CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Scope of the Study

Farmer has to play a vital role in the welfare of a nation. The present picture is that the farmer is sacrificed and victimized in India.

Though there are many reports in the newspapers and in the magazines about the crisis in the agricultural sector a detailed study was not done about the farmers. Globalization has got a direct impact on the people of Idukki because they produce for export. Therefore a study about the farmers of Idukki will tell upon the impact of globalization on the farmers.

A detailed study among the farmers in Idukki District will highlight clearly the causes of farmers suicide and their solutions. This study will be useful for formulating suggestions towards the problems of the cultivators. It will help the central government to have a new approach to the demands and dictates of the super powers and their organizations. Studies of this sort will force the Government to think twice before they sign international treaties. It will help the government officials to have a new approach to the welfare of the farmers. It will also help in formulating policies when the farmers are affected by cheap imports from other countries.

Though this is a microscopic study about a District which directly relies upon the income from the export of spices, the conclusions drawn from this study will have wider applications in the all India level.
Location of the Study

In Kerala many of the farmer suicides are taking place at Wayanad District. But I have taken Idukki District as the area of the study because of the following reasons.

1. Idukki is in the second place in the incidence of suicide of the farmers.

2. In Idukki farmers produce mainly for export not for consumption.

3. Globalization affects the Idukki farmers because their products are spices which are demanded in the international market.

4. Main income of the people are from the agriculture. Idukki is an industrially backward area too.

Because of the above reasons the researcher took Idukki as the study area.

Data Base

The main source of the data for this study was primary data collected by the researcher. Relatives of the farmers who committed suicide, their neighbors, community leaders, prominent figures in the village etc. were interviewed directly. The researcher also interviewed the Panchayath Presidents, Panchayath Members, Panchayath Secretary, Krishi Bhavan Officers and the Agricultural University Officials.

Secondary data relevant for this study were collected from books published by experts, data published by government authorities, Agricultural Department Studies, Studies conducted by various private agencies, data published by International Agencies, Publications by different Panchayaths, Magazines, Periodicals, News Papers, Weeklies, and unpublished data from various University Libraries, Internet services etc. were made use of for obtaining information on the topic.
Unit of Study

For data collection only the houses of the farmers who have committed suicide were selected. The reason for selecting these houses is on the ground that these are the people who are worst affected for one reason or the other. The researcher visited 135 houses of the farmers who have committed suicide during the period 2006 - 2008

4.5 METHOD ADOPTED FOR DATA COLLECTION

Spending much time with the family members of the selected households and interviewed them informally. It would be unfair to ask the close relative of a deceased person about the details with a typed questionnaire. Even in the absence of the formal questionnaire utmost care is taken to find out the major reason for the suicide of the farmer.

The important reports that appeared in the news papers about the suicides of farmers were also collected.

PERIOD OF STUDY

The period of study of the data collection is Jan – June 2009.

CONCEPTS USED IN THIS RESEARCH

In order to avoid ambiguity and to enhance clarity in discussion the concepts used in this study are explained here.

Cash Crop

It includes pepper, cardamom, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, coffee, vanilla etc. which are produced mainly for sale and not for household consumption. It is different from food crops such as rice, wheat, bajra, pulses etc.
Colonialism

The practice of acquiring control over another country by occupying it with settlers and exploiting it economically.

Effect

Effect is the ultimate contemporaneous impact negative or positive that fall upon the farmers after the 1991 reforms.

Farmer

Farmer means who is doing agriculture in less than 3 acres of arable land, and who is depending mainly on income from agriculture for his livelihood. Farmer need not be owner-cultivators. Peasants in our study include share croppers who sometimes did operate in the land of somebody else.

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

GATT is a special agency started with the special task of working out principles for the general conduct of international trade and to draw up proposals for the implementation of policies to expand multilateral non discriminatory world trade.

Globalization

Globalization is the international integration of an economy with modern world markets by the process of transnationalization of production and circulation of ideas, goods, services, information and people into one global economy with the help of international institutions like World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization.
Global village

The concept “global village was first popularized by Marshall Mc Luhan, a Canadian philosopher in 1968 in his book “War and peace in the global village”

Imperialism

It is the policy of a state aiming at establishing control beyond its borders over people unwilling to accept such control.

Internationalization

In Internationalization nations mattered, therefore the people were rooted in the country and had a greater stake and louder voice in decision making. In Internationalization nation was very important but in globalization nation does not matter at all.

