina Mazumdar, Indrani Mazumdar etc. However, it should be noted that the present research has tried to focus on a more invisible side of the informal sector women workers in India, i.e., traditional family based workers; their position and role have not been studied or analysed till date. Various literature is available in libraries on fishery as a whole, women in marine fishery and ceramic pottery. However, works on women workers in inland fishery especially in

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<sup>2</sup>Bina Agarwal, Jane Humphries, Ingrid Robeyns, "Exploring the Challenges of Amartya Sen's Work and Ideas – An Introduction" Bina Agarwal, Jane Humphries, Ingrid Robeyns eds., *Capabilities, Freedom and Equality – Amartya Sen's Work from a Gender Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, India; 2006, Chapter 1, p 6

wetland fishery or clay based pottery are rarely to be found. The present thesis has focused on these ignored women workers and has tried to do a comparative analysis of the position of the working women in marine and inland fishery, clay pottery and clay modelling, and further, a cross-tabulation and comparison between women workers in pottery and fishery was done.

Due to the lack of adequate literature on the above mentioned areas, emphasis was given by the researcher on survey data. Various methodologies were combined to get the best possible information from the not so educated or empowered women. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied like Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), aggregate data analysis, oral history, participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews, and interview data analysis through statistical tools and software. Basic variables and hypotheses were set for doing the current research. The total number of interviewees was 373, out of which 300 were women respondents, selected from the sample areas of the two cities. Selection of the sample areas and population was done on the basis of snowball sampling, convenience sampling, judgemental sampling and quota sampling. All these sampling techniques were used as the sample population selected was not easily accessible, approachable and were mainly illiterate. Moreover, as no previous work has been done on them, no previous reference could be used for selection. For qualitative analysis, the researcher relied mainly on in-depth interviews done by the researcher with officials of the municipal bodies of the two cities and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) that work for the betterment of the women workers in the selected localities, like Tapuriaghata Nari Unnyan Kendra (TNUK) in Tapuriaghata, Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA) in Kumbharwada, as well as with informants from the localities. The data collected was substantiated by quantitative data gathered through extensive surveys, and by testing their significance through statistical tools.

The major research deliverables, derived at two levels of analysis, can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Whether women possess material assets and have the capacity to control their circumstances, are educated, and have the will to perform better in the work sphere.
- 2) The Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) was also used to judge the level of economic participation (which implies the professional position that the women workers hold) and power over the economy (through an analysis of the income gaps).

3) Gender Inequality Index (GII) was used to calculate the level of inequality in the labour market by analysing the extent and type of women's participation in the work force of the two identified occupations.

Further, Amartya Sen's capability approach was applied to judge:

- a. the level of interdependencies and power relations between the men and women of these two identified occupations within the household and the worksphere;
  - b. whether democratic norms (in the sense that both genders are equally placed in the occupations) are followed;
- 4) Attention was paid to see if the three gender biases, mentioned earlier, are present in the two occupations;
- 5) whether the presence of agencies or membership of the women workers in such agencies, bring any difference to their socio-economic position;
- 6) whether the collaborative/efforts of the public and private sectors enhance the position of the women workers.
- 7) two specific cities were chosen to examine whether cultural and political differences bring change in the workforce and their attitude towards work.

The research focussed on these issues and questions to gauge the work conditions of the women workers in two family based traditional occupations.

#### **6.4 Fishery as a traditional occupation in India with special reference to the role of women in the fishery industry in India -- Case Studies of Marine Fishery in Mumbai and Inland Fishery in Kolkata**

Chapter 2 entitled 'Fishery as a traditional occupation in India with special reference to the role of women in the fishery industry in India -- Case Studies of Marine Fishery in Mumbai and Inland Fishery in Kolkata', deals in detail with the tradition, historical background, geographical location, population structures, culture, myths, nature of fishing and the involvement and position of the fisher women of the fishing villages in Mumbai and Kolkata.

Fishery, which is based on common property resources, is a traditional occupation in India; the people have been traditionally attached to the land for generations; they appear to worship the water. India, having a long coastline on three sides, many rivers and water bodies, obviously has given birth to a thriving fishery industry of all kinds. There is a combination of inland and marine fishery, and in each the involvement of the women

differs. To assess their position and to make a comparison between the two, marine fishery of Mumbai and inland fishery of Kolkata were selected.

#### **6.4.1 Fishery industry in Mumbai and role of women in marine fishery**

Mumbai is located on the west coast bounded by the Arabian Sea, and has a long coastline. The original fisher-folks are known as *Kolis*. The places they reside in are known as *Koliwadas*. Mumbai has a special place in the history of fishery in Maharashtra; it is a proper urban location, but it still continues with the tradition of the fisher-folk who were its original inhabitants. The *Kolis* have a distinct dress, culture, language, food and lifestyle. They still, in this world of fast growing modernization, believe in retaining traditionality, which makes them unique. In Mumbai, the fishery industry involves three major phases - production (primary production involving production of fresh fish and secondary production which means production of dry fish), marketing and distribution; and from here the gender division of labour emanates. Only primary production is the domain of the men, where the women are not allowed to interfere. In the other spheres, the women play the primary role. To study in detail the entire working of the fishery industry in Mumbai and the involvement of the women in them, three fishing villages (though termed as slums by municipal corporations) were selected for the current study - Versova, Mahim and Khar Danda., catering to more wholesale business, a larger retail business and big fish processing work respectively. From a study of the three locations, the main observations drawn by the researcher are as follows:

1. Culture and tradition continue to dominate the occupation. Catching fish, dragging and carrying nets on shoulders, pulling heavy weights, plying boats in high tides and stormy weather, require the strong physique of men. So fishing is the domain of men. *Koli* women possess a strong bargaining acumen, so they are naturally more involved in the selling and marketing of fish.
2. Previously the *Koli* women were equally involved in the wholesale and retail sale of fish and the drying of fish. Now, the latter has become the domain of migrant fisherwomen who mostly hail from other states.
3. The fishing villages which have large landing centres, carry out all kinds of fishing activities by the shore; wholesale fishing is largely prevalent.
4. Fish markets are of two kinds -- registered and unregistered (roadside markets). In registered markets, only the *Koli* women can sit and sell fish; the space occupied by

the *Koli* women in the fish market gets transferred among family members only. No new membership is given, nor are any non-*Kolis* allowed to use the space. This is mainly to protect the occupation from outside intruders.

