CHAPTER - III
CHAPTER III

PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

PROBLEM - ITS IMPORTANCE

As it has been pointed out in earlier chapters, a vast number of research investigations have been carried out in the past and are even now-a-days being undertaken to study and analyse the nature of attitudes, factors contributing to the formation and modification of social attitudes and opinions, life-styles and values, process of communication, social influence, techniques of persuasion and propaganda for attitude and opinion change, and so on. (A.S. Patel, 1958, 60-61, 1971, 1972, 1976, 80, 82, 84), in order to cope with and search possible solutions or at least to mitigate the overpowering influence and spread of varied problems of illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, corruption, communal tensions, distortion in perception and communication, rumour-mongering, old conservative social structure and traditional family system, consequent resistance to change, etc. Afflicting and damaging our society and our country at large, most of which have been generated and accelerated by emotional stress, generational conflict, sudden on-coming social change and technological advancement, progress in economy and education, impact of the West, democratic ideology in recent years and even out-burst of new regional, religious and political groups or cliques, all indirectly augmenting tensions instead of solving problems. Researches in social sciences, especially in social psychology and more specifically in area of attitudes, their formation and
modification have recently gained a unique status and importance insofar as they have been immensely contributing to the knowledge, skills and techniques for solving the current social issues of our country. Like the vastness of the country, the scope of the problem is also very vast and much yet remains unwaded. After reviewing the related research works, one more attempt has been made by the present investigator to add to the existing literature in this area with a view to filling up gaps, improving the methodology and shedding more light on the nature of some specific, social, current attitudes and beliefs of individuals, both males and females, belonging to different generations, communities or castes, socio-economic levels and education cadres. The problem of the study has been concisely summed up in the title of the work thus: "A comparative study of social beliefs as a function of some socio-cultural factors at three generational levels."

To spell out more precisely and specifically, the general object of the study under investigation has been first to search out the prevalent beliefs or attitudes of individuals with reference to some social current issues and then tracing these to the varied characteristics of the sample or the organismic and socio-cultural factors involved, such as, sex, generational level, caste, education, and socio-economic status, the attempt has been made to serve the primary aim of the study, viz. to compare the beliefs of various groups formed by the above mentioned five characteristic factors. In other words, the investigator has aimed to relate these beliefs to these five main factors or to study how far these five factors influence or
contribute to the formation of beliefs or attitudes under the study. Further, since the subject of varied generations (adolescents, parents and grandparents) in the sample happened to belong in major cases to the same family (children of same parents and grandparents - a sort of longitudinal study), and sometimes belong to different families (matching only on age level - a sort of cross-sectional study), the investigator aimed additionally to compare the social beliefs of these two groups of subjects, i.e., to study the role of family environment or parental influence in nourishing the views, beliefs, opinions or attitudes with respect to some social current issues. And this has been the unique contribution of the present study.

The social beliefs studied in the present investigation included beliefs or views or opinions or attitudes regarding five following specific social, current, much controversial issues, viz.

(1) Caste System
(2) Social Customs & Reforms
(3) Superstitious Beliefs
(4) Social, Moral Values
(5) Drug Abuse.

Researchers have investigated attitudes towards the wide number of issues in social, religious, educational and political systems in general, using a variety of techniques for collection and analysis of data. However, the present author has undertaken to examine attitudes towards some of the current and controversial issues (shown above) in the present society of our country, vacillating and fluctuating between the traditional, conservative, patriotic, rigid social structure relishing in old culture, customs and values on one hand and on the other, a new, progressive
democratic, flexible social structure craving for something new for change, for reforms, for freedom and in thinking, feeling and acting, in attitudes, values and life-styles. The present investigator has planned an extensive research project in area of attitude formation and attitude modification through various techniques of persuasion, social influence and change, especially with respect to most current problems and social issues in the present society and our country at large. The present investigation forms a part of the wider project. A study of only some above mentioned, most current and controversial issues, using more refined techniques for collection of data and analysis of data to shed more light on the role of selected socio-cultural factors not fully studied so far has been presented in this work for doctoral thesis.

