

OCCUPATIONAL DETAILS OF COLLECTORS OF POST-CONSUMER CLOTHING WASTE IN MUMBAI

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Abstract: Consumers are discarding their clothes much before they are fit to be thrown away. This may be due to the fast changing fashion, increased spending capacity and growth of the retail industry. Disposal of clothes is not given much thought. One of the options is to exchange them for a value. Unique in India is a mobile door-to-door collection service of used clothes discarded by households. This is done by men and women known as *bhandivale* in Mumbai, India. Their livelihood depends on the bartering skill in exchange for stainless steel utensils and plastic ware. They specialize in collecting, sorting and selling clothes in the second-hand market. Unlike rag-pickers, studies on *bhandivale* who make a living exclusively by collection and redistribution of clothes in Mumbai are limited. This is part of a larger study on these collectors of post-consumer clothing waste in Mumbai. The objective of this study was to understand the present working conditions and identifying the changes in their work environment. A Descriptive Research Design was selected. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. The research Design made use of survey non-participant observation, case study, oral history and narrations to elicit the data. A semi-structured Interview schedule and observation schedule were used as tools to gather primary data. The process of collecting clothes from various residential locations between Bandra and Borivali in Western Suburbs, Thane in the Eastern Suburbs and Sion and Central Mumbai and selling old clothes at the second-hand goods market, Chor Bazaar near Mumbai was observed during the field visits in the business hours. The samples were drawn through non-probability convenience sampling design using snowball technique. Work of the *bhandivale* business involves a number of activities. Understanding the nature of work itself, the number of hours per day devoted to the profession, the various activities involved and the time taken for rest and breaks. This paper also deals with the pattern of exchange, the mode of transport and the competition faced. The increase in the high-rise residential tower apartments has to some extent changed the method of collection of clothes from the residents. The security personnel of these indirectly help in facilitating transactions for the *bhandivale*. There is flexibility in the pattern of exchange thus requiring a regular cash flow that is generated through sale of second-hand clothes. Direct selling of the clothes in the second-hand market gives a higher rate of return than selling the clothes through agents called *Chindhivale*. Some *bhandivale* have taken up alternate occupation alongside with the family business; has given them a better living. They have not given up on their traditional occupation. The *bhandivale* themselves do not realize that they are important stakeholders in the recycling industry. As important contributors to the environment, they mobilize solid waste in terms of surplus clothes generated from Mumbai households.

Keywords: Clothing waste; Collection; Second-hand clothes; Occupational details, working conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Fashionable goods contribute to consumption a higher level than need. As consumers continue to buy, waste will continue to be created, further compounding the problem of what to do with discarded packaging, discarded apparel and home textile products [1]. Used clothes can be donated, reused, recycled or sold as second-hand clothing. There is a demand for second-hand clothing both in the villages and Cities. In the city of Mumbai the collectors of old clothes from residential areas are called *bhandivale*. They are also called *bartanvale* in some parts of India. Among the various methods of disposing family clothing from households in Mumbai, one is that of exchanging them for utensils. This practice of exchanging peasant embroidery for pots in Gujarat was started by entrepreneurial *pherias* (wandering traders) in the 1950s [2]. In Nandurbar, they sell old clothes in the daily market and the weekly market day, that is Tuesday. Transactions are done in cash and kind in the market. At the time of exchanging old clothes with utensil, the transactions are in kind [3]. *Bhandivale* collect clothes from households in exchange for utensils or plastic articles for their livelihood. The utensils are purchased from stainless steel merchants and carried door to door in a basket or they are seen at strategic locations in some residential localities. These poor and illiterate migrants operate during afternoon and evening hours to earn their livelihood. They walk long distances or travel by pooling cabs or rickshaws for transport. They travel to different areas of the city to collect old clothes. These clothes are then sorted out. The wearable clothes are sold through agents in the weekly markets (Chor Bazaar), street side or railway bridges in the City. Alternatively they are sent to remote villages to be sold. The torn and non-wearable clothes are sold by weight to rag merchants called *chindhivale*. Only cotton clothes are further utilized as industrial wipes [4]. These insights helped understand the importance of *bhandivale* in redistribution of used clothing thus contributing to recycling. This paper is one aspect of a larger study on *bhandivale*. This part of the study was aimed at understanding the present work related activities, change in working conditions of *bhandivale*, competition faced and predicting future trends. Work of the *bhandivale* business involves a number of activities like the collection of clothes, sorting, and selling. Understanding the nature of work itself, the number of hours per day devoted to the profession, the various activities involved and the time taken for rest and breaks.