5. Traditionally, the *Koli* women never go out for fish selling with head loads. It is the migrant women who sell fish or head loads.
6. The non-*Kolis* mainly hail from Uttar Pradesh, Southern India, Gujarat and West Bengal.
7. The smaller boats are gradually being replaced by big trawlers which sail for longer lengths of time and go far off from the coast to catch fish from the deeper sea. The fish supply near the coast is decreasing due to over fishing. This has increased the cost of fishing and impacted the profit margin. Unable to maintain big trawlers, many *Kolis* are selling their boats to outsiders.
8. For the welfare of the fisher-folk of these fishing villages, various fishery cooperatives have been formed. However, the women fisher-folk are not allowed to become members.
9. The daily schedule and activities of the fisherwomen are very hectic. They are very hard working. Their day starts in the early morning hours and ends late at night. They are involved in the management of their households as well as their work sphere. The *Koli* men are apparently lazy and indulge themselves more in drinking and other bad habits.
10. No NGO is involved in the welfare of the *Koli* women nor has any political party come to their support.
11. The *Kolis*, inspite of being the original inhabitants of Mumbai, feel like outsiders, due to the lack of any proper support from the government. The marketplaces are in disaray. Very few renovation work has been done.
12. There are some trade unions working in their favour for the betterment of the *Koli* women workers, like the *Maharashtra Macchimar Kruti Samiti*, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), and Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).
13. The women rely more on their own unity and strength for redressal of all kinds of issues and grievances, rather than on the police or the cooperatives.
14. Unity, community living and the hardworking nature of the *Koli* women makes them unique and this has led them to survive with their traditional practices in the contemporary world.

15. There is high resistance from the urban society as well as from the newer generations, who are not very willing to carry on the traditional occupation of trading in fish.

#### **6.4.2 Fishery in Kolkata and the role of women in inland fishery**

In Kolkata, the situation appears to be totally different. The fishery is of an inland variety as Kolkata does not have any coastline. Inland fisheries exist in the wetlands of East Kolkata, where women are involved in subsidiary activities. To study the nature of the activities of the women fisher-folk in Kolkata, some representative fishing villages were selected, i.e., registered *bheris*, unregistered *bheris* and fish processing units (FPU). The slums selected for this research are Kulipara and Durgabhashan for Durgabhashan *Bheri*, Chhayanabhi for Boro Chhayanabhi *Bheri*, Naobhanga for 4 No. *Bheri*, Thakurdari-Polenite Slum and *bheri*, Tapuriaghata for Captain *Bheri* and Khashmahal for a fish processing unit.

In Kolkata, women also perform the work of ornamental fish culture with aid from the Fisheries Department, Government of West Bengal. Women representing one cooperative society for ornamental fish culture, called Matsya Kanya Rangin Mach Chash Mahila Samabay Samiti Ltd, were also interviewed. Combining the study of the above mentioned selected areas and units of analysis, the following observations can be made:

1. The wetlands are an area of international importance and have been selected as the Ramsar site of importance in regard to ecological balance.<sup>3</sup> Here, in contrast to Mumbai, which is characterized by marine fishing, pisciculture is practiced. In Mumbai, capture fishery is predominant. Pisciculture requires lot of care in respect of pond preparation, cleanliness of the adjacent *bheri* areas, and other kinds of subsidiary work. These are the domains of the fisherwomen of the localities. The males are involved in selling and marketing, which is not the custom in Mumbai.
2. Whatever research exists on the wetlands is mainly focused on ecology. Hardly any detailed work has been done on women workers in the area, especially their role in the inland fishery industry.

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<sup>3</sup> 'The Convention on Wetlands' (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) -- called the "Ramsar Convention" -- is an intergovernmental treaty that embodies the commitments of its member countries to maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and plan for the "wise use", or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories. Unlike the other global environmental conventions, Ramsar is not affiliated with the United Nations system of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, but it works very closely with the other MEAs and is a full partner among the "biodiversity-related cluster" of treaties and agreements.' Details on the Ramsar Convention are available at the official website of the Ramsar Convention [http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-about-ramsar/main/ramsar/1-36%5E7687\\_4000\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-about-ramsar/main/ramsar/1-36%5E7687_4000_0__) accessed on 28.08.2014



3. East Kolkata Wetland (EKW) is an extensive area, where one section is closer to the city, whereas another part is in a remote area away from the heart of city, without much communication facility or roadways. The *bheri* areas have been selected in such a manner that both the sections are represented so that the problems/roles of women in both parts are highlighted.
4. These areas are vulnerable to political pressures and *goondalism*, which obstructs their development. The dwellers are afraid to voice their demands or to have any form of gathering which may be considered as a political gathering.
5. The women feel insecure to move alone at night. The *Koli* women are very strong natured and opinionated, so much so that their men feel afraid to talk to them.
6. Life becomes worse during the rainy season when the *kutchra* roads become slippery and the area becomes isolated. The houses are of inferior conditions than the counterparts in Mumbai. Financially also, the women here are weaker than their Mumbai counterparts.
7. The women who are unregistered members of any *bheri* have to depend on the whims of men for availability of work. The condition is worse for women who live in the remote areas. They cannot move outside for work, nor do they have much work in the *bheris*. The kind of work available to them is highly seasonal. No governmental initiatives reach them, nor have any NGOs come forward to help them. Some informal credit societies (chit fund societies) once came to the area and promised to double their savings. However, the women were cheated of their money, and the society vanished without returning their, let alone double it.
8. There is one trade union known as the *Bheri Mazdoor Union* which is there to help the fishermen only; and the West Bengal State Fishermen's Cooperative Federation Ltd. has no future plans for the benefit of the fisherwomen of the locality.
9. There is one NGO named South Asian Forum for Environment (SAFE) which works for the benefit of the women workers of the area, but its reach has not extended to the remote areas. However, another NGO named Tapuriaghata Nari Unnayan Kendra (TNUK) is religiously looks after the betterment and overall development of the fisherwomen of only one location, i.e., Tapuriaghata. These NGOs are imparting training to the women so that they can be empowered both socially and financially. Also TNUK attempts to redress the problems of the local women, and conducts classes to impart non-formal and adult education. Tapuriaghata is the only place

where some female fish sellers are found. The presence of these NGOs are not present in Mumbai.

