CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a vital component of a research design (Kothari, 2003). It is the procedure followed in a research work. It explains how the research problem is solved systematically. Accordingly, in this chapter the procedure followed in the present study is presented. It presents in detail the following aspects of the methodology of the study. A detailed explanation of each category is given below.

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1. Theoretical Framework

Many theories of ageing have been proposed by different authors. The present study has taken into consideration certain psycho-social theories for the conduct of the study. The Modernization theory of ageing states that the status of the elderly has declined since industrialisation and spread of technology. We see that this theory is applicable in the case of elderly in Tamil Nadu. More and more old age homes are coming up since the nuclear family of the present days is not in a position to take care of the aged and both the husband and wife in the urban area are earning members and have to attend to work during the day time. The origin of nuclear family can be traced the industrialisation and urbanisation and the job opportunities created by the spread of technology.

According to the Disengagement theory, the separation of older people from active roles in society is normal and appropriate and benefits both society and older people. The question whether this theory is applicable to elders from all cultures and societies is debatable. Also it would be appropriate to investigate when exactly the process of disengagement starts.
Ill different cultures and societies, because in many extended families, the elderly are engaged in child care and many elders occupy administrative, managerial and advisory positions till an advanced age.

Another important theory is Activity theory. This view holds that the more active people are they are more likely to be satisfied with life. Many studies, including the present one have tried to ascertain the veracity of the theory. Is life’s satisfaction dependent on external factors or one’s own attitude and behaviour? The implication of this theory is far reaching because if this theory is found true the elderly can be kept active through programmes that may be decided by policy makers.

The continuity theory maintains that ageing people are inclined to maintain as much as they can, the same habits, personalities and styles of life of their past years. This is because the aged are happy and secure in the way of life to which they are used. The cognitive theory also lends support to the continuity theory by saying that one’s subjective perception rather than the actual objective charge which determines the behaviour of the aged. As the behaviour of the individual is largely determined by the affective aspects, the present study has attempted to study the affective aspect ie. happiness during old age.

There are also the life course theories of Erikson and Havighurst which state the relationship between accomplishment during old age and life satisfaction and happiness. Many studies have attempted to find out the relationship between the physical changes, changed social circumstances and person’s sense of subjective well being.
Besides these psycho social theories, there are Biological theories of gerontology. There explain the biological changes of ageing and the role of biological factors such as hormonal change, body cells, genetic code, body’s immense system and metabolism.

All these theories have formed the theoretical framework of the present study. The researcher has attempted to study whether her aged subjects were ageing happily and which situation helps them to age happily situation. An understanding of these theories has helped her to prepare the conceptual framework of the study and the interview schedule for the study.

2. Type of Research

The present study titled “Factors Influencing Happy Ageing: A Comparison of Old Age Home and Own Home Inmates” is a survey to find out the happy ageing status of the elderly in old age homes, in comparison with those in their own homes. The present study is descriptive in nature as it is a fact-finding investigation designed to gather descriptive information. Data were collected using interview schedule. In the present study, variables related to happy ageing are compared between the elderly in the old age homes and those residing in their own homes.

The present study can be said as a qualitative study in so far as it attempts to study the variables contributing to the happy ageing status. It can also be said as a quantitative study as for comparing the happy ageing status, a scale was constructed and happy ageing scores were calculated. This helped in comparison between own home inmates and old age home inmates.
Area of the Study

The present study was carried out in Madurai District of Tamil Nadu state. Tamil Nadu has 31 districts. Madurai is the 2nd largest city in Tamil Nadu. The district comprises blocks, municipalities, town panchayats, village panchayats and villages. There are 13 blocks, 15 town panchayats and 43 village panchayats.

According to the census in 2001, Madurai had a population of 25,623 who were 60 years and above (Mohan, 2004). A large number of textile and spinning mills provide employment to thousands of people. Many people have come from far away villages with their families and settled here* and that population has contributed to the large population in the district.

In Madurai district there are 32 old age homes (The positions of old age homes is given in the map on page No 63) run by the government, NGOs, Charitable institutions and many individuals. Though old age homes have been in existence for more than a decade, investigations reveal that very few studies have been conducted on the elderly in this area. Studies so far conducted included status of the elderly, institutions for the elderly, problems of the elderly, etc. But the mental status or happiness of the elderly in the institutions has not been studied so far.

Among the 31 districts in Tamil Nadu, Madurai was chosen for the study because of the higher number of old age homes found here compared to other districts in Tamil Nadu.
4. Sampling Design

The primary purpose of the study was to find out the factors influencing happy ageing among the aged. Studying a whole population of the aged to arrive at a generalization is not at all practicable. The process of sampling makes it possible to draw valid inferences or generalize on the basis of careful observation of the variables in relation to a relatively small proportion of the population. Hence a sample was drawn for the study.