METHODS

Descriptive Research Design was found suitable for the study. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were necessary to study the occupational details of this trade. An interview schedule was administered to a sample of 52 *bhandivale* drawn from unknown population through convenience sampling using snowball technique in Mumbai. The data was collected through field survey in different localities of the Western and Eastern Suburbs and Central Mumbai and the largest second-hand clothes market 'Chor Bazaar'. An observation schedule was also used. Most of the indicators were quantifiable for analysis. The findings have been presented using statistical methods and their theoretical implications.

Background

The sample comprised of almost an equal number of men and women, in the age group between 21 and 50 years. The presence of three sub-castes of tribal communities were noticed, namely the *Waghri*, *Kunchikorve* and *Gondhali*. The sample comprised of 50 percent Gujarati speaking *Waghri* from the *Duttani* sub-caste, about 35 percent belonged to the Marathi speaking *Gondhali* and the remaining 15 percent to the *Kunchikorve*. They migrated to Mumbai generations back and are in the trade of old clothes by exchange of stainless steel utensils for a livelihood. The study on the weekly income from the trade in old clothes revealed that nearly 27 percent of the respondents earn a weekly income of INR Rs. 3000 to Rs. 4000 and more than 63 percent of the respondents earned a total weekly income of INR Rs. 4000 and above. There was no respondent who earned less than INR Rs. 1000 per week. On the whole, a greater majority of the *bhandivale* of the *Gondhali* caste seem to be earning a higher income. The *Gondhali* and *Kunchikorve* enjoy a better income as compared to the *bhandivale* of *Waghri*. *Bhandivale* of the *Waghri* caste earn between Rs. 3000 and Rs. 1000 per week through the same *bhandivale* trade. By looking at the income pattern of the *bhandivale* it cannot be said that all in this profession are below the poverty line. *Bhandivale* live in three types of families namely nuclear, joint and extended. Half of the *bhandivale* live in joint families, comprising of three generations living together. At least 42 percent of the *bhandivale* live in nuclear families. The smallest nuclear family consists of five members. Majority of the families have between five to eight members. A small proportion of eight percent of the respondents live as extended families. The numbers are large mainly due to the large number of children [5]. The collection and redistribution of old clothing from households earns the *bhandivale* a living where most are satisfied with. Nearly half of them live in large joint families. Although they did not keep a record of their expenses and savings, they were aware of the daily outgoing expenses. Those who lived in rented housing facilities reported that they shared the expenses on water and electricity. A few lived in huts made of

different materials. On the whole a greater majority of the *bhandivale* of the Gondhali caste live in ownership flats. The *Gondhali* and *Kunchikorve* who were living in Dharavi enjoyed better residential facilities as compared to the *Waghri* who were scattered in the suburbs of Mumbai. They had better neighborhoods, water, electricity facilities and sanitation facilities within the house. The Slum Redevelopment Scheme has greatly helped improve the housing conditions, living conditions and infrastructural benefits of a majority of the *bhandivale* living in Dharavi for over two generations and involved in the trade of old clothes [6].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hours of work

Most *bhandivale* (63.5 percent) on an average spend at least seven to eight hours of work per day more in the activities involving the *bhandivale* trade. One third (32.7 percent) of the *bhandivale* respondents, work for an average of seven to eight hours a day. Table 1 shows that another one third devotes more than eight hours in the trade of old clothes. Very few (less than eight percent) *bhandivale* spend four to five hours in the collection of clothes from residential localities in Mumbai. It was observed during the interviews that many of these families belonged to the nuclear families which had infants or young children to care for.

Table 1: Hours of work

Hours of work per day	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
More than 8	17	32.7	32.7
7 to 8	16	30.8	63.5
6 to 7	8	15.4	78.8
5 to 6	7	13.5	92.3
4 to 5	4	7.7	100
Total	52	100	

Comparing the number of hours devoted by different type of families

An eyeball view showed that the number of working hours that are put in by the joint families is more than the nuclear or extended families. This may be noted in Fig. 1 that most of the *bhandivale* living in joint families spend more number of hours at their work involving collection, sorting, selling directly or through the help of agents. Statistically it seems that there is only a moderate negative correlation ($p = -0.520$) between the type of family and number of hours of worked devoted to the trade in used clothes. One reason for joint families spending more number of hours could be that there is better support of family members and more helping hands in the trade.