10. Daily wage earning falls below the standard minimum wage rate in the remote areas. The women can manage to earn hardly Rs.100 per day, which is too meagre to run a family. In Mumbai, the women earn more than this and in most cases run the entire family.
11. The conditions are a little better for the women workers of registered *bheris*. Registered *bheris* are mainly situated near the city. Problems here are comparatively fewer. The women are either members of these *bheris*, or have access to outside work like housekeeping jobs in adjacent offices and malls, maids in residences etc.
12. The women are allowed to become members of these *bheris* on a secondary basis when there is no active or living male member available in the family.
13. There is, however, equal pay for both male and female workers in the registered cooperative *bheris*. But the payment structure varies with *bheris*.
14. Mediclaim and LIC (life insurance) facilities are available only for the male members.
15. The work pressure on the women fisher-folk in Kolkata is far less when compared to Mumbai. The women here are less labourious. Moreover, work opportunities are available more in Mumbai for the women.
16. Fish processing work is done by the women in the fish processing units (FPUs). This work is quite different from what fish processors in Mumbai do. In Mumbai, the women work in open areas under the sun. In Kolkata, the women work inside the units, and their main job entails beheading the fish. They are mainly residential workers paid on a per day basis. In Mumbai, as mentioned earlier, the supply of work depends on the *Koli* wholesalers, and their earning depends on the quantity of fish they can process as a family unit. The work they do is not on an individual basis, whereas in the FPU's the women work on an individual basis. In both the cities, however, the women are mainly migrants; local women are also deployed if necessary.
17. In the FPU's, there is a gendered division of labour; the job of beheading the fish rests on the women and the living and working conditions are very poor for them.
18. Here the fishing areas are divided on the basis of registered and unregistered type. In Mumbai, there is no such division. There it is found the division. There it is found that the division is mainly based on the kind of work women perform. There are

varieties of sub-categories under fishery and each selected location in Mumbai is famous for some kind of work. In Kolkata, however, the nature of work are more or less same. The main issue is the availability of work.

### **6.5 Pottery, Idol Making and Clay Modelling as a traditional family based occupation in India with special reference to the involvement of Women: Case Studies of Mumbai and Kolkata**

Chapter 3, entitled 'Pottery, Idol Making and Clay Modelling as a traditional family based occupation in India with special reference to the involvement of Women: Case Studies of Mumbai and Kolkata', focuses on another traditional family based occupation, that is pottery/clay modelling, with special emphasis on the role of women working in this profession.

#### **6.5.1 Pottery in a Mumbai and the role of women in this profession**

Some of the observations of the researcher while collecting material in Mumbai on the profession mentioned above, are summarised below:

1. India , being a land of many gods and goddesses that are worshipped via images many of which are made of clay, and where clay images are ritually worshipped periodically, has a thriving market for clay modellers.
2. Earthen pots, cups, utensils, lamps, decorative items, images, etc. are items of daily use even today, and are thus creating a continued market for potters.
3. Artisans, who have an inclination towards the making of these products, are passionate about their art and profession. They have been traditionally attached to these occupations for generations.
4. The community they belong to is known as *Prajapati Kumbhars* in Mumbai.
5. They work as family units and their residence becomes their workshop. This mixing of residence and workshop, leads to more involvement of women, who can easily be involved in the private and public spheres, without the one obstructing the other.
6. Transmission of the skills of the artisans from one generation to the next and job inheritance are two important characteristics which helps the artisans to continue their traditional occupation.
7. The roles of men and women in a potter's household are different, and the occupation shows signs of strict gender divisions.

8. In the potter's families, the involvement of women, however, is highly encouraged; the occupation cannot survive without their support, yet their contributions are unrecognised and are not calculated by the society or officially documented.
9. Pottery and clay modelling have different variations of work. In an attempt to cover the important ones, locations were selected from the two cities, so that a broad comparison could be attempted. Since in Mumbai, there is only one potter's colony, Kumbharwada, it was chosen for analysis. In Kolkata, three locations were selected: Kumartuli (for big clay images, decorative artistic work), Dakshindari (for small images and decorative items) and Ultadanga (for clay pots and cups).
10. Pottery in Mumbai is not indigenous in nature as the local people are not engaged in this occupation. Migrants from neighbouring Gujarat came to Mumbai in the early 19th century, settled there and continued with their traditional art of making pottery. They formed their own community and brought in more of their relatives from their native lands. They named the land they acquired during that time as Kumbharwada. This is in Dharavi, one of the largest slums in Asia.
11. Clay pot producing activity is carried on within the house, on the floor, and just outside their houses on the veranda. A wooden loft is built overhead for members to sleep and eat. They display their products on the rooftops which are also used for drying purposes. Every house accommodates a potter's wheel, and a bunch of houses share a big potter's kiln.
12. They are very much community bound; marriages take place within the community.
13. The area may be dirty due to clay lying all around, but the houses are clean inside.
14. The area is divided into various *wadis* or lanes and in each lane there is a Patel (elderly member as head) who governs, and takes care of many of the problems, and issues of the locality. The *Kumbhars* rely more on the *Patels* than on the police force for grievance redressal.
15. The work schedule of the women is strenuous, as they have to manage both the household as well as be part of the business. Pottery making is a lengthy and labourious process. The most painful is the process of preparing the clay, a work that is done by the women. Preparation requires removal of stones, pieces of wood, glass etc. from the clay, stamping the clay underfoot to make it smooth, and then making a clean *pinda* which can be put on the wheel for pot making. The cleaner the *pinda*, the less is the percentage of breakage while the pots are baking. Along with preparing clay, the other kinds of jobs the women are involved in are carrying of the finished

products to sunny areas for drying, dealing with customers who come to the house for buying, negotiating prices with them, colouring, decorating the products, dice work and also selling the products on head loads and by the roadside when necessary.

