CHAPTER - III

METHODOLOGY

The review of literature had shown that there are very few studies in India which directly ascertain the attitude of students towards higher education.

Over the years it has been observed that considerable number of students drop out at the higher education level with very few completing the course, and a larger number joining the courses because of the availability of fellowships and other facilities. This gave an indication that students perhaps were really not interested in higher education but use it more as a stop gap arrangement until better alternatives were available to them. If this were so, it would mean that higher education, perhaps, is not serving the purpose and therefore is perhaps becoming redundant in the context of Indian educational setting.

Keeping the above in view, it was felt that by knowing the attitude of students at higher education level towards the same, one could get an idea from students point of view, the defects and problems in higher

Contd...
education, which could then be taken up and dealt with.

Thus the main objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To study the attitudes towards higher education of students of Jawaharlal Nehru University doing their M.Phil and above level courses.

2. To study and compare the attitudes of students of J.N.U. towards higher education in terms of different schools, and within the same school in terms of different centres.

3. To study the relationship between a student’s attitude towards higher education and the number of fellowships available to the students in regard to those courses.

4. To study the relationship, if any, between the attitude towards higher education and the opportunities for appearing in some of the central services examinations.

5. To ascertain the relationship if any between attitude towards higher education and the socio-demographic variables related to the students.

Contd...
6. To ascertain the relationship if any between continuing or completion of higher education courses by a student and his/her attitude towards higher education.

with the above objectives in view the following hypotheses were laid down.

**Hypothesis - 1**

"THE ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION, WILL BE UNFAVOURABLE".

**Rationale**

As the total output of the different schools and centres is very poor and as there had been a very high rate of dropout inspite of the maximum facilities provided to students, it was thought that the attitude of students towards higher education will be negative.

**Hypothesis - 2**

"THERE WILL BE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALE, FEMALE STUDENTS IN THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION".

**Rationale**

In many studies relating to education, researchers...
have found a difference in performance as a function of sex factor. For instance, Mura (1980) found that the attitude of boys towards mathematics was more favourable than that of girls. Sex factor had always been one of the major determinants of an individual's personality; hence it was thought that there could be a difference between male and female students in their attitude towards higher education.

**Hypothesis 3**

"STUDENTS BELONGING TO DIFFERENT SCHOOLS WILL HAVE DIFFERENTIAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION."

**Rationale:**

In some studies, Badami and Badami (1976), differences in students' attitude towards certain issues had been found to be related to the courses they were pursuing. Indireen, (1979) and Badami and Badami (1976) found a difference between the Engineering and Social Sciences students towards certain aspects of higher education. Thus it was thought that students belonging to different courses of study could have differential attitude towards higher education.

Contd...
Hypothesis - 4

"WITHIN THE SAME SCHOOL, STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT CENTRES WILL HAVE DIFFERENTIAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION".

Rationale:

It is well known that even though the centres belong to the same school, each centre differs from the others; in terms of courses, teachers, students, teacher-student ratio, relationship etc. Thus one may expect these differences among centres to bring about differences in the students attitude towards higher education.

Hypothesis - 5

"THERE WILL BE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION".

Rationale:

This hypothesis is based on the rationale that attitude can change with the passage of time, maturity, exposure to various complex aspects of the world, and so on. Thus the student of various age groups will differ in the above mentioned features, and in this institution of
higher education (J.N.U.) there are students belonging to various age groups. Thus it was thought worthwhile to find out if the student's attitude towards higher education was in any way related to the age of the student concerned.

**Hypothesis - 6**

"STUDENT BELONGING TO DIFFERENT STATES WILL DIFFER IN THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION."

**Rationale**

India's 31 States (22 States and 9 Union Territories) differ from each other in their norms, culture and traditions. These differences are also characteristically observed among the people belonging to the particular States. One could thus expect the students of the concerned state to manifest these differences in their attitude, behaviour etc. J.N.U. generally attracts and admits students from almost all States of India, and hence one could expect the background and culture aspects of students to influence their attitudes towards higher education.

Contd...
Hypothesis - 7

"THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION WILL DIFFER AMONG STUDENTS COMING FROM RURAL AND URBAN BACKGROUND".

Rationale:

It is well known that people belonging to rural areas behave very differently from their urban counterparts. They have highly set, rigid ideas, prejudices and notions, whereas the urban people are relatively more open to contrary arguments and viewpoints. Further, the educational background being very poor in the rural areas one could expect their attitude towards higher education to be different as compared to those of urban people.