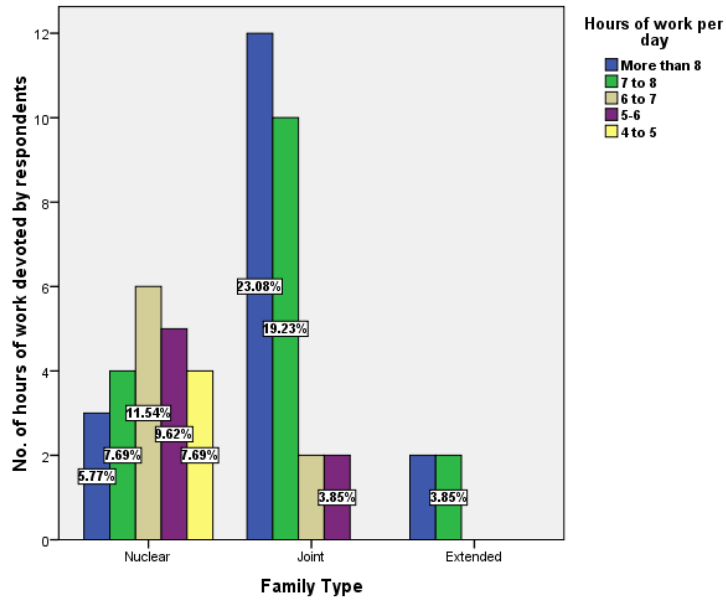


Fig. 1: The number of hours of work in different types of families

Comparison of hours devoted to work by different the sub-castes

Comparison was made in the number of working hours put in by the various sub-castes. It can be noticed from the Fig. 2 that the *bhandivale* belonging to Waghari Duttani caste spend between minimum of five hours and more than 8 hours of work. The *bhandivale* belonging to the Gondhali sub-caste of Marathi speaking *bhandivale*, spend more than seven hours a day. It may be that the *bhandivale* belonging to the Gondhali caste are hard working. It was reported by one of the respondents that a lot of time is spent in collection of clothes from households than in direct selling at the Chor Bazaar.

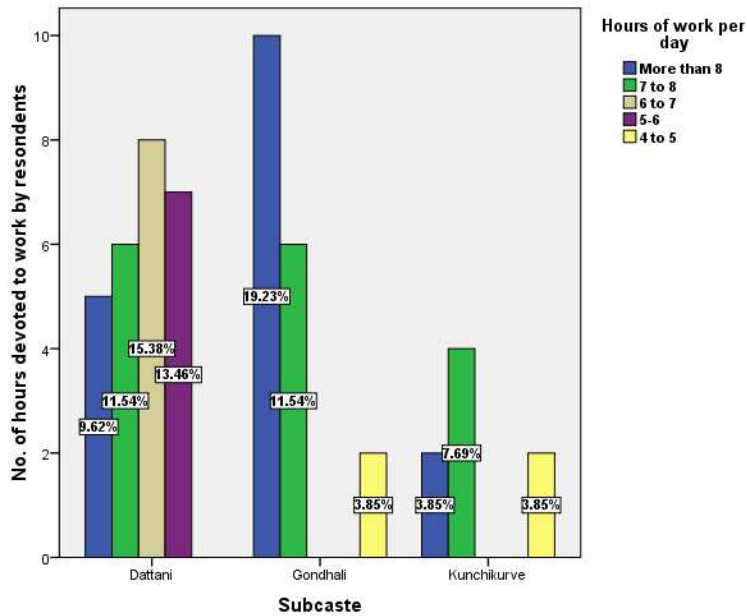


Fig. 2: Comparison of hours of work by different sub-castes Timings

Work timing

The respondents were asked their work timings. Though most respondents said that they started their work of collecting old clothes at 10 A.M or 11 A.M in the morning, but it was observed that the earliest that they were seen in the work field that is the residential areas was not before 12.15 P.M. They made their presence felt by calling out to the householders in a characteristic sing song manner '*Bhandi lo*' (take utensils) which often sounded like '*Eeh yoh*'. The timings for sales at the Chor Bazaar (as seen in Fig. 4) are 4 A.M to 10.30 A.M. They leave for sale work as early as Three A.M. The collection of clothes from households is done between 3 P.M and 7 P.M in the evening.

Case 1

It was observed that on returning to her home in Dharavi Labour Camp, Shanta efficiently managed the basket of utensils and plastic tubs along with three huge bundles of clothes that were collected during the day in the elevator as she took it up to her flat on the fourth floor. Shanta had also reported that it is possible to collect old clothes from homemakers who are housewives in the afternoon or early hours of the evening. But there are householders who are working women. Transactions with them in old clothes can be done only after they return from office work. Therefore the timings of work extend sometimes to 8.30 P.M or 9 P.M. She had then to get back and cook dinner for the family.