16. The work the women do are on an unpaid basis, and they do not expect to be paid or to draw any remuneration from what they consider to be their family business.
17. The men are involved only in pot making on the wheel and managing stores if they happen to possess one.
18. There is smoke everywhere in Kumbharwada; the residents adjust themselves to this choking smoke.
19. The problem of storage and marketing affects potters the most.
20. Redevelopers also have an eye on their land which they want to take away from the *Kumbhars* either for building shopping malls or high rise buildings.
21. Community bonding, and love for their occupation have united the potters and has helped them to retain their traditional occupation in this modernising world.
22. There are some agencies and organisations for the welfare of the *Kumbhars*. A *Prajapati Kumbhar Cooperative Society* is there for providing some kind of financial and moral help to the potters. It also helps in providing raw materials at a cheaper rate, providing space to keep the extra raw materials etc.; however, there are no women members in this cooperative society, and despite prolonged demands made by the women potters, their entry has been restricted. This indicates the patriarchal nature of the potter community. Moreover, there is one *Kalyan Kendra*, a welfare association which runs a nursery school, a dispensary, a recreation centre and a women's vocational class.
23. Among all the agencies, the contribution of a NGO named SNEHA is maximum. With its will and zeal to improve the living and working conditions of the women of Kumbharwada, it has created *Mahila Mandalas* and *bachat* committees for the women of the area; it provides training in tailoring, cooking and painting so that they get some kind of job in the outside world. It also provide financial help to the needy for starting a business. Most importantly, it helps the women in getting empowered from within. The women have now created their own association, organise regular meetings, help each other in times of crisis, and fight against patriarchal domination. They have gained enough confidence to approach the police for grievance redressal.

They arrange picnics and excursions. Thus though they do not earn money from their family based pottery business, they are finding new avenues to earn money.

24. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), agencies of the government of India, are supposed to look after the potter class and promote its development. But the projects and initiatives of the government bodies are all targeted at rural artisans.

### **6.5.2 Pottery and Clay Modelling in Kolkata and the role of women in this industry**

Some observations of the researcher regarding pottery and clay modelling in Kolkata are summarised below:

1. Clay image making is inextricably related to the culture of Kolkata, where ritual image worship is a norm from the earliest days of the city.
2. Clay workers are popularly called *mritshilpis* and community wise they are known as *Kumhors*. The most common surname they have is *Pal*.
3. Kumartuli is the oldest potter's colony in Kolkata and it is situated on the banks of the River Ganga in North Kolkata.
4. Kumartuli is a hub and revered hotspot for traditional Indian pottery, clay image making, doll makers etc.
5. The area has a combination of both original inhabitants and migrants from erstwhile East Bengal. Two separate cooperative societies exist catering to the two groups.
6. The houses are mainly semi-*pucca* and *pucca* types, and the area does not resemble a slum; yet it is enlisted under the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) as a slum.
7. Image making is a labourious process and requires both time and skill to ensure maximum perfection. Moreover, it is not the result of individual work, but requires the support of different types of labourers to complete the work. There are also different seasons for work and each season is related to the worship of a particular god or goddess.
8. Making of these images not only involves clay work but also various other kinds of related work like *shola* and ornament work, painting, decorating, plaster of Paris work etc.
9. It is in this area that women artists are involved; they do all these kinds of work starting with dressing and decorating the images, putting ornaments, painting and doing all the finishing work before an image is supplied to the customer. They are

involved by the main male artists to save and curtail the cost of production by not employing any outside labour.

10. However, there are some individual women who make big sized images in Kumartuli; they have joined this business out of necessity, due to the death of their fathers, or husbands etc. All the women interviewed, learnt the work of image making from their childhood. But generally, they are not allowed to do the work nor are they encouraged to join the business. Only when the family lacks a male artist to continue their traditional business or run the family, the women come to the forefront.
11. The women artists, who run their own business, face a lot of challenges from society and their male counterparts. Competition is high. They have to manage both their business and their household single handedly. They do not have much funds to employ outside labour for the most part and are therefore forced to involve their little children, if any, in the business. And in this way, the tradition of clay image making continues.
12. The artists, including the women, face a problem of funds, because of the unavailability of bank loans. However, nowadays, some artist cards are being issued by municipal bodies for identification which helps them avail of some loans. The cooperatives provide hardly any financial help.
13. The rich artists are all male and therefore, not much movement for fund arrangement could be discerned by the researcher. The women, if they have to run their own business, do so with family money.
14. Moreover, due to the lack of any organised marketing network and the fixed price of products, the women who do not have access to the outside world and internet facilities, suffer a lot and fail to compete with the power and influence of their male counterparts.
15. Party conflicts and lack of unions hamper their development.
16. 17 No. Dakshindari Pal Para is another potter's colony situated in the eastern part of Kolkata on V.I.P. Road; this is comprised of migrants coming from erstwhile East Bengal. They were also potters in their original settlements, and continue their profession in their new location.
17. Here, too, the business mainly thrives because of women artisans who are expert in making small idols using dice.
18. Because of a lack of space, the artisans restrict themselves to small idols.

19. The houses are all shanty types, with almost no houses having *pucca* construction.
20. The women of Dakshindari Pal Para are mainly the sole workers and not subsidiary workers. They manage the entire business. Their men have either died or are not active or are into other businesses or work.
21. Many of the males continue their pottery business in an adjacent rural area. This is to manage some kind of funds from the government because there are governmental programmes to support rural artisans in the rural areas. They have bought land and continue their business using Dakshindari as their place of residence and doing the marketing work as this place is convenient for making contacts. They get orders here and produce in the outskirts. This is also done because of a lack of space. In the outskirts, they make big idols and big decorative items.
22. The women stay in Dakshindari only, managing the household and their small businesses.
23. The women here, who do not have the money to do their own business, work under others in the locality as piece-rate workers or daily wage earners, or contractual workers.
24. Harish Neogy Road, Ultadanga, is another example of a different type of potter's colony in Kolkata. Here, unlike clay image making, pottery is done.
25. The nature of the job and the characteristics of the population are more or less similar to that of Kumbharwada. They are also *Prajapatis* but hail from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In Kumbharwada, the *Prajapatis* migrated from Gujarat.
26. The financial and social conditions are poorer than in Kumbharwada; there is no involvement of any NGO.
27. There is one *Kumbhakar* cooperative which takes care of the community's affairs and businesses. But no woman is a member of this cooperative and women do not derive any benefit from it, which is also similar in Kumbharwada.
28. The difference between the two localities is that in Ultadanga, the main business thrives on making small items like earthen cups, utensils and decorative items. This is mainly because they suffer from a lack of space, and being migrants and illegal encroachers on land, the potters are not given any benefit by the government, whereas in Kumbharwada big earthen items are produced.
29. The women here are also unpaid helpers to the male members of their families, trying to help and assist in all kinds of subsidiary work involved in the business. They only go out of their homes in the context of the business during festivals to sell



their products by the roadside, which the men do not do feeling that it is a derogatory job.

