CHAPTER – III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design of the Study

A research design is the overall plan or programme of research. It is the general blueprint for sample selection, data collection, and analysis of data. The present study aims at describing the current status of women empowerment, it is therefore descriptive in nature, by fulfilling the objectives of the study. This study also describes the relationship between the variables especially profile of the women entrepreneurs and their empowerment and also the increase in empowerment through their education. Hence it is a descriptive research design.

3.2. Profile of Study Area

Dindigul district is an administrative region in the south of Tamil Nadu, India. It was carved out of Madurai District in 1985, and is famous for its lock and tannery industries. It has an area of 6266.64 square km and comprises three Revenue Divisions, eight Taluks, and 14 Panchayat Unions. The district has many waterfalls including AnjuVeedu, Bamen Falls, Bear Shola Falls, Fairy Falls, Gaur Vellaiyan, Glen Falls, Kumbakkarai Falls, Kuthiraiyar Falls, Kutladampatti Falls, Neptune Falls, Palar Falls, Pambar Falls, Poombarai Falls, Silver Cascade, Skamba Falls, Snake Falls, Thakkamthootam falls, Thalaiyar Falls (Rat tail) & Thoovanam Falls. The city is home to a major IT and textile spinning industries, which ranks highest
capacity within Tamil Nadu. A large number of Chamber Brick units are
functioning in this District. Dindigul Lock and Iron Safes are very famous for
its quality. Handloom, Rice milling, Groundnut and Vermicelli are the other
type of food based Industries functioning in this District. There is much scope
for starting the Leather based units, Lock units, Brick Units and Food based
units in this District. Dindigul is primarily an agro-based town of Tamil Nadu.
About 70% of the total population earn their livelihood directly or indirectly
through Agriculture. There are about 165 rice mills in and around Dindigul.
Famous flour mills Naga, Viskalakshi are located here. Anil Semia, Savorit
Semia, Nandhini Sambirani industries are also located in Dindigul. It is an
important wholesale market for Cotton, onions and groundnuts (peanuts).
Panneer Grapes which is a special type of black grapes is specific to Dindigul.
It has 8 taluks They are Dindigul, Palani, Athoor, Kodaikanal, Oddanchatram,
Vedasandur, Nattam and Nilakkottai. According to the 2011 Census, the
district has a total population of 2,161,367, roughly equal to the nation
of Namibia or the US state of New Mexico. This gives it a ranking of 211th in
India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 357
inhabitants per square kilometre (920/sq mi). Its population growth rate over
the decade 2001-2011 was 12.39 percent. Dindigul has a sex ratio of
998 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 76.85 percent.
3.3. Statement of the Problem

India is a country characterized by diversity, contrasts and contradictions. According to Human Development Index (HDI) assigned by the United Nations Development Programme, India assumes extremely low position in terms of human development, though assumes a high position as an exporter of software in the world. Half of the population of India constitutes women. About 300 million Indians are not able to even meet their basic subsistence needs. Development policies and programs framed are not viewing women as an integral part to the economic development of the nation. Indian women still have a low level of representation in the parliament of the Country and also assemblies in various states.
In traditional societies, women empowerment cannot happen overnight. It takes decades to produce constructive results. Despite the introduction of various schemes for empowering the women, the improvement in empowerment of women is not up to the expected level. Gender barriers still continue particularly in rural areas though the saying goes on “women are equal to men”. Due to the presence of socio-economic constraints in rural areas, the potential of women have not been fully utilized and they have been further pushed back into the social hierarchy. Women remained long neglected and the most deprived segment of the society, despite constitution guarantees equal rights and privileges for both men and women for making social returns. In labor markets, women earn less than the earnings of male partners.\(^1\) The working women in India are facing more challenges than their counter parts in other parts of the world. It is due to management of three areas viz., house, child and office. Work life balancing technique and empowerment in taking household decisions could improve the working conditions of working group of women and reduce the stress.

The inbuilt idea that women are capable of doing less work than men and are less efficient than men amounts to an injustice of paying low salary and wages to the female workers. The gender barrier at the entry level of work also persists that hampers the growth of the working women. Focus is to be given on empowering women and girls, because they are capable of bringing drastic changes in the society. Efforts have still to be taken by all in making strategic

\(^1\) Article ‘The role of micro finance in the empowerment of poor and general women folk’ by S.Gangadevi, Journal NCBF-2012 of Jamal Institute of Management Studies, Trichy.
approach to the empowerment of women. Though the women in rural areas are capable of hard working and motivated, they are not aware of the different development programmes and schemes announced by the Government and private organizations. The lack of education becomes the obstacle in getting empowerment. It becomes constitutional responsibility to give women the equal rights and opportunities as available to men. Empowering women must be a united approach which involves attention of all stakeholders. The rural women entrepreneurs are finding it difficult in marketing their products because of poor educational background. Though the women are having basic knowledge and understanding, they are not able to enter into business contracts, avail of loan facilities and incentive schemes, taxation procedures etc. due to lack of education and training.