It should be noted at this stage that the author acknowledges to have taken liberty to use the terms 'belief', 'attitude', 'opinion', or 'view' more or less interchangeably or somewhat loosely in this study for the practical purpose of common understanding, though as a social scientist he is fully aware of the finer, theoretical distinctions, which he has attempted to bring out in the first introductory chapter earlier. The statements used in the questionnaire or Scale specially constructed pertain some times to beliefs, sometimes to attitudes, and hence the author has ventured to use these terms little loosely in practice for understanding of common, layman. In short, the investigator has planned his work to investigate social beliefs as a function of some socio-cultural factors at three generational levels and also to examine the influence of family atmosphere and environment or parental influence.
AIM AND OBJECTIVES

In other words, the investigator has undertaken to study the nature and extent of the social beliefs or relevant social attitudes of individuals towards some common, current social issues prevalent in the society, viz., (i) caste system, (ii) social customs and reforms, (iii) superstitious beliefs, (iv) social ideals or moral values, and, if possible, (v) most important problem of current practice of drug use or abuse prevalent especially among the young generation and the consequent concern of the elders. The investigator has aimed to examine some of the factors or influences contributing to the formation of these social beliefs or attitudes and has tried to relate their attitudes to some socio-cultural factors, such as, caste or community, socio-economic status and education level of the individuals entertaining such beliefs or attitudes i.e., to study the differences in extent of attitudes as a function of caste, socio-economic status and education. The inclusion of subjects of both sexes, comprising of members of three generations, viz., young adolescents (from about 13 to 20 years of age), middle-aged parents (of about 35 to 45 years of age), and old grandparents (of above 60 years) has been planned with a view to comparing the results on the basis of the contribution of sex and generation level to the extent of attitudes. In addition, the author has aimed to study the influence of family environment or parental influence, if possible, by analysing separately the data obtained from members of the three generations in the same family and those of similar generations from different families.
To be more specific, the study has been undertaken keeping in view the following objectives:

1. To study the extent of social beliefs and attitudes of individuals with respect to specific social issues named above.

2. To examine therein the contribution of three main socio-cultural factors, viz., caste, socio-economic status and education level of the subjects, along with the influence of two other main variables, viz., sex and generation level. To put it differently, the objective has been to study the significance of differences in the main as well as interaction effects of these five variables, viz., (a) generation level, (b) sex, (c) caste, (d) socio-economic status, and (e) educational level, and thereby to compare the contributions of different levels of each of these five variables.

3. To study at the same time the contribution of parental influence or family environment by comparing and contrasting the responses of subjects of three generations in the same family and those from three generations of different families (of similar age levels).

HYPOTHESES

In order to achieve the above aim and objectives of the study, the following specific hypotheses have been formulated and tested for significance through adequate statistical analysis.
To study or test whether the three generation levels contribute differentially in the extent of social attitudes towards the issues under study, i.e., to study the difference in the social beliefs or attitudes among the three generation groups:

i) Null hypothesis \((H_0)\): There are no differences in the attitudes of three generation groups; all groups hold equally favourable or unfavourable attitudes towards the social issues under study.

ii) Alternate hypothesis \((H_1)\): The three groups of generations differ in their beliefs or attitudes, i.e., differ in the extent of favourableness or otherwise of social attitudes.

To study or test whether sex variable contributes differentially in the formation of social attitudes, i.e., to study the sex differences in social attitudes of males and females:

(i) Null hypothesis \((H_0)\): There are no sex differences in social attitudes towards issues under study.

(ii) Alternate hypothesis \((H_1)\): Social attitudes of males are different from those of females, i.e., are more or less favourable towards social issues.

To study or test whether caste variable influences differentially the formation of social attitudes:
(i) **Null hypothesis (H0)**: The upper and lower caste groups do not differ in their social attitudes.

(ii) **Alternate hypothesis (H1)**: The two caste groups differ in the extent of favourableness or otherwise of their attitudes towards social issues under study, i.e., upper caste group subjects hold more or less favourable attitudes than the lower caste group subjects.

(d) To study or test whether the level of socio-economic status contributes differentially to the formation of attitudes towards social issues under study:

(i) **Null hypothesis (H0)**: The three socio-economic status groups, viz., higher, middle and lower groups, do not differ in their social attitudes.

(ii) **Alternate hypothesis (H1)**: The three SES groups differ in their social attitudes, i.e., one group holds more or less favourable attitudes than any other group.

(c) To study or test whether education level influence the extent of formation of social attitudes:

(i) **Null hypothesis (H0)**: The two groups of education level, viz., those with college education and those with only high school education, do not differ in their social attitudes.
(ii) Alternate hypothesis ($H_1$): The two education groups differ in their favourableness or otherwise of attitudes towards social issues, i.e., higher education groups hold more or less favourable or desirable attitudes than the lower education groups.

(f) To study or test whether the three generation groups of the same family differ in their social attitudes from three generation groups of subjects belonging to different families (matching in age levels):

(i) Null hypothesis ($H_0$): The two groups, viz., those in same family and those from different families, do not differ in their social attitudes, i.e., both hold equally favourable or unfavourable attitudes.

(ii) Alternate hypothesis ($H_1$): Same family groups in the three generations hold more or less favourable attitudes towards social issues under study.