30. The irony is that the women are subject to domination by males at two levels. When it comes to sharing the responsibility of the business inside the house, the women are given subsidiary jobs to perform, and outside, they do the 'derogatory' work of selling their wares by the roadside, which the men wish to avoid.
31. The right to decide on any important matter lies with the men. The women are just the receivers of orders.
32. In all the three areas under study the newer generations are seen to be moving out from their traditional business and losing interest in continuing the jobs that their mothers do. This is because the younger generation feels that this kind of work would not fetch them respect or monetary benefits. They would remain as care givers and unpaid helpers, whose labour would be utilised to curtail the expenditure of employing outside labour.

These were some of the findings of the researcher on the livelihood, working conditions and position of traditional family based women workers in pottery in Mumbai and Kolkata. The findings were based purely on qualitative interviews with the respondents and informants, and the first hand observations of the researcher.

#### **6.6 Quantitative data analysis on the role and position of women in pottery/clay modelling and fishery in Mumbai and Kolkata**

The qualitative analysis was substantiated by quantitative data analysis. On the basis of the statistical data furnished in Chapters 4 and 5, the following findings can be summarized:

1. A fewer number of young women of the next generation is interested in pursuing the jobs of their mothers or to continue doing it as their primary occupation irrespective of location and occupation.
2. Neither education nor formal training is an important determinant in the continuation of these traditional occupations. What they most require is the experience that the women gather from childhood by staying with their parents and being their helping hands.
3. Earning for oneself is not an important criterion for the women workers of these occupations. They do not mind being the unpaid help of their male counterparts especially in pottery. In fishery, Kolkata, women work as daily wage workers if there

is a lack of any active male member in the family. And in Mumbai fishery, the women work and take an active role in the business because often the male members are lazy and further, it is not customary for men to sit and sell fish.

4. Where we find the existence of, or active involvement of, agencies, informal as well as formal, women appear to be more empowered, in terms of raising their voices against discrimination, asking for problem resolution etc. Here, there is also a degree of uplift in the socio-economic position of women. They have formed Self-help Group (SHGs) and credit societies, which support them in their fight against financial and social hurdles.
5. Official documentation is better in Mumbai than in Kolkata, in case of both the occupations. Proper statistical data could be elicited from the KVIC and KVIB Annual Report, Mumbai, for pottery, and the Marine Fishery Census, Mumbai for fishery.
6. There is a lack of proper initiatives from the Government in both occupations, perhaps because of the location of the occupations in urban areas. Their counterparts in rural areas get more benefits from governmental programmes.
7. The nature of involvement of women in fishery is different in respect of the marine and inland sectors. In marine fishery, the involvement of women is more in direct selling, marketing and fish processing in open areas, whereas in inland fishery, the involvement of women is mainly of a subsidiary nature; in the FPU, women are involved in fish processing.
8. In Mumbai, there is a lack of FPU whereas in Kolkata, they are prevalent; the women involved come mainly from families which are traditionally called fisher-folk families.
9. The nature of involvement of women in pottery also differs with location. In Mumbai, the women are involved in the direct pottery industry where big *matkas* are produced. In Kolkata, the women are involved more in clay modelling. In Kolkata, on the other hand, pottery work mainly includes making of small *bhars* and pots.
10. In terms of social recognition and marketing, in the pottery sector the clay modellers of Kolkata are better recognized nationally and internationally as this potter's colony has been in existence for ages even before independence, and clay workers in Kolkata have become almost synonymous with Kumartuli. In the fishery sector, it is just the opposite; the fisherwomen of Mumbai, especially the *Koli* women, are well known for their unique technique, charisma, and bargaining power in selling fish and

dealing with customers. Moreover, they are the most hardworking among all the women workers studied in this dissertation. The fishery industry in Mumbai thrives on the strength of these *Koli* women. The pottery industry too, in both Mumbai and Kolkata, may find it difficult to survive without the unconditional support of the women workers, even though they are mostly unpaid workers.

11. Power relations are noticeable in these occupations where women's involvement is dependent on the following criteria : a) the non-availability of work due to the absence of any male member in the family to take that particular responsibility, b) the need for extra earning in the family, i.e., supportive income, c) the need for unpaid help for the completion of orders on time, d) the need for some subsidiary kind of work which the men otherwise would not like to do, e) getting the work done by deploying female labour to curtail the cost of paid labour. Thus deflationary bias is maintained, which means including female labour to cut business costs/ expenditure.
12. If there is a transfer of business or assets to, it is mainly because of the absence of any male member in the family.
13. Gender discrimination and division of labour on the basis of gender is common in both the occupations and locations. There are some kinds of jobs which are not permitted to be done by women, because their culture and customs do not allow it. The division of labour is very strictly followed even in the present day. Thus business democratization, in the sense of gender equality, is not followed.
14. In both the occupations, unpaid labour is common only among the women. Even if the male members contribute less than the female to the family income, the male never fails to draw remuneration from the business, which the female, mainly does not. Thus, male bread earner bias, too, is apparently maintained.
15. There is also the presence of a commodification bias; women's unpaid labour in these two occupations has been ignored socially and is also absent from official documents.
16. Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation (LPG) has had a major impact on these traditional family based occupations in India; newer techniques and technologies have been created which have resulted in tough competition for traditional workers who rely more on indigenous tools, techniques and designs. The quality also sometimes fails to match that of the machine made products which serve the same purpose of the items that potters make.