Hypothesis - 8

"THERE WILL BE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SC/ST STUDENTS AND OTHERS IN THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION".

Rationale:

This hypothesis is based on the fact that SC/ST students are relatively more economically and
educationally deprived as compared to the non SC/ST students and these factors may influence their attitude towards higher education.

Hypothesis - 9

"ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION WILL BE A FUNCTION OF INCOME, EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION OF THE PARENTS OF THE STUDENTS".

Rationale :

Since family influences the students to a great extent, it was thought worthwhile to find out if the varying income, education and occupation of the parents of students, in any way affected the attitude of students towards higher education.

Hypothesis - 10

"THERE WILL BE A DIFFERENCE IN THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION BETWEEN THE STUDENTS WHO APPEARED FOR DIFFERENT COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS AND THOSE WHO DID NOT".

Rationale :

It has been generally observed that a large number of students enrolled in M.Phil/Ph.D programmes give priority to appear for various Central and

Contd...
State Services examinations. In other words they appear to be more interested in such examinations rather than pursuing higher education. Thus one could expect that the students who appeared for various examinations other than for what they were enrolled to have relatively less positive attitude towards higher education as compared to the students who did not appear for any examinations apart from the one for which he was enrolled.

**Hypothesis - 12**

"THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION OF A STUDENT IS A FUNCTION OF THE NUMBER OF FELLOWSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR THAT PARTICULAR COURSE CONCERNED."

**Rationale:**

The fellowships are generally good incentives to attract students to higher education. One could, therefore, expect that a student will be attracted towards that centre to do his higher education course, which has relatively a large number of fellowships to offer to the students. Hence depending upon the number of fellowships available one could expect the attitude towards higher education of students belonging to different centres also to differ.

Contd...
Hypothesis - 12

"The attitude towards higher education of the students of a centre/school will be a function of the number of M.Phil/Ph.D. awards given by the centre.'

Rationale:

It is well known that a school or centre or a unit which has a large number of students completing the course concerned and getting a degree or award, will have greater attraction for students than those where there are fewer awards, more failures and dropouts. As such one could hypothesize that a centre which has awarded degrees and diplomas to more students will attract relatively larger number of students with a positive attitude towards higher education than centres which had not awarded an equal number of degree or diploma.

Hypothesis - 13

"The attitude towards higher education will differ significantly between the students who desire to continue the course as compared to those who do not desire so.'

Rationale:

The effective component of attitude has been Contd...
demonstrated by many social psychology, (for example, Saccoz and Beckman 1976), if the students expresses a desire to discontinue the course, it could to an extent indicate that no/she may be having a less positive attitude towards higher education than those who express a desire to complete the course. Thus one could expect a relationship between the students desire to complete a course and his/her attitude towards higher education.

**Sampling**

To test the above mentioned hypotheses the subjects chosen for the study were students from J.N.U. doing their M.Phil/Ph.D courses in different centres under different schools.

In order to arrive at a representative sample of the student population of J.N.U. the following procedures was adopted.

**Step - 1**

All the 6 schools of J.N.U. were covered which included School of Social Sciences, School of
International Studies, School of Languages, School of Life Sciences, School of Environmental Science, and School of Computer System & Science.

**Step - 2**

From each of the 6 schools all the centres were listed down (Details of the centres under each school are given in the appendix).

**Step - 3**

There were only 3 schools which had centres under them, while the other three schools had no centres, and functioned as schools only.

**Step - 4**

From each centre and from each school (where there were no centres) 20% of the total enrolled students for M.Phil/Ph.D. who were registered at the time of data collection from each school or centre, as the case may be, was taken as the sample. This 20% was randomly chosen from each centre/school using random numbers from random tables.

Contd...
Step 5

Thus a sample of 65 students was selected from the School of Social Sciences from all its centres, whereas a sample of only 7 students was obtained from the school of computer systems & science as it had no centre under it. The detailed number of students selected randomly from each school/centre is given in the table below:

Table A 1 Sample of the students from each School/Centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>SSS</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(These schools have no centres under them)</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>19</td>
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Total No.
of Sample 65 48 21 11 11 7

Contd...
A total of 169 students was thus randomly selected and were administered the attitude scale and the questionnaire devised specifically for the purpose of this study.