Break during working hours

It was found that the *bhandivale* do not take breaks/ rest at regular intervals. There is no fixed time of rest and breaks for refreshments. It was also observed that they start from their homes after a meal and have the next meal only after returning home late in the evening. Most of the breaks taken are short for tea and water. It was observed that often, the places where they take a break, is known and a familiar place as seen in Fig. 3. Most often these were the places where interviews had to be taken. For example the vegetable vendor under a pipal tree at Vile Parle East, the tea stall (*Chai ki tapri*), the cycle repair shop at Daulat Nagar, Santacruz West, the ice-candy stall (*golewalle ka thela*) at Kurar Village, Malad, Mahim Station, footpath on the side of Sion Hospital etc. These agent were also supportive towards the *bhandivale* specially in taking care of the bundles of clothes that were collected in the earlier part of the day could be stored there before they went on the collection drive again to the other buildings in the vicinity.



Fig. 3 *Bhandivale* taking short breaks



Fig. 4 Sale of used clothes at Chor Bazaar

Pattern of exchange and total income

Traditionally the *bhandivale* trade started with the bartering of stainless steel utensils for old clothes. Gradually over the years there seems to have been a change in the pattern of exchange. The *bhandivale* have stainless steel, aluminium utensils, plastic ware and cash to exchange for old clothes. They are expected by the homemakers to have this flexibility to suit the requirements of various customers. It is seen from Fig. 5 a majority of *bhandivale* (77 percent) follow a flexible pattern of exchange for old clothes.

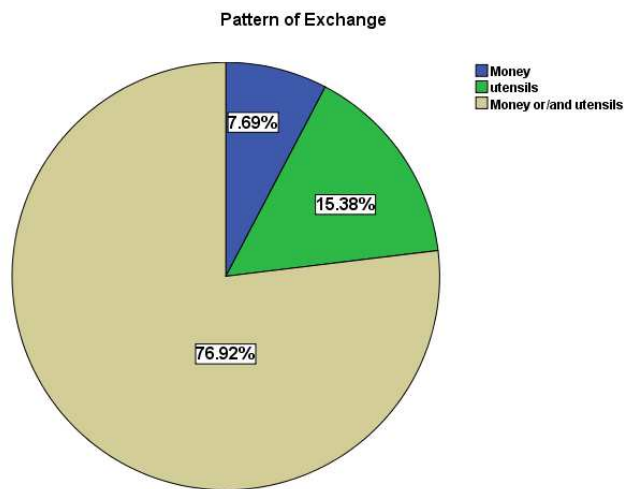


Fig. 5: Pattern of exchange for collecting clothes

Exchange with cash, stainless steel utensils, plastic ware or aluminium utensils; as desired by the customers. The customers are the homemakers who see the value in what they can get in exchange for the clothes they want to dispose.

Comparison in the mode of exchange in the sub-castes

A cross tabulation between the mode of exchange in the sub-castes showed that there is a significant association between the pattern of exchange in the three sub-castes of *bhandivale*. More number of families of the Waghri–Duttani caste follow a flexibility in the pattern of exchanging clothes for only utensils or a combination of money and utensils as desired by the homemakers. As seen in Fig. 6, greater number of *bhandivale* belonging to the three sub-castes, follow a flexible pattern of exchange.

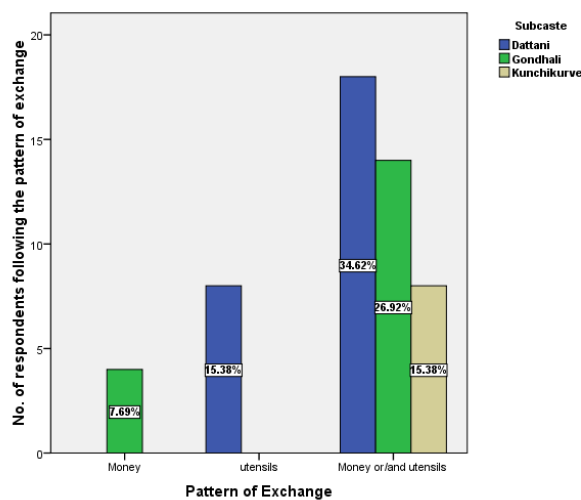


Fig. No. 6: Comparison in the pattern of exchange in the various sub-castes

The correlation co-efficient between the pattern of exchange and the sub-caste is ($p= 0.09$). This shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the pattern of exchange and the number of *bhandivale* respondents following the pattern of exchange. A very small proportion of *bhandivale* offer cash alone in exchange. These *bhandivale* usually do not carry any utensils with them but they do carry a basket to carry the bundles of old clothes. They are mostly in the younger age group between 20-25 years. Most of those who were interviewed belonged to the *Waghri* community. Since they do not carry utensils they are not recognized on the roads easily. They may be easily spotted wearing the latest trend of jeans and sport a single earring in one ear. That is exactly what they want. When questioned how they manage to contact the homemakers they reported that they have been regular in particular housing societies and have operated there for years. Some of them had accompanied their parents since the time they were kids. They are more selective of the clothes and are on the look-out for gents' garments like jeans, pants and shirts. All the clothes collected are sold through agents on railway bridges and road sides. The agents who sell second-hand goods in Mumbai are mostly migrants from Uttar Pradesh who follow the Muslim religion. It can be noted from Fig. 7, that having a flexible pattern of exchange gives the *bhandivale* family higher of returns per week. The *bhandivale* have stainless steel, aluminum utensils, plastic ware and cash to exchange for old clothes. They are expected to have this flexibility to suit the requirements of various customers.