17. A large percentage of migrant workers are prevalent in the pottery sector in both the cities. In fishery, this is true only in respect of those who do the fish processing work in both the cities. Fish selling in the registered markets is restricted only to the inhabitants of Mumbai, i.e., the *Kolis*; membership of the registered *bheri* cooperatives is similarly restricted to the inhabitants of that locality of the EKW. Being migrants, the women in the pottery sector are debarred from getting loans from banks for their business. Thus they have to rely more on informal credit sources like chit fund societies. Sometimes, NGOs come to their rescue, for instance, in Mumbai's Kumbharwada. Lack of funds is thus a recurring problem among these traditional family based workers, who do not get any benefit from the Government as all governmental projects are targeted at the traditional sector workers and artisans of the rural sector. The selected populations of the present study are not located in rural areas. They are migrants, so they do not have access to any formal benefits. It is interesting too, that NGOs focus on popular trends and localities, perhaps because this gets them more funds and publicity. Further because these workers live in slums, they lose the benefits that accrue automatically to urban localities. No census data or any other official document enlists their work. Even KVIC and KVIB annual reports only record the potters of the rural areas in Mumbai.
18. In Mumbai, the traditional family based occupation workers are a more close knit unit, and are traditionally more tied to their occupation. They are not very keen on allowing outsiders to enter their job market and pursue the same primary occupation as them (the original and traditional workers). For example, pottery work in Mumbai is done by the Kumbhars who came from Gujarat. Even though they are migrants, they have lived in their locality for ages and the area is known by their occupation as Kumbharwada. They do not want people of any other community to pursue this occupation and stay inside their close knit community and area. In fishery also, the main control over the fishery business is in the hands of the *Kolis*, the original inhabitants of the area. The migrant workers can do all kinds of fish processing work but they are at the mercy of the *Kolis* who gave them space to stay and work. In Kolkata, on the other hand, the potters have many variations of work and lots of migrants have entered the job market. In Kolkata, along with the original inhabitants, there are migrants from different parts of the country as well as from other occupations. There is no resentment regarding the entry of 'outsiders'. Various non *Kumbhakars* also do the work of clay modelling nowadays.

19. These traditional family based workers are mostly the original inhabitants of the localities, yet the places they live in now are termed 'slums'. These places were originally villages. Later with urbanization, they got transformed into slums due to a lack of governmental attention in developing these areas. These areas are inhabited by groups of people pursuing the same occupation; they are termed as fisher colony, potter colony etc.; as the government does not show any interest in developing these occupations, invariably the areas also do not develop, and finally they have acquired the characteristics of slums. Thus, the original villages became slums. So inspite of being original inhabitants, the people who lived in these areas became slum dwellers.
20. The combination of two parallel forces deprives these traditional family based occupations of basic benefits and requirements. The first force is that they are migrants; the tag of which debars them from any credit facilities from formal institutions. The second force is that since they have been degraded into becoming slum dwellers, they are devoid of the social benefits which normally accrue to urban dwellers. Therefore, the workers pursuing the traditional family based occupations and residing in urban localities, more specifically 'slums', are deprived of benefits. They are not given the recognition that is given to other informal sector workers. Very little research has been done on them; media focus on their working and living conditions is rare, and not much literature can be found on them in government reports etc. The women workers of these occupations are in a worse condition with the least attention being paid for their uplift. Gender division of labour and disparity in earnings are added challenges that the women face over the other problems that are faced by all the workers belonging to these traditional family based occupations.
21. Working conditions are terrible for the women involved in both the occupations in all the locations. They face health hazards of different kinds. They have no medical benefits. In official documents, they are not even listed as workers, and there is no data on them. They are missing from official sources. If anyone is counted as a worker in official documents, inevitably the person is male. In government sources, there is a category of 'potter', under which mainly ceramic workers are included. Clay workers have not been included in the potter class. As such, the question of medical benefits does not arise. In fishery, only those who go out fishing get medical benefits. As the women are not allowed to sail, they do not get any benefits. However, in Mumbai, it has been mentioned that the entire fishing business rests on the participation of women workers.

22. Traditional family based workers fall under the category of self-employment. Under self-employment, there are two sections -- home based and non- home based work. Each carries some unique and specific problems. In home based work, like pottery, the women face problems like lack of space to work. Place of residence and place of work get merged and this leads to the issue of enough space for sorting and other work and ample space for living. The cooking area, the sleeping area, the working area are all actually the same place. The potters also have *bhattis* within their homes, which release smoke. This creates more health problems. During the rainy season, the problem gets worse. The workers use adjacent roads and their shanty roofs to store their products. But during the rainy season, they cannot use them. They have to stack everything inside their small houses. Privacy for the women is a major issue, with no private toilets attached to the houses. They have to depend on common toilets. This, however, is not the situation for the fisher colonies of Mumbai, where the houses are mostly *pucca* or semi-*pucca*, and have proper amenities. The women here as noted earlier, control the entire business, and can use the money for improving living conditions. In the other cases, the men control the money, or the women's earnings are so low that they can hardly think of using the money for improving personal conditions. For those non-home based workers like in fishery, the problems were noted to be different. There, the women, especially in Kolkata, have to travel to other places for work, which creates the problem of balancing household work and professional work and have to face double the pressure of work. The work pressure issue is least in case of women workers in the registered *bheris* who get equal payment for equal work. They work for 3-4 hours a day but get the full daily wage. This shows that within the category of 'self-employment', different occupations and different types within occupations face dissimilar problems especially when it comes to the nature of the work of women involved in the occupations.
23. Working and living conditions worsen when the locations are far from the main urban areas. For example, some *bheri* areas in remote areas (Durgabhasan and Kulipara, in Kolkata). If the slums are located in remote areas, with poor communication systems and other basic services, the living conditions suffer. Benefits do not reach them so easily. Exploitation increases, and opportunities to voice demands decrease. Women do not get access to information regarding benefits. They do not get opportunities to earn money by pursuing secondary occupations. But

if the location is in the heart of the city, then people come to know about these areas and governmental and non-governmental initiatives for their development increase. The Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) project to develop the Kumartuli area and the NGO named SNEHA's initiative to generate secondary occupation for the women of Kumbharwada can be cited as examples.

24. Different locations were selected to examine cultural differences, if any, as well as the impact of political organizations on the occupations. While in Mumbai, till recently, the Shiv Sena and the Congress (the right wing and centre left) have had influence, Kolkata was ruled by the CPI-M led left front for 34 years. It was found that culture and politics have both had some impact on the position of the women workers. In Kolkata, women appear to be more politically active and political participation is much higher as there are either passive or active members of political parties or trade unions. Thus a political culture seems to prevail in Kolkata. In Mumbai, social empowerment is much higher than in Kolkata in the sense that that women form SHGs, and there is more NGO involvement; they organise rallies, demonstrations on social forum but do not appear to take help of political parties. In answers to questions, Mumbai women said that these parties are all the same; politicians have an eye on their land, and want them to vacate them in the name of redevelopment. In Kolkata, on the other hand, women believed that to achieve ones demands, political channels had to be used and this could be done only by aligning themselves with a political party and doing what the party demanded.
25. Last but not the least, one of the most important findings of this thesis is that all the women workers are traditionally connected to their primary occupations. They take interest in their occupation because it has come down to them over generations. They are dedicated to the progression of their respective occupations and feel proud to be part of the traditional sector. While this is true of the present generation, there are signs of change in the next generation.