I) The Population of the Study. The population of a study meant all the individuals of a particular type of group (Best and Kahn, 2002). The population of the present study comprised all the males and females in the old age homes studied. It was found that there were 599 males and females in all the old age homes studied.

ii) The Sample of the Study. The sample of the study comprised 300 elderly taken from the total population of 599 from the old age homes. And the 300 elderly comprising both male and female, who were 60 year and above. 95 of them were male and 205 were female. For the purpose of comparison, an equal number of the elderly staying in their own homes were selected. They were of the same age group (both male and female) and were of the same economic status. Thus the total sample consisted of 600 elderly from old age homes and own homes.'
a) **Selection of the Sample from Old Age Homes.** The sample size of respondents from old age homes was fixed as 300. This was limited to 300 because of certain practical difficulties. One of them was the difficulty in collecting data from the aged who were bedridden, deaf etc. Time constraint was the second reason. Interviewing more than 300 would have taken more time for the study.

Stratified random sampling method was adopted to select the sample for the study. The diagram given below explains the methodology followed:

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Total Population (599)
   /-------------------
  /                   
/                     
Total Male (190)      Total Female (409)
   |                    |
102 Widowers          316 Widows
   |                    |      |                    |
   |                    |      50%                  50%      50%      50%      50%      50%      50%
| 50%                 | 50%     | 50%                  | 50%     | 50%     | 50%     |
51 Widowers           21 Singles           158 Widows
   |                    |                    | 29 Singles
   |                    |                    | 18 Divorcees
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The population of the study consisted of 599 elderly from 32 old age homes of Madurai district. The total population was subdivided into homogenous strata of 190 males and 409 females. Male population was again stratified into widowers, singles and divorcees. From among them 50 per cent of sample were drawn by random sampling. In the same way the total 409 women were stratified into widows, singles and divorcees and from among them a sample of 50 per cent was selected by random sampling.
b) Selection of the Sample from Own Homes. For determining the factors contributing to happy ageing, a comparative sample of elderly from own homes was selected. For comparison purposes a comparative sample was selected in such a way that they were similar in all characteristics except that they were staying in their own homes. Hence after determining the socio-economic characteristics of the aged from old age homes, from the neighbourhood of the old age homes a sample of elderly from own homes was selected by the purposive sampling method. Thus 300 elderly were selected from own homes.

5. Tools Used for Data Collection

The tools used for data collection were an interview schedule and a happy ageing scale. An interview schedule generally contains a set of questions logically related to the problem under study. It aims at eliciting responses from the respondents during interviewing (Krishnaswamy, 2005).

The tool interview was chosen to collect data from the subjects of the study because of certain specific reasons. First of all, most of them because of their lower education status and problems with eyesight were not in a position to fill in questionnaires. Questionnaires were tried and only after this trial, the interview method was chosen as a right method. Secondly, as happiness is an affective condition, the researcher wanted to know first hand in a face- to- face situation how the participant really felt about their own conditions at own home and old age home. Also, it was doubtful whether even those who could read and write would have filled up the questioners without the interference of the caretakers. As this would bring distorted
picture of their happiness, the researcher decided to use only interview method for data collection.

As assessing the happy ageing status of the participants was the major aim of the study, the researcher constructed her own happy ageing scale after surveying a number of scales such as subjective well being scales successful ageing scales and life satisfaction scales.

**i) Interview Schedules.** For the present study, two interview schedules were prepared. One for the aged in the old age homes and another for the aged in their own homes (they are given in the appendices I & II). The first part in both the schedules had two sub-divisions. The first sub-division contained items for collecting the socio-economic profile of the elderly which included age, sex, religion, educational status, and occupation before coming to old age homes, marital status, details about their children, pension details, duration of their stay in old age homes, reasons for coming to old age homes, method of spending leisure time in old age homes, etc. The second sub-division contained questions to elicit information on their physical disability and health problems.

**ii) Happy Ageing Scale.** This scale was prepared by the investigator for the specific purpose of measuring happy ageing (the happy ageing scale is given in the appendix III). As the first step, the variables for happy ageing were studied thoroughly from literature, internet, and by interaction with the elderly from old age homes and with the experts in the field. These variables were healthy life style, economic security, functional autonomy, religiosity, life satisfaction, work participation, acceptance of ageing, inter-personal relationship, family relationship, emotional security, cognitive well - being
and inter-generational activity. Based on these variables 54 statements were prepared. Each statement was rated on a 3 point scale of ‘Agree’, ‘Undecided’ and 'Disagree’. The scores given for ‘Agree’ were 2, for ‘Undecided’ 1 and for ‘Disagree’ 0. The total scores obtainable by an individual ranged from 54 to 108.