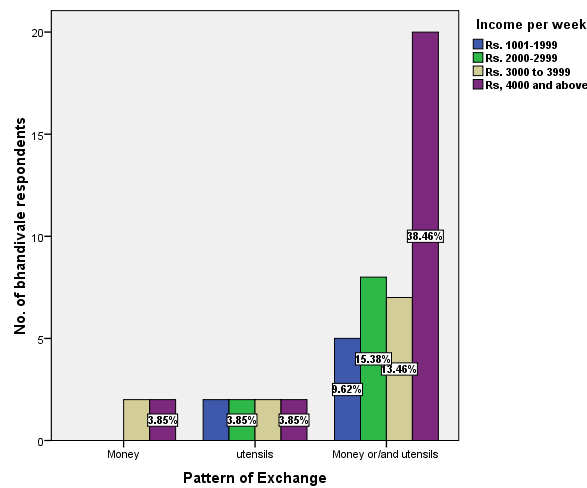


Fig. 7: Flexibility in pattern of exchange in relation to income

This can be seen in the results of the Chi-square Test. The value of Chi-square being higher than the table value at 2 df and .001 level of significance. Therefore the significance is high and the two attributes are dependent of each other. Greater the flexibility, in the pattern of exchange higher the income. In the past the *bhandivale* collected clothes selectively; only those clothes like trousers, shirts, formal suits, saris, *salwar kameez* (Indian dress) and jeans. In the present days the *bhandivale* specialize in collection of particular type of garments and for a particular purpose. For example *salwar kameez* with bead work, *zardozi* (embroidery with metallic yarn), crystal work and elaborate hand or machine embroidery are selected for the purpose not for resale but for the value the garment will fetch in the markets in Rajasthan where the surface ornamentation is transferred to another garment for reuse. The portion of the embroidery is cut out and sold by weight for Rs. 300 per Kilogram. The remaining part of the *kameez* (top) or the *salwar* (type of pant) or *burkha* is sold for between Rs.12 to Rs. 20 per kilogram of cut garments. Similarly there are *bhandivale* who specialize in collection of denim jeans or only sarees, some only collect cotton sarees, only trousers or shirts. The preference is for full sleeved shirts. Half sleeve shirts are undervalued in the exchange process. They travel bi-weekly or on weekly basis long distances within and inter-state for collection and sale with ease. Clothes collected in Mumbai may be sold in Surat or Vapi. Clothes collected from Loni, Parbani, Nasik and other parts of interior Maharashtra are sold in Mumbai. There are merchants who source specialized surface ornamentation to sarees and *kameez* by weight for Rs. 300-400 per Kilogram. These embroidered or ornamented parts of garments are sent to merchants in Jaipur and Ahmadabad for applying as patch work on new fabrics.

Mode of transport

Mode of transport is crucial in the profession of collection of discarded clothes. This is because the work involves carrying a variety of utensils and plastic ware. On their return from work, the collected old clothes have to be transported back home. Most *bhandivale* walk from their residence to the nearest railway station and then walk or use taxi or rickshaw to carry their load.

Table 2: Mode of transport

Mode of transport	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Rickshaw	15	28.8	28.8
Taxi	12	23.1	51.9
Train	16	30.8	82.7
Walk	9	17.3	100
Total	52	100	

With reference to the Table No. 2 that nearly 30 percent of the *bhandivale* living in the Western and Eastern Suburbs of Mumbai use rickshaw (three wheeler public transport facility) and another 30 percent use the local train in the Western and Eastern Suburbs. Taxi and the local trains are the only mode of transport available to *bhandivale* in Central Mumbai. When the clothes have to be sold there are three to four bundles or more to be transported to Chor Bazaar for direct sales. *Bhandivale* in Thane, Matunga and Dharavi areas use shared tempo service where Rs. 40 per head with the bundles of clothes to Chor Bazaar is charged from each *bhandivale*. A return trip costs an additional Rs.10 per head. Such a facility was not available from Borivali, Kandivali, Goregaon, Andheri, Bandra and other areas of the western suburbs. But most of those who sold at Chor Bazaar pooled a taxi to and from the Chor Bazaar. The single trip cost them Rs. 700 per trip both ways. The only other mode of movement was by walking. There are some *bhandivale* who walk for long hours with little time for break. It is noteworthy that the *bhandivale* have a great stamina in walking for long distances even while carrying a load of utensils and clothes. They walk at a fast pace and are able to cover distances fast. Though the mode of transport is taxi, train or rickshaw, often these are used in combination to reach their destination for collection, selling or to sell to the *chindhivale*.