### **6.7 Linking the main objectives of the research (Chapter 1, section1.6) with the researcher's findings through qualitative and quantitative data analysis**

Finally getting back to the main research objectives and hypotheses stated in the introductory chapter, it is necessary to check whether the current research has succeeded in answering the basic research questions and whether the stated hypotheses drawn are true.

1. Selection of different primary occupations from different locations situated in two socio-economically and politically different cities has helped in making a cross-sectional analysis of the position of traditional family based women workers in India.
2. These workers are located in the heart of urban localities, and the study has tried to understand the current urban forces and pressures the traditional family based workers face, and the ongoing challenges they have to counter. This study is an attempt to study the relationship between urbanisation, globalisation and the existence of traditional workers.
3. These traditional family based occupations are not exceptions; there are many other such occupations in urban localities. What is interesting is that in both the occupations, gender discrimination is present. Gendered division of labour is present in all the locations and primary occupations. It has been shown that subsidiary work is dumped on the women workers, and in many locations the work is unremunerated or underpaid. One important finding is that because the business is family based, it is customary for both men and women to accept that women should continue to do what previous generations of women have done and not be paid for that.
4. Work in the public sphere is an important aspect in everyone's life, and women also feel proud that they can contribute to their family business. But their contribution remains largely unrecognised and invisible; they fall in the category of unpaid helpers. The women sometimes get access to work as a secondary option in case of the death of the male head of the family or absence of any active male, or sometimes at the whim of their male counterpart. The women work because they wish to contribute either as care givers or as bread earners. There is an acceptance of their traditional roles.
5. A comparison of these traditional workers opens a wider platform to judge their position and brings out the problems they face in their day to day life.
6. The researcher paid attention to the contribution of the government and non-government organisations and studied their policies and activities for the betterment of the lives of these workers. It was found that hardly any governmental initiative has been introduced for these women workers. Whatever benefits they have received are from NGOs. The state's policies are targeted mainly towards men and rural workers. Political affiliation however, does create differences in the attitude of the workforce. Women workers in Kolkata are more politically active / aware because the political atmosphere of the city is such that the people become politically active. Moreover,



34 years of leftist rule in West Bengal has politicized the workers, and created unions which voice their demands.

7. Women's capabilities are restrained by their inability to control assets, male decisions, participate in paid services, get access to education, or membership in associations and agencies etc. Wherever the women have overcome this constraint, they have been able to empower themselves to some extent. Where the women have succumbed to the whims of the men, they have become subject to male bread earner bias, commodification bias and deflationary bias.

### **6.8 Validity of the basic Null Hypothesis set in the Introduction Chapter under Section 1.8**

1. Null Hypothesis: The women belonging to traditional family based occupations in India and living in slums in major urban areas in India are employed and empowered. -- From the research data presented in the thesis, it is seen that though the women of the traditional family based occupations living in slums in major urban areas are employed, they are not always empowered. Their general life, availability of work, receipt of payment, position, decision making power, work participation etc are all dominated by men.
2. Null Hypothesis: The women in the selected slums are employed in lucrative occupations and their earnings and status are always at par with men. -- The so called notion of lucrative occupation is no longer valid. The pottery and fishery sectors are no longer lucrative in urban areas; these occupations face lots of challenges and potters and fisher-folk struggle for their existence without any help from the governmental sector. Wherever the businesses are run by women, the women's status is lower than those of their male counterparts. The jobs are gendered with women for the most part, playing the role of secondary and subsidiary workers. The percentage of unpaid helpers is maximum in these family based occupations.
3. Null Hypothesis: There are proper and effective initiatives from the government in terms of access to basic necessities, training and fund allocation. -- Initiatives from governmental sources are minimal; most government projects and policies are targeted at their counterparts in the rural areas. In the urban areas whatever benefits are given are targeted at the male workers. The women's contributions are neither made visible in the social forum nor in official documents. They simply remain as

care givers and unpaid helpers. Wherever women have managed to empower themselves financially, it is noticed that there is the absence of a male family member to manage and control the business.

4. Null Hypothesis: Women get empowered individually, without the involvement of any external forces like private sector agencies (NGOs, pressure groups, cooperatives). -- Women can empower themselves only when an organisation or agency gives them the platform to voice their demands. Agencies instil in them a kind of unity as well as a cooperative attitude, and help them to fight for their rights and demands and get monetary benefits; they also enable the women to get some training to start some personal business, and give them a forum for grievance redressal etc. In the absence of such agencies, the women cannot come out from the domination of men in the home as well as in the work place.
5. Null Hypothesis: Market liberalisation did not create any impact on the newer generation. -- With the advent of market liberalisation, newer jobs have come up, which are alluring the newer generations away from their traditional occupations and family businesses. They feel that the traditional jobs hardly fetch them any form of monetary benefit, social recognition or a brighter future. When the government itself is not paying any heed to improve their condition, there is no attraction to continue with their traditional occupations.
6. Null Hypothesis: Traditional family based occupations are of a similar nature everywhere, and no socio-economic, cultural and political differences lead to differences in attitude towards work and related issues. -- Traditional family based occupations are mainly are of two kinds -- home based and non-home based. The nature of work, problems related to the work and the involvement of women in the occupations, differ between the two. Moreover, the economic, social, cultural and political backgrounds of the location of the occupations have an impact on the occupations as well as on the worker's attachment to the community. These also have an impact on the rise of protest movements, the formation of associations, the involvement of political parties and trade unions. There are also differences in the financial capability of the workers to manage their business, the payment mode and structure of payment, social recognition, livelihood profiles and constraints in livelihood patterns, educational standards, nature of health problems etc.

