Chapter - 3

METHODOLOGY
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The traditional methods of study in psychology have largely been derived from the positivistic paradigm and undoubtedly they have contributed to the science of psychology. But inspite of their usefulness, it is being felt that in certain aspects they impose significant restrictions on research within the clinical and counselling setting (Howard, 1985; Mahoney 1991; PolkingHorne, 1984, 1990). Awareness of these restrictions has promoted recent efforts to draw out meaningful modes of inquiry from disciplines less wedded to the objectivist stance. As a result, concerted attention has been given to issues of self agency, hermeneutics, and theories of intentional action and narrative knowing (Hoshmand, 1989; Howard 1989; Polkinghorne, 1988), approaches that are broadly consistent with the rapidly emerging field of constructivist counselling and psychotherapy (Carlsen, 1988; Efran, Lukens, M., & Lukens, R., 1990; Mahoney, 1991; Mahoney & Lyddon, 1988; Neimeyer, R. & Neimeyer, G., 1987).

With this background in mind the researcher decided to utilize a methodology which would be based on the advantages of both the constructivist approach as well as positivistic. Therefore the researcher decided to obtain indepth information which could be analyzed to provide both a general picture of the phenomena as well as to present an
appraisal through which observations of the researcher would provide useful inputs for realistic understanding.

The thrust of the research undertaken by the present investigator was concerned with understanding children who are challenged mentally. Therefore the first important step was to identify organizations and centres which are concerned with the education of these children.

The researcher surveyed the various centres in Delhi and visited twenty centres. Although the majority of centres did not extend their cooperation to the researcher saying that since the research was going to evaluate their programme they would not like to participate in the research, but the experience of interacting with them was educative and a very good first hand picture of the situation was obtained. In the organization run by the Spastic Society of Northern India the researcher spent considerable time with the children. The nursing background of the researcher was a facilitating factor in the sense that personnel in the organization found her useful and permitted to interact with the children. Organizations run in the smaller towns were much more co-operative in terms of permitting the researcher to collect information. Through snow ball sampling, organization in Meerut, Muzaffarnagar and Rishikesh were identified. The researcher was able to elicit co-operation from three organizations in Meerut, one in Muzaffarnagar and one in Rishikesh. This step was an extremely challenging one.

The topic of the research is to study the effectiveness of psychological skill training programmes for differently abled children.
Therefore the researcher had to devise a system of assessing objectives and goals which parents and teachers desire from programme and extent to which objectives were being successfully achieved.

The study of objectives as well as assessment of effectiveness was done both at the levels of parents and at the level of teachers. This was felt to be an important aspect of the research because the concept of special education considers parents and teachers to be partners in the total process of education. Therefore a set of questions considered to be relevant for the understanding of phenomena were framed by the researcher.

The questions were open ended and permitted the parent and teacher to express views freely. Relevant biographical and personal information about the child was obtained through a set of questions framed for the purpose. Details of the above are given under tools of study.

**SAMPLE**

The sample comprised of one hundred subjects. Seventy five subjects fell in the age group of 3-15 years. Twenty five subjects were older and fell in the age range of 16 to 22. The researcher included them in her work not only because, they were available for study but because they comprised a group that had undergone at least one decade of psychological skill training in the institution. Through them we could obtain important information in terms of long-term implications of skill training programmes. These institutions were selected through snowball
sampling and also the factor of willingness of organization to participate. All the children of the institution formed part of the study with the exception of those whose parents did not agree to participate. Thus, although a certain number of institutions constitute our sample, but by a large the total population of each institution was studied. The institution studied were:

1. Disha (Meerut)
2. Chetna I (Pallampuram Road, Meerut)
3. Chetna II (Ghaziabad Road, Meerut)
4. Swamikrishna Nanda (Rishikesh)
5. Asha Deep Training Centre for Child Care (Muzaffarnagar)

Responses were obtained from mother of each child and teachers engaged in guiding them. Thus 100 mothers and 25 teachers gave responses.