Mode of selling second-hand clothes

Traditionally the barter of stainless steel utensils was done in exchange for clothes. However, this pattern continues today. But the *bhandivale* are now more flexible in their pattern of exchange– they have aluminum ware, plastic ware and cash to offer in exchange of old clothes. The clothes that are collected are sold for a living in three ways. There is a kind of flexibility in the mode of selling that was observed during the course of collecting data for this study. It can be observed from Table 3, that nearly half (48 percent) of the *bhandivale* sell the old clothes that are collected directly at the second-hand market called Chor Bazaar near Mumbai Central. Another 46 percent sell through the help of agents called *chindhivale*. Only a few nearly six percent sell the clothes through the dealers of stainless steel ware. This flexibility is the change that is seen in the last few years.

Table 3: Mode of selling old clothes

Mode of selling old clothes	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Stainless Steel Dealer	3	5.8	5.8
Direct selling	25	48.1	53.8
Selling to chindhivale	24	46.2	100
Total	52	100	

During the interviews, some of the *bhandivale* reported that several years back this market used to be open on Fridays. But over the years, this market is open on all days of the week. As reported in Thaneplus though clothes are the most popular items sold, there is not a single item/ gadget / equipment that one cannot purchase from this second-hand market. The colorful clothes dominate the market [7].

Direct selling at Chor Bazaar

The clothes that are collected from the residential areas of Mumbai are sold in the second hand market. Directly selling of the clothes personally by the *bhandivale* at Chor Bazaar gives a higher rate of return than selling the second-hand clothes through agents. The agents purchase clothes selectively and pay Rs. 50 per kilogram of *salwar kameez* sets. This has given the *bhandivale* affordability for better quality of life. This can be observed through improved purchasing power of gadgets, transport facilities and housing conditions. There is increased stress on providing education to the children.

Distribution of work among the genders

There is more visibility of women in the collection of old clothes, the residential localities of Mumbai, there seems to be weak and negative correlation ($p = -0.246$) between gender and hours of work. It was observed that over a half of the *bhandivale* were women. The multiple tasks in which women were occupied in such as sorting the clothes that are collected, sometimes washing and ironing them, carrying the bundles of clothes that were collected to the shared tempo service, selling them directly at Chor Bazaar, purchasing utensils from dealers, preparing for the next day's collection all these along with looking after children and the household chores. The contribution of women in the recycling business was significantly higher than that of men. However women in the presence of their husbands did not acknowledge this fact. Two *bhandivale* women asked the researcher if there were any jobs available for their husbands who were supposed to be 'helping' in the old clothes selling business at Chor Bazaar.

Number of and nature of participation of children

Table 4 shows the kind of participation of the children of the *bhandivale* in the collection and selling of old clothes. More than 67 percent of the *bhandivale* children do not participate in the business activities of their

Table 4: Number of working children

Number of working children	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
One	6	11.5	11.5
Two	4	7.7	19.2
Three	7	13.5	32.7
None	35	67.3	100
Total	52	100	

Parents as they are if school going age. Those who are involved were between the age group of 17 and 20 years. They had dropped out of formal education and helped in various activities that were defined like four percent were helping in collection and carrying the bundles of clothes. Eight percent help in carrying and another eight percent in accessing and co-ordinating with *chindhivale*. It was observed that more number of working children belonged to families of the Waghri caste. A Chi-square test showed an association between the sub caste and participation of children in the profession. It may be inferred that there is a significant association between the two attributes. That is, there is an association between caste and the number of children in the profession.

It is observed in Fig. 6 that there are more number of children working in the profession in the *Waghri* caste as compared to the *Gondhali* and *Kunchikorve*. This may be due to the higher rate of school drop-outs among the *Waghri* children [5]. The tabulated value of chi-square at 0.09 level of confidence at 2 degree of freedom is 4.61. The calculated value (9.385) is higher than the critical value. It may be inferred that there is a significant association between the two attributes nature of participation and the sub-caste.