## **6.9 Suggestions and scope for further research**

On the basis of these findings, some suggestions may be extended and opportunities for new research can be identified:

1. Governmental initiatives may be taken to enlist the workers in these traditional family based occupations under census data by creating new categories particularly under pottery.
2. The current projects of the government should include urban artisans in such professions.
3. Better opportunities may be created and projects to be introduced to benefit the women workers of the EKW.
4. Training should be extended to the women workers of the EKW to better utilise their potentials.
5. NGOs should be encouraged to work in the remote areas and less popular localities to help the women workers with their problems.
6. Public- private partnership may be encouraged to bring the women workers in these professions into the mainstream.
7. Neither the government, nor the newer generation in fishery and pottery understand that in the current situation of job scarcity and unemployment, these businesses can open up fresh opportunities for the youth. The government should pay adequate attention to develop these businesses and allocate proper funds to strengthen these businesses, which can not only generate employment and restrict youth from taking to anti-social activities due to lack of job opportunities, but also protect the environment. Fishery in the EKW and pottery as a profession are both environment-friendly. Replacing earthen pots, cups and utensils with plastic and other similar kinds of products can ultimately harm the ecological balance. Earthen products rise from and vanish into the natural environment. When environmental protection is such a burning issue, the government should try to promote pottery and help the business.
8. Unpaid women workers should be transformed into paid workers by encouraging them to get formal training from NGOs and engaging them in some paid productive work. They should be properly enlisted in government census records.
9. Traditional family based occupations should be revived and transformed into profitable businesses, so that the newer generation does not lose interest in them, and continue the traditionality.

10. Modern approaches should be introduced into traditional occupations to make them profitable.
11. Gender division of labour should be removed and discrimination against women on the basis of custom and culture should be eradicated.
12. More job opportunities should be cultivated for the women in EKW.
13. Basic infrastructure needs to be upgraded.
14. Credit facilities may be introduced to improve traditional businesses.
15. More funds should flow from proper channels so that women do not get trapped by chit fund agents.
16. It is desirable that interference of middlemen should be bypassed to prevent the siphoning off of profits.
17. Methods and techniques of work should be modernised to minimise the effects of the environmental pollution on health.
18. The potters need more space and facilities; this should be provided so that they can expand their business and receive more privacy for their household.
19. Proper registration of businesses and issuance of identity cards will help in access to credit facilities. It will also help in census data collection and analysis.
20. There should be registered cooperatives for each occupation in all the localities and women's representation should be there in such cooperatives so that they can voice their own demands and problems through proper channels.
21. Proper shades, toilets and working atmosphere should be built for the women workers who work near the landing centres in the open areas subject to direct sunlight and rainfall.
22. Proper marketing networks should be set up so that the women do not feel lost in the competitive world.
23. Prices of the products may be fixed to minimise exploitation.

From the findings of this research and the suggestions put forward by the researcher, further research areas can be identified. This research focuses only on urban artisans. There is scope is for the inclusion of rural artisans and workers and a comparison of the rural-urban divide in traditional family based occupations. The research would have been more comprehensive if a larger sample size could have been taken. The statistical significance testing would perhaps have given more accurate results. Further researchers can attempt a deeper study with larger sample sizes. Moreover, there are various kinds of

*bheris* in the Kolkata wetlands, various kinds of pottery and clay based workers, and various kinds of fishery related workers. There is ample scope to compare the sub categories and come up with more interesting results to substantiate this current research analysis.

#### **6.10 Concluding Remarks**

This present thesis is an attempt to get an overview of a different side of urban informal sector occupations in India which have not been highlighted in research so far, i.e., traditional family based occupations. Two different kinds of occupations catering to the traditional family based occupations were selected as sample occupations for the study, i.e., fishery and related work and pottery and clay modelling, and sub categorisations were accordingly made to have a wider comparative analysis, within and between the occupations. Moreover, two different kinds of locations were also selected, i.e., Mumbai and Kolkata, as sample areas to bring a wider vision on these occupations. Mumbai caters to marine fishery, whereas Kolkata was selected for inland wetland fishery. These occupations were studied in the backdrop of female workers and their involvement in such occupations. The main focus of the study was to understand whether the selected occupations are gendered, whether any gross discriminations are faced by the women workers who are part of these occupational sectors, and the major challenges faced by the traditional occupations in general and women workers in particular in the face of market liberalization and urbanization. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were followed. Due to the lack of adequate literature on the subject matter, greater emphasis was placed on quantitative data collected mainly through survey research. The total number of interviewees including male and female respondents, resource persons and informants, was 373. The study harped on some major research variables like age to understand inter-generational gaps, gender to understand gender biases, income to learn about income gaps between the workers specially between males and females, location to gauge the impact of culture and political ideology of any locality on the occupation and women workers, and the presence of agencies working for the occupations and women workers. It was found that gender division of labour is predominantly present in both the occupations and locations. It has also been shown that subsidiary work is dumped on the women workers, and in many locations the work is unremunerated or underpaid. An important aspect is that their contributions remain largely unrecognized and invisible. They remain non-empowered.

There is lack of proper and effective initiatives from the government regarding access to basic amenities, training and fund allocation, which is one of the main reasons for the underdevelopment of the women workers and arises the issue of the survival of these traditional occupations in the fast growing competitive world of machine made products. Underdevelopment of this sector, has led to disinterest among the younger generations who are moving out of their traditional occupations, inspite of the fact that they can earn their livelihood through their own personal businesses, in a market where there is a scarcity of jobs. Inter-generational gaps are thus predominantly present.

However, an important finding of this thesis is that wherever there has been the involvement of private (NGOs) and public (government) agencies, women's empowerment has taken place. Women, it appears, can empower themselves only when an organisation or agency gives them the platform to voice their demands. Agencies instill in them a kind of unity as well as a cooperative attitude, and help them to fight for their rights and demands, and get monetary benefits; they also enable the women to get some training to start some personal business, and give them a forum for grievance redressal etc. In the absence of such agencies the women seem unable to come out from the domination of men in the home as well as in the work place.

Therefore, the entire set of major null hypotheses selected for this dissertation, have been proved wrong and the alternative hypothesis are proved right. This opens up the issue of the creation of some new avenues for the empowerment of women workers in traditional family based occupations in India, especially in the fishery and pottery/clay modeling sectors. The researcher has, therefore, suggested some fruitful solutions for the recurring and serious problems that women workers in these sectors face for consideration by relevant and responsible agencies.

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