This scale was also administrated along with the interview schedule.

Construction of Research Tools. Items in the interview schedule were collected after an extensive review of literature. From literature review the researcher got acquainted with the various concepts such as subjective well being, life satisfaction, successful ageing etc. As happy ageing include, as defined by the researcher, all these three aspects, the tools used by previous researchers were analysed and items comparable between own home and old age home inmates were identified and adopted by the researcher.

The questions for the tool were first prepared in English. For use in the field by the researcher, the items were translated into the regional language. Though the researcher was well versed in the regional language and in English, to avoid waste of time in on-the-site translation, the researcher used the translated questionnaire in the field. The interview schedule was given to professional translators so that the affective aspect can be thoroughly investigated.

iii) Pre-test of the Tools. The interview schedule was pre-tested on a sub sample of ten elderly from the old age homes and own homes. The pre-
iv) **Reliability of the Tools.** The reliability of the tools was tested by test re-test method. The finalized interview schedule and the happy ageing scale were administered to 20 elderly in the old age homes and own homes. The same tool was again administered after an interval of one month to the same respondents. Thus the reliability of the scale was ensured by test re-test method. The correlation coefficient was 0.81.

v) **Validity of the Tools.** The validity of the tools was found based on its content. Content validity has been based on the application of logic and on the logically appropriate statements used in the tool for finding out the happiness of individuals. Content validity was found out by giving the tools to 5 experts including those from sociology, psychology and gerontology.

4 Methods of Data Collection

Data were collected using the interview method. The interview method is one of the most powerful techniques of data collection through primary sources. This method was selected for the present study as it is the only method which enables the investigators to obtain the feelings of the respondents and helps them in obtaining first hand information even from the illiterates (Kothari, 2003). Owing to the peculiar condition of the elderly the investigator decided that interview would be the most appropriate method.

All the 600 respondents were studied using the interview method.
i) **Pata Collection in Old Age Homes.** In order to collect data from the elderly, as the first step, the purpose of the study was explained to them in groups. This also helped to create a rapport with the investigator. Then the schedule was filled by interviewing each one of the samples. In some old age homes, all wanted to be interviewed and the researcher had to pretend to include them in the investigation without actually doing so. One of the reasons was under age and the other one was incoherence in answering. At times collecting correct information was rather difficult from them. The investigator had to interrupt some of them in between as they wanted to talk and say many things. Sometimes it was hard for the investigator to make the elderly understand the questions. Repeated efforts were necessary to make them understand what information she needed.

In some old age homes the caretakers wanted to be with the respondents while interviewing. This prevented the elderly from expressing freely what they wished to talk. In many of the houses the elderly were free to talk. The respondents were open to share their difficulties and problems without any inhibition.

In two paid homes, the elderly were not cooperative. They were rather irritated by the presence of the outsiders. Some of them said that they were allergic towards filling up questionnaires. They said that students visited them very frequently and asked them very sensitive questions. This reminded of their past painful experiences which left them unhappy for days.

!i) **Data Collection In Own Homes.** Respondents were selected from rural and semi urban areas of Madurai district. The elderly from own homes were hesitant to speak in the presence of the other members of the family.
Therefore the investigator chose the time when the rest of the family members would have left for their work. The elderly were happy to speak when they were alone.

In order to identify a widow or widower the investigator had to get the help of other elderly in that street and with their help visited the families of the elderly and collected the necessary details. It was a time consuming procedure. The investigator had to spend a lot of time for each individual to create rapport and collect data. In some places the elderly from nearby areas had gathered in the evening for talking among themselves. Such occasions helped in identifying and acquainting with the sample.

7. Analysis of Data '

The data collected for the study were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. For the analysis of the data SPSS software was used. For analyzing the data percentage, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation were the statistical methods used. Both parametric and irai-parametric tests were used (t-test and chi-square test) for the analysis of data. The data collected through interview were checked for their completeness. Responses which were written in short from were expanded and written in fell form on the same day. They were then coded and fed into the computer. The frame of analysis was prepared keeping the objectives in view. The cross tables were prepared wherever needed, especially, when finding out the influence of the variables. Accordingly dummy tables were prepared in order to avoid analysis of data which did not fit in the objectives. The major findings with implications are presented in the Results and discussion chapter.