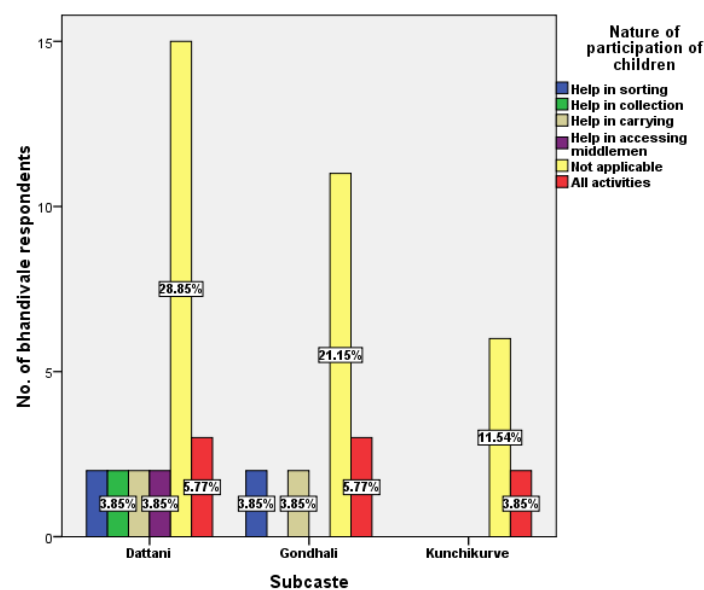


Fig. 8: Participation of children in different sub caste

That is, there is an association between caste and the number of children in the profession. Some of the reasons cited are the lack of motivation to study, expenses on education, not being able to afford on providing remedial and coaching to the children who do not perform in studies and the expense on education. Some of the reasons for poor educational levels in the *Waghri* children are cited are the lack of motivation to study, expenses on education, not being able to afford on providing remedial and coaching to the children who do not perform in studies and the expense on education. Children are expected to involve themselves in economic activities [3]. As soon as they drop out of school they join their parents business of collection and selling of old clothes.

Generation-Next in the *bhandivale* profession

A very small proportion of *bhandivale* give cash alone in exchange. They are mostly in the younger age group between 20-25 years. Most of those who were interviewed belonged to the *Waghri* community. These *bhandivale* usually do not carry any utensils with them but they do carry a basket to carry the bundles of old clothes. Since they do not carry utensils they are not recognized on the roads easily. They may be easily spotted wearing the latest trend of jeans and sport a single earring in one ear. They want to be noticed. But they do not wish to be identified as *bhandivale*. They are more selective of the clothes and are on the look-out for gents' garments like jeans, pants and shirts. Most of these are sold through agents on railway bridges and road sides or weekly markets. The agents are mostly migrants from Uttar Pradesh who follow the Muslim religion. There were no children working in other professions found among the *bhandivale* respondents in the study. Children of *bhandivale* are getting educated and taking up professional courses may be the trend of the future in *bhandivale* families.

Competition Faced

There was no *bhandivale* who admitted to having to face competition in their business. They did not express or foresee any threat to their business of collecting old clothes from the residential areas in Mumbai. One of the respondents, Ratna, 31 years old who collects clothes in the Borivali and Dahisar area belonged to the Waghri caste. She mentioned that, “*Jiske naseeb main hai usiko milta hai.*” (One gets whatever is destined to her/him). This feeling was echoed by most of the *bhandivale*. They did not feel the competition even at the place of selling at Chor Bazaar. The *bhandivale* leave as early as 3.30 A.M to Chor Bazaar so as to get enough space at the road side at Chor Bazaar to sell their clothes. However there were some who had changed their profession for better prospects as in the Case of Hiranna.

Case 2:

Hiranna, aged 43 years old had given up the collection of clothes business 12 years ago. He was into contract labour with the Mahanagar Palika Office and worked with the ‘Clean- Up’ Department in collecting the daily garbage. When the slums were rehabilitated to buildings His family was living in the redeveloped Uday Society at Dharavi Labour Camp. He helps his wife who continues the family *bhandivale* business and he helps her in loading the bundles of clothes on to the shared tempo at 4 A.M. in the morning. When questioned why his wife continued in the business he said that it was his family business for generations. She claimed to be earning enough to educate the five children in English medium schools and also provide them with private tuitions for the same.

Hiranna mentioned that there could be at least 4000 *bhandivale* in the Dharavi area alone. As the 2011 census report could not be made available at the time of the analysis of this study, no statistical data could be accessed. There were 16 *bhandivale* families in the same residential housing society. However they did not feel there was any competition or threat to their business.