TOOLS OF STUDY

1) Measure to assess Parental Perspective of Psychological Skill Training Programme:

It was essential that issues pertinent to the study should be assessed appropriately, therefore the researcher prepared a list of questions which fulfilled the purpose. The following things were kept in mind while framing the questions:

a) Parents have a vital role to play in the education of children who need special attention. It is important to know what parents expect
from the programme and to what extent these expectations are fulfilled.
b) The questions should be open-ended in order to bring out individual views and perspectives.
c) The wordings of the question should not put the parents on the defensive. Subtly critical or negative statements be avoided.

With this background, a large number of question which covered the following dimensions were framed:

i) Goals and objectives of the psychological skill training programmes as perceived by parents, i.e. expectation of parents from the programme.

ii) Goals, which the programme has helped to come nearer to, i.e. area where improvement is seen.

iii) Goals which the programme has failed to achieve i.e. areas where improvement is not seen.

These questions and their implication were discussed with teachers and research scholars. In the end, six questions were retained, some of which would elicit direct information and some would help to obtain valuable information less directly.

2) Measure to assess teachers perspective of psychological skill training programme

With the same perspective in mind, a list of questions was prepared for teachers. This would bring out the goals and objectives of the programme vis-a-vis the teacher, areas in which success is perceived/not perceived by the teacher. In addition, some questions relating to
methods used for imparting skill training, together with effectiveness of method utilized were put.

As in the case of parents questionnaire, here also the items were scrutinized by senior teachers and research scholars and six questions were retained.

PROCEDURE

The actual conduct of research involved a person to person interaction between researcher and parent/teacher. Rapport with the institutions was a very essential feature. This was established by the researcher by actually working with them for about two weeks, after which access to parents could be made and teachers would also give their view's on issues of concern to researcher. Once the researcher had understood the working of institutions, the actual collection of data started. Usually the female parent visited institutions to pick up the child and after talking to her an interview was fixed. In one day only one parent could be interviewed by the researcher and responses on the questionnaire would be taken. Together with completing the questionnaire, parents expressed verbally their feelings on various matters. The researcher facilitated such narrative by taking interest and encouraging them to express their views. The view's of teachers were also taken in a similar manner, although their verbal comments were collected also on many other occasions when researcher interacted with them. Thus data collection was time consuming but extremely enlightening.
Another important activity undertaken by the researcher was to categorise the large and varied types of responses given by parents and teachers with regard to objectives and goals. About 52 different reactions were obtained and it was important to categories them so that they could be understood more clearly. Therefore, these responses were examined by the researcher and 2 teachers of the department and through discussion and consensus, seven categories were created. These are -

1. Self sufficiency skills
2. Interpersonal skills
3. Emotional maturity
4. Academic growth
5. Improvement in physical deficit
6. Cognitive skills
7. Vocational training

The details of these categories created are given in Table 1.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The nature of the research and its objectives dictate the type of analysis that will be done. Statistical analyses are easy to conceptualise for experimental, quasi-experimental, causal comparative and correlational research. However, even within these types, constraints apply. For example in terms of statistical synthesis Cooper (1989) identifies the following situations in which the use of statistical syntheses are not appropriate even for such researches:
1. If the researcher's goal is to trace the historical development of a concept or practices statistical synthesis is not appropriate.

2. If comparable treatment and control groups are not included in the reviewed studies, it may be inappropriate to lump the studies together. Aggregation of dissimilar groups can obscure effects.

Thus if there are constraints in conventional researches where statistical analysis is usually conducted, all the more there are constraints in the type of work we are engaged in. The present research falls in a category in which the usual analysis can not be used. It has to be understood at the very outset that when we talk about improvement and non improvement amongst the psychologically challenged group it can not ever be achieved to a degree considered to be statistically significant. A very slight improvement is also a meaningful concept and therefore it was felt that merely measuring the frequency with which improvement/non improvement in a particular area was observed would be important in itself. Explanation of improvement/non improvement were to be searched in the nature of disorder, the child's condition together with information given by parents and teachers.