Empowerment of women has emerged as an important issue in our society. Empowering women is a life cycle process and therefore, policies must be framed at every stage to suit the particular needs of the women. The contribution of women to the economic and social development could be possible only when women are empowered at every stage of life cycle. In the women empowerment process, the self help group (SHG) acts only as a window for development of rural women folk by usage of micro finance and interaction. The need of the day is to impart the knowledge of women by Higher education and training. Further creating awareness programmes

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2 Articles on 'Innovative programmes for the empowerment of women workers in India’ by N.Murugeswari, - Journal Innovate Business & Technology strategies for developing countries, MasilamaniPathipagam, Chennai.
regarding accessibility to loans, procedures of funding agencies for getting certification, improving the motivational skills and educating the importance of support from family and other organizations are the need of the hour. Since the empowerment involves competency development, effort is to be made to create a culture of continuous learning. The continuous learning goes beyond training and development programmes.

The process of empowerment requires patience, perseverance and commitment, which ultimately leads to quality results. In order to address the above issues, a maiden effort has been taken by the researcher to study the impact of higher education on women empowerment in Dindigul District Tamil Nadu, India.

3.4. Objectives of the Present Study

i. To exhibit the profile of the study respondents in Dindigul district.

ii. To identify the various levels of empowerments among the respondents.

iii. To analyse the association between the profile of the respondents and various levels of empowerment.

iv. To evaluate the impact of higher education on women empowerment.

v. To offer suggestions for enhancing the women empowerment based on the findings of the study.
3.5. Hypotheses

- **H₁**: Social empowerment has a significant and positive effect on overall empowerment of women.

- **H₂**: Economic empowerment has a significant and positive effect on overall empowerment of women.

- **H₃**: Political empowerment has a significant and positive effect on overall empowerment of women.

- **H₄**: Educational empowerment has a significant and positive effect on overall empowerment of women.

- **H₅**: Psychological empowerment has a significant and positive effect on overall empowerment of women.

- **H₆**: Overall empowerment has a significant and positive effect on outcome of empowerment of women.

3.6. Sampling Procedure

Scope of the study is confined to Dindigul district in Tamilnadu. The researcher has chosen three blocks in Dindigul district namely Athoor, Nilakkottai, and Dindigul in which three town panchayats selected for this study. The researcher gives equal distribution of sample size for three blocks. The researcher has fixed sample size for each block to be 210. Thus total size of the sample is 630 for the present research. The simple random sampling method is followed to select the sample from each town panchayat.
3.7. Construct Development

Since the present study is mainly based on primary data, an interview schedule was prepared which consists of three parts. The first part covers the profile of the respondents which includes all the socio, economic, psychological profile of the respondents. The second part of the interview schedule includes the education and reasons for joining the job, whereas the third part of the schedule consists of the status of the respondents. The empowerment variables related to social, economic, political, educational and psychological empowerment have been drawn from previous studies, and from the views of academic experts. A pre-test was conducted in the study area to finalise the data collection in each empowerment. Also the variables in all empowerment satisfy the validity (Cronbach alpha varies from 0.7374 to 0.8917), the selected variables had been included for the present study. Certain additions, deletions and modifications had been carried out as per the instructions of the academic experts. The final draft of the schedule had been prepared for the data collection.

3.8 Collection of Data

The study relied on both the primary and the secondary data.

3.8.1 Primary Data

The primary data were collected from the sample respondents with the help of structured interview schedule.

3.8.2 Secondary Data

The secondary data related to the women empowerment in the three blocks namely Athoor, Nilakkottai and Dindigul of the Dindigul district were
collected from the records available with Dindigul Collectorate. The details related to the programmes organized by government and NGO’s for enhancement of women empowerment and block wise details from 2008-2009 to 2012-2013 were collected from Dindigul Collectorate.

3.9. Statistical Tools Used for the Study

Data were processed and analysis were made using SPSS. Statistical tools employed in analyzing the data are as follows.

3.9.1. Reliability Analysis

The extent of reliability of the variables included in each factor or construct has been tested with the Cronbach Alpha (Nunnally, 1978)\(^3\). In the present study, it has been used to test the reliability of variables in each construct developed in the study. Besides Chi-Square test, Correlation, Multiple regression analysis, t-test, ANOVA and MANOVA have been used in data analysis.

3.10. Scope and Limitations of the Study

3.10.1. Scope of the Study

The study is confined to the women empowerment in Dindigul district. The included sample respondents are confined to women empowerment in three blocks namely Athoor, Nilakkottai, Dindigul of the Dindigul district.

3.10.2. Limitations

The limitations of the present study as follows

- The scope of the study is confined to Dindigul district only

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• In Dindigul district three blocks were identified and samples were collected from these blocks.

• The variables related to educational, economic, social, political and psychological were drawn from the review of previous studies and the views of experts in the field.

• The descriptive variables related to various aspects of women empowerment had been measured with the help of likert five point scale.

• The multiple regression analysis had been applied to examine the impact of independent variables on dependent variable with an assumption of linear relationship between them.

3.11. Chapterization

The thesis consists of five chapters.

The first chapter provides the basic concepts involved in empowerment and the procedure to measure these empowerment.

The second chapter deals with the review of previous studies.

The third chapter gives a detailed account of the research design, sampling procedure, tools and techniques for data collection and method of analysis.

The fourth chapter deals with the analysis of data and the empowerment gained in terms of social, economic, political, educational and psychological aspects of the respondents. Further, the association between the profile of the respondents and their empowerments are also examined.

The fifth chapter concludes a brief report of the study and its salient findings. The policy suggestions and future research areas are also given in this chapter.