Harassment faced Case 3

Bhandivale who were on the move for door to door collection in residential areas did not complain of any kind of harassment. It was the *bhandivale* who operate from Thakur Village in Kandivili who said that they feared police harassment. One peculiarity in this area is that the *bhandivale* wait on the roadside with their stainless steel and plastic wares. During one of the visits to that area, 20 years old Mayur was apprehensive when he asked, “*Aap hamara dhanda bandh to nahi karvaiyenge na?*” (Hope you will not get us to stop our business here). They reported that they had to dodge the police with their basket of utensils whenever they came on their rounds. Thakur Village is a residential area with several high rise buildings. Accessing them is not as easy as that of *chawls* they reported. They had to wait for the housewives to approach them and show them the utensils. If the housewife was satisfied with any one of them; then they could accompany her to their residential flat in the high rise buildings. The security guards do not permit the *bhandivale* to enter the gate unless accompanied by the homemaker. On their own the *bhandivale* cannot enter the premises and access the clients. Though they do not see this as a problem and have accepted this as part of the change in the way they operate. Other than this area - Thakur Village, Kandivili East in Mumbai, where there are at least 12 *bhandivale* of who three were included in this sample, there were no *bhandivale* in any other part of the city who wait for customers to access them. This seems to have been a change in their working conditions.

Changes in the Professional lives of *Bhandivale*

According to literature, when Waghri people migrated from Gujarat to the adjoining areas, some of them adopted some new occupations. Apart from exchanging stainless steel utensils for old clothes, they are also engaged as daily wage labourers in Mumbai [3]. From the present study it is learnt that those who have changed their profession in the last five years have not completely given up trading of old clothes. There are at least few other family members who are involved and continue the trade while the alternate occupation gives steady supplementary income for a better standard of living.

Change in Collection of Clothes

In the past the *bhandivale* collected clothes selectively; only those clothes like trousers, shirts, formal suits, saris, salwar kameez and jeans. In the present days the *bhandivale* specialize in collection of particular type of garments and for a particular purpose. For example salwar kameez with bead work, zardozi, crystal work and elaborate hand or machine embroidery are selected for the purpose not for resale but for the value the garment will fetch in the markets in Rajasthan where the surface ornamentation is transferred to another garment for reuse. The portion of the embroidery is cut out and sold by weight for Rs. 300 per Kilogram. The remaining part of the kameez or the salwar

or burkha is sold for between Rs. 12 to Rs. 20 per kilogram of cut garments. Similarly there are *bhandivale* who specialize in collection of denim jeans or only sarees, some only collect cotton sarees, only trousers or shirts. The preference is for full sleeved shirts. Half sleeve shirts are undervalued in the exchange process. They travel bi-weekly or on weekly basis long distances within and inter-state for collection and sale with ease. Clothes collected in Mumbai may be sold in Surat or Vapi. Clothes collected from Loni, Parbani, Nasik and other parts of interior Maharashtra are sold in Mumbai.

Collection of clothes from High-rise residential buildings

Sourcing old clothes from an increasing number of high rise tower apartments and large residential complexes in the different residential areas of Mumbai; is not seen as a problem by *bhandivale*. Often this is done with the help of the security staff of residential buildings. Some of them wait like other hawkers by the road side for customers to access them. This seems to have been a change in their working conditions. Regardless of the level of education, the *bhandivale* of all age groups use a mobile in their professional activities. They specialize in collection and sale of a particular type of garment from households for example jeans only or shirts and trousers or sarees or salwar suits. In exchange they offer not only utensils but casseroles and other home utility items or cash.

Future trends

The trend in the future with regards to disposal of used clothes could be on the same lines as that of newspaper in the present time in Mumbai. The deal is a phone call away. The younger generation of the *bhandivale* use mobile phones. They may be able to pick up used clothes with a phone call. As of the present clothes are collected and sold by piece. The trend of collection of old clothes by weight has started and may be the likely practice in future. These changes in the professional lives of *bhandivale* have been noticed during the course of this study. In the case of used clothing from Urban households, redistribution will help prolong the life of garments, satisfy the clothing needs of poor and reduce the load on the landfill/dumping grounds of Deonar, Mulund, Gorai and Malad in Mumbai.

CONCLUSION

From the present study it is learnt that although the sample consisted of nearly equal number of men and women; the women involve themselves in more number of professional activities than men and hence their visibility is more. The participation of children in the trade is more in Waghri subcaste due to school drop-out. The collection of old clothes which is done in the afternoon and evening hours, whereas the direct selling at Chor bazaar which is done early in the morning. On an average 5 to 8 hours in collection including travel time and breaks. Some of the changes seen in over the years are in the flexibility of exchanging items other than utensils for old clothes. The younger generation offer cash. Sourcing clothes from residents of increasing number of high rise apartment buildings in Mumbai is not seen as a problem. Those who have changed their profession have not completely given up trading of old clothes. There are at least few other family members who are involved and continue the trade while the alternate occupation gives steady supplementary income for a better standard of living. The trend of collecting used clothes for sale as second hand clothing is to continue as a profession in India.

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