International Monetary Fund

A special agency of the United Nations established in 1945 with headquarters in Washington. It aims at promoting international monetary co operation, to promote orderly and stable foreign currency exchange markets, to facilitate international trade and to contribute to balance of payments adjustment. The voting power of each member country is determined by its quota, which is based on a complex formula that takes account of the country’s size and its general importance in world trade and finance. In addition, each member country’s quota determines the amount of financial resources it had to make available to the IMF, and its access to the Fund’s facilities. IMF members may utilize the Fund’s resources if they find themselves in balance of payments difficulties.
**Liberalization**

Liberalization implies relieving the economy with measures like public expenditure cuts, freeing the economy from restrictions relating to size, capacity, model, pricing policy, ownership pattern, and relaxation of controls on foreign investment and opening up the economy to competition from abroad, and the state taking a back seat in economic affairs.

**Mercantilism**

The economic belief prevalent in the 17th and 18th centuries is that it was to the advantage of a nation always to strive for an excess of exports over imports. Mercantilist doctrine centered on the power of the state. The interests of the individual were regarded as subservient to those of the state.

**Multinational Companies / Transnational Corporations**

By the dawn of 1980s, the big Multinational companies became Transnational Corporations. As their name indicates, in addition to extending into several countries, these mega enterprises stand beyond or above the nation state. Their financial and technological capacity defies borders and transcends state power. With increasingly numerous mergers takeovers and alliances the concentration of wealth at the top reached such a degree that, for the first time in history, economic power succeeded in liberating itself from the national legal framework and from governmental control.

**New Agricultural Policy**

Following are the main tenets of the New Agricultural Policy. Private sector investment in agriculture would be encouraged; Restrictions on the movement of agricultural commodities throughout the country would be progressively dismantled; Agricultural research, human resource development, post harvest management and marketing will be encouraged in the private sector; credit would be given to farmers for providing timely help.
New Economic Policy

There was a total reversal of economic policy of India in 1991. Market friendly liberal economic policies replaced interventionist state policies. It implies a policy of liberalization with a greater role for private sector. It encompasses deregulation, withdrawal of subsidies and abolition of obstacles in the way of investment by monopolies and smoothening the flow of direct foreign investment.

Poverty

Poverty is a situation in which the basic necessities of life like, food, clothing, shelter, and education are least satisfied.

Privatization

The sale of government owned equity in nationalized industries or other commercial enterprises to private investors, with or without the loss of government control in these organizations.

Structural Adjustment Programmes

The underdeveloped countries have to concede the following requirements in order to qualify for financial aid from the international institution like IMF and World Bank; cut public expenditure; make currency freely convertible with other currencies; dismantle state controlled marketing boards; privatize state owned industries; cut import restrictions; allow foreign companies to freely repatriate profits; boost exports etc.

Spices

Any of various strongly flavoured or aromatic vegetable substances, used to flavour or scent food such as pepper, ginger, cardamom, turmeric, cocoa, coffee, lemon grass, nutmeg, clove etc. are considered spices.
World Bank

World Bank is a specialized agency of the United Nations established in Washington in 1945. Its aim is to encourage capital investment for reconstruction, promote and supplement private foreign investment and encourage the expansion of world resources and production capacity particularly in the underdeveloped countries. It lends either directly to governments or to private firms under the guarantee of the borrowers government. It gives long term loans and provides advisory services on economic development.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

The WTO was set up in Geneva in 1995 replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The WTO is charged with the further development of policing of the multilateral trading system along the principles followed by the GATT negotiations. It provides the legal status for the resolution of trade disputes through dispute panels. A member may appeal to the WTO appeal tribunal but must accept its ruling. The failure of a member country to accept the WTO ruling would subject it to trade sanctions.

PONZI SCHEMES

Charles Ponzi persuaded investors that he could double their money in 6 months by purchasing international postal reply coupon in one country and redeeming them in another country where the exchange rate was higher. Within a few months 20,000 people invested money in this scheme. The first ones got returns from the others who invested later. Ponzi was playing a game without any investment. And the last wave of investors lost their entire income while he went to prison for fraud. Today Ponzi scheme denoted any scheme in which the original investors are paid off with money supply by later investors. The same principle under lies pyramid, chain letters, money chain and various net work marketing.
LIMITATIONS

It is a case study of a selected District and the sample size is limited to 135 households where suicides have taken place. Very often the researcher is limited to believe what the relatives, neighbors, and friends have exposed about the exact reasons for deaths of the farmers.

When the members of the farmer family were interviewed, some of them wanted to affirm that the head of the family died because of debt. Since there was financial assistance from the government, they were afraid to give the exact reason for suicide since there was a chance of losing it. In those cases the researcher asked the neighbors, close relatives, the Panchayath member, community leaders and others about the root cause for the death of the farmer. In eight houses nobody was there. If a death is taken place they believe that the cause of the death is evil spirit. So the house is not good for living. Two of the family members believed that the spirit of the person who committed would be in the house. So the researcher was forced to get the details about the family indirectly from the others.