CHAPTER III

THE STUDY DESIGN

The Gujaratis settled in Kochi form a distinct community with a culture markedly different from the rest of the population in the city. They are prosperous traders, who migrated from Gujarat state in Western India for pursuing their economic interests. Though Gujarati trade was there since the 16th Century, there is no evidence of their settlements in Kochi prior to 19th Century. The year 1887 is a landmark of their migration to Kochi, when it is believed that about seventy two families reached Kochi. They were provided with adequate facilities for settlement and they lived in exclusive areas, preserving their traditions and practices. At present about 4000 Gujaratis are living in Kochi, i.e., 0.71 percent of the total population of the city. Majority of them are settled in Mattancherry area of Kochi city, while a minority have put up their residence in the Ernakulam side of the city. For the present study, Gujaratis are considered as an ethnic group for understanding the complex problem of ethnicity in the urban context of Kochi city.

Rationale for the Study

Ethnicity or ethnic identity from which people are able to forge a sense of peoplehood are caste, religion, region, and language. Most of the studies on ethnicity in
India have considered ethnicity as emerging from the traits of caste (Pathy 1988), religion (Behra 1986), region (Devalle 1992) etc. Language has gained political and legal recognition when India reorganized its states on the basis of linguistic differences. This study focuses on linguistic ethnicity of the Gujaratis, who formed one ethnic community following the reorganization of states in 1956. An analysis and measurement of the ethnicity of the Gujaratis in Kochi will be helpful to understand the dynamic nature of the community and their acculturation process. In brief, the rationale for the study can be summarized as follows:

1. It is believed that this study will unravel, to a considerable extent, the nature of boundary maintenance of the Gujarati community.
2. Further the study will throw light on the changes that are occurring in the cultural life of Gujaratis.
3. It is hoped that a study on the ethnicity of Gujaratis in the urban context will indicate the extent of acculturation of Gujaratis and spell out areas where adaptation has occurred in their culture through contact with Malayalees.
4. The understanding of the nature of ethnicity of the Gujaratis would provide us information about the impact of urbanization and modernization on the phenomenon of ethnicity.
Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the cultural markers of ethnic identity of Gujaratis and to understand what methods the Gujarati community employ to maintain their ethnic boundary.

2. To investigate the variations in maintaining the objective markers of ethnic identity due to factors like gender, age, generation, education, occupation, income and locality of residence.

3. To understand the social participation of Gujaratis in the urban setting.

4. To examine the subjective aspect of ethnicity, viz, the intensity of their sense of identification to the ethnic group.

5. To find out the factors which promote or inhibit the salience of ethnicity such as the influence of their sense of identification.

Hypotheses

1. The salience of ethnicity of the Gujarati community in Kochi is found to depend on and vary according to the degree of their sense of identity within the community.

2. The sense of ethnic identity among the Gujaratis does not seem to decline in spite of the fast urbanization and modernization in the city.

3. The ethnic sense appears to be positively correlated to age and occupational status and negatively to education and income.
4. The females exhibit the features of ethnicity more strongly than the males.

5. Residential proximity tends to enhance ethnic sense.

**Universe**

The study has been conducted among the Gujaratis residing in the city of Kochi. Kochi is a class I city with a population of over 564589 (1991 Census). The universe of study consists of over 4000 Gujaratis, of which about 2510 are adults. The Gujarati population is distributed in the two neighbourhoods of Mattancherry and Ernakulam. These two neighbourhoods are chosen for the very reason that they are different. Mattancherry provides an area exclusively dominated by Gujaratis where they are residing as a colony. On the other hand, the population of Ernakulam is predominantly Malayalees and Gujaratis are scattered here and there.

**The Sample**

A random sample of about 400 respondents (1/6 th of the adult population) are selected, out of which 75 belong to Ernakulam and 325 belong to Mattancherry. Roughly a ratio of 1:4 is followed here, taking into account the number of households in each locality.
Characteristics of the Sample Population

Out of the 400 respondents chosen for the study, 278 are males and 122 are females. A majority of the respondents, 41 percent (164) is in the age group 40-60 years, followed by 34.75 percent (139) in the age group of 25-40. Only about 14 percent (56) belong to the age group below 25, and a still less ie, 10.25 percent (41) are above 60 years. In the sample, 31.25 percent (125) are first generation immigrants and 34 percent (136) are second generation. About 34.75 percent (139) fall in the third generation and above category. The religious break up of the sample shows that Hindus, the majority of the community, constitute 61.5 percent (246) of the sample population and Jains form only 38.5 percent (154) of the total sample. The distribution of the sample on the basis of educational level reveals that the largest group of 43.75 percent (175) are educated upto SSLC, followed by 42.75 percent (170) educated upto graduate level. 2.75 percent (11) are having diploma/ technically educated, 3 percent (12) are postgraduates. On the extremes are professionaly educated and illiterates, constituting 2.75 percent (11) and 5.25 percent (21) respectively. The occupational break up of the sample shows that 44.75 percent (179) are self employed, 13.75 percent (55) are employed in trade, 2.5 percent (10) are professionals, 0.75 percent (3) are in administrative/ managerial capacity. Only 0.25 percent (1) is found in the category of white collar worker. However, 2 percent (8) are retired from work, and there are about 36 percent (144) who are without any particular job. As regards the distribution of the sample on the basis of income, 30.2 percent (121) earn less than Rs. 25000 a year, 38.75 percent (155) Rs 25000 to 50000, 25.5 percent
Rs. 50000 to 100000, and remaining 5.5 percent (22) form the upper income group with an income of Rs. 100000 and more. The distribution of the sample by the length of stay in Kochi indicates that 38.25 percent (153) have been living in the city for more than 10 years, 4 percent (16) for 2 to 10 years, and 57.75 percent (231) for less than 2 years.