**Tools for collection of data**

The instruments used for the collection of data were as follows:

1. An attitude measurement scale to ascertain the attitude of students towards higher education.

2. A questionnaire to ascertain the socio-demographic factors and certain characteristic features regarding students opinion about the various aspects of higher education.

3. A questionnaire for the administrative staff of the concerned schools/centres which covered various aspects such as the number of students registered in a year, fellowships available, and the degree awarded etc.

An attitude scale was developed specially for this study based on the Thurstone - Chava method of attitude scale construction. The procedure adopted was as follows:

Contd...
The first step was to write out a large number of statements relating to higher education. Thus a total of 150 statements was written, covering positive, negative and neutral attitude towards higher education.

The second step was to pool all these statements together in a random manner.

The third step was to select a large number of judges from different walks of life for rating the scale items, so as to arrive at a scale value for each of the 150 statements.

The total number of judges selected was 100, of which 10 each were academicians, lawyers, administrators, Engineers, Psychologists, Doctors, educationists and policy makers, social workers, and 5 were officers working banks and another 5 were people from various walks of life.

The fourth step was to give all those 150 statements to all the 100 judges, with the following instructions:

"An attitude measurement scale is being developed to ascertain the attitude of students towards higher education. To develop this scale, 150 statements have been pooled together of which some indicate positive, some negative and some neutral attitude towards higher education. As a judge you are requested to indicate to what extent each one of these statements indicates positive,
negative or neutral attitude towards higher education.

Please do not give your own opinion or attitude towards the statements, but merely indicate the degree to which a statement reflects a favourable, unfavourable or neutral attitude towards higher education.

To be more specific, here are 150 statements regarding the attitude towards higher education ranging from extremely unfavourable via neutral to extremely favourable. You have to place each one of these statements in the 11-point scale given below. In this scale, numbers 1-4 indicate unfavourable attitude, 5-7 neutral attitude and 8-11 favourable attitude.

Now, you have simply to judge each item on the nature and degree of its being favourable, unfavourable or neutral attitude, and to place each and every statement in the appropriate category in the 11-point scale given below.

11 = Point Scale

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<td>Extremly unfavourable</td>
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<td>Very unfavourable</td>
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<td>Neutral inclined to be unfavourable</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>Neutral inclined to be favourable</td>
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<td>Favourable</td>
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<td>11.</td>
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<td>Extremely favourable</td>
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Contd...
Of the total of 100 questionnaires only 75 were returned back duly filled in as per the instructions.

The fifth step was to calculate the median scale value for each statement on the basis of the scale values assigned to them by judges.

After having determined the median scale value for each statement 33 statements were selected finally. To select these 33 statements following criteria were used:

1. The scale value assigned to a statement should not differ too widely between the judges, for e.g. one judge placing the item at the 1-point and another placing the same at 11-point.

2. The interval between the chosen items should be such that there should be an equal interval between one item and the other.

The 33 finally chosen statements were then pooled together in a random order to produce the final attitude measurement scale.

Contd...
The attitude score of each subject was then to be determined on the basis of the total scores agreeing responses with any number of statements out of the 33 statements.

The Thurstone method of attitude scale construction is also known as, "the method of equal appearing interval scale" and has been more widely used than any other method of scale construction.

The outstanding feature of this method is the use of judges to determine the point on the attitude continuum. This method is economical and basically a common sense type of instrument. It permits the construction of fairly reliable and valid scales. The use of judges to estimate the intensity of attitude is rather a strong point of the Thurstone scale. It is an advantage in that, the scale position has a rational meaning that would be difficult to obtain by other methods. The use of judges is particularly helpful in locating the neutral point on the attitude scale. It is because of these estimable advantages that the Thurstone scale method was selected for this study.

This scale has, however, certain limitations.

Contd...
A potential weakness in this scale is the absence of any direct procedure to determine whether there is only one attitude or more involved in the statements. Although statements with high inter-judge variability are removed from the scale this is not a precise method for purifying the scale.

The attitude measurement scale and the questionnaires were distributed to all the 163 students selected as sample subjects for this study. The subjects were given instruction as follows:

"Here are some statements which are intended to study your attitude towards higher education. Kindly tick mark the 'Yes' category if you agree with the statement or tick mark 'No' if you disagree with the statement. Please do not leave any statement unanswered. Read each statement carefully and give your real agreement for disagreement to each statement".

After receiving the questionnaire back and the attitude score of each respondent was computed. The next chapter presents the result analysis of the data."