Variables Selected for Study

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Gender, age, generation, length of residence in the city, education, occupation and locality of residence of the respondent are the chief independent variables selected for the study.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

The dependent variable selected is ethnicity indicated by social markers like language sentiment, typical traditional type of Gujarati dress, Gujarati items of food, specific religious practices, marriage customs, social customs and samskaras, social participation of Gujaratis in the city and the sense of ethnic group identification of the community.
Key Concepts

ETHNIC GROUP

Cohen has defined ethnic group as "a collectivity of people who share some patterns of normative behaviour and form a part of a larger population, interacting with people from other collectivities within the framework of a social system." Yinger has defined "an ethnic group is a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and/or others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients." Thus ethnic groups are found to have attributes like group identification, common culture, and social participation.

ETHNIC IDENTITY

Ethnic identity is one of the social identities of a person, such as ethnic identity, religious identity and so on. Social identities are the "groups, statuses or categories to which an individual is socially recognized as belonging". "Social identity refers to the public self which is derived from the person's membership of different social groups, and
categories and occupancv of various roles: it is the sum of all those different faces the person puts on to meet the world. Social identity changes with social demands. Ethnic identity is thus the social identity of a person due to his affiliation to an ethnic group. Often ethnic identity is expressed by certain cultural markers like language, religion, marriage, dress, food, and social customs.

SALIENCE OF ETHNICITY

Ethnicity may be dormant or salient. In its dormant form, ethnicity represents an innocent mode of identification based on certain distinct cultural attributes. In its salient form, ethnicity signifies an urge for political power based on a sense of cultural distinction, or politically activated cultural consciousness. It favours the emergent conception of ethnicity or as a situational reality.

Salience of ethnicity for the individual is the importance of ethnicity. Salience accounts for consistency or variability of a particular identity being invoked across situations.

Methodology

The researcher has combined historical and empirical methods. A review of historical records, Census reports and other literature have provided secondary data on the past history of the Gujaratis and given information about the processes of urbaniza-
tion occurring in Kochi city. Present situation of the Gujaratis is examined by empirical data, which is collected through interview schedule. This contains questions to elicit data to examine the hypotheses. Interview schedule is complemented by informal interviews which helped to shed light on the life of Gujaratis. Extensive interviews with a few knowledgeable people in the locality have helped to get further insight into the life of Gujaratis. Those who are comparatively highly educated from within the community and those who have frequent contacts with the Gujaratis from outside the community were selected for this purpose.

**PREPARATION OF THE STUDY TOOLS**

In the study, a number of variables have been defined and operationalised for measurement. The general orientation has been empirical, and statistical. Still the analysis has been carried out in depth and supplemented by qualitative data wherever possible. A schedule has been developed for the purpose of interviewing and this schedule consisted of four parts, which included in sequential order, questions on personal data, expressions of ethnicity, social participation, and sense of identification. Most of the responses to the questions were structured, though some were open ended.

In order to measure the sense of identification of the Gujaratis in Kochi, the researcher selected 6 statements to construct a scale based on the knowledge of the community. This scale was developed in the model of Likert scale with five points like strongly agree, agree, moderately agree, somewhat agree, undecided and not at all agree.
This scale was used to assess the sense of identification of the Gujaratis. Each answer was given weightage and the total score found out.

PRETESTING

The schedule was pretested on a representative sample of respondents in the two neighbourhoods. A sample of 15 respondents were interviewed, and a preliminary analysis was made to examine various items of the schedule, their content and ordering. Some questions were modified and a few were added.

INTERVIEWING

The respondents were located with the help of local leaders. The interviewer tried to establish rapport with the respondents, so that the respondent felt free and relaxed. A few were apprehensive in the beginning of the interview, for fear that the investigator represents Income tax Officials. Once they were convinced of the actual intention of the investigator in collecting information, they were very open and cooperative.

DATA ANALYSIS

The entire data processing was done on Computer. The computer programme STATA was used for data processing.
NOTES

1. Sri Cochin Gujarati Mahajan 100 years Souvenir '85.


CHAPTER IV