TYPES OF VARIABLES

As indicated and understood from the definition of the problem, generation level, sex, caste, socio-economic status, education level and sameness or otherwise of the family have been the independent variables whose effect or contribution to the formation of social attitudes has been studied. These dependent variables under study are the social attitudes with respect to (i) caste system, (ii) social customs and reforms, (iii) superstitious beliefs, (iv) social ideals or moral values, and (v) drug abuse. The extent of social beliefs or attitudes
measured in the study has been the dependent variable. All other variables likely to influence the dependent variable have been assumed to be kept constant or have been supposed to be controlled variables through the process of randomization in the selection of subjects or through experimental design used in collection and statistical analysis of data.

SAMPLE

Sample consisted of 1800 subjects in all, distributed equally among each level of five main variables as well as in sub-level groups formed by different levels of these five variables arranged in a factorial design. These 1800 subjects were, however, unequally distributed between the two groups of sameness or otherwise of the family, arranged in a randomized group design as available. Special attempts have been made to include subjects randomly and yet representatively from different groups as available and needed for the purpose of the study. Thus, initially high school pupils and college students forming the first generation or young adolescent group of 13-20 years of age were included to serve as subjects for administration of the specially constructed Social Attitude Scale. These subjects included both boys and girls, from different high schools and colleges in Saurashtra, coming from both upper and lower castes, varying in their socio-economic status level. Later on, their own parents (second generation) and grandparents (third generation) of both sexes, thereby belonging to the same caste and SES level, were selected to serve as subjects for administration of same Social Attitude Scale. All these subjects of three
generations were considered as members of the same family. Specific further care has also been taken to match these subjects in their level of education as far as possible according to the group under study. In case of less availability of subjects in the same family group, other parents (of about 30 - 45 years of age) and other grand-parents (of about 60 years of age) were selected randomly from the different families in the society (i.e., not necessarily the parents or grand-parents of the adolescents of first generation) to serve as subjects, matching in age, sex, caste, SES and education level corresponding to or parallel to sub-groups as needed to fit in the cells of the design for the purpose of the study. In short, special care has been taken to select subjects to fill in appropriately the various sub-groups in the cells of the experimental design used for the study.

TOOLS USED

A specially designed Social Attitude Scale (SAS) and Socio-Economic Status Scale (SES) both constructed by Professor A. S. Patel of Baroda University, were used respectively to measure social attitudes and SES level of subjects. The SAS consisted of a series of sections of sub-scales to measure variable of social attitudes towards different social issues, including the five issues under the present study. This scale measured the attitudes towards social issues, viz., (i) caste system, (ii) social customs and reforms, (iii) superstitious beliefs, (iv) moral values, and (v) drug abuse, each section comprising of 10 items or attitude statements to be responded by
the subjects on a continuum of five-point scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', i.e., from most favourable or desirable to most unfavourable or undesirable (as shown in answer sheet appendix - 3). The SES scale consisted of information items on eight aspects of socio-economic status, to be marked by the respondent and assessed on the basis of standard key formulated (as shown in appendix - 1). The score on this scale indicated the three levels, viz., higher, middle and lower levels, of SES of subjects.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

To study the main as well as interaction effects of the five main variables under study, \((3 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 2)\) factorial experimental design has been used, representing three levels of generation (A), two levels of sex (B), two levels of caste (C), three levels of socio-economic status (D), and two levels of education (E), as represented in the following table. Each cell consisted of 25 subjects, thus totalling 1800 subjects in all. In addition, a randomized group design has been used to study the parental influence of two levels of family data, viz., data of subjects from the same family and data from different families.

PROCEDURE

The investigator administered carefully and with all precautions both the scales, viz., SES scale and SAS scale to the subjects at different intervals of time. The subjects were asked to read carefully each statement of the scale and mark the adequate response on the separate answer sheets as per instructions given.
### Experimental Designs

**PART I: Fourth Order Factorial Design for Five Factors A, B, C, D, and E**

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The table above outlines the experimental design for five factors, A, B, C, D, and E, across different levels of generation gap, education, section, caste, and economic status. Each combination of factors is represented by a four-digit code (e.g., A1B1C1D1E1). This design allows for the examination of the effects of these factors in a factorial manner, enabling researchers to understand the interactions and main effects of each factor on the outcome of interest.
### PART - II : Second Order Factorial Design for Three Factors A : B : F

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<th>Generation Gap</th>
<th>A&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>A&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>A&lt;sub&gt;3&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
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<td>B&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
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<td>Family Category</td>
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<td>F&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>A&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;B&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;F&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
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<td>A&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;B&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;F&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
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<td>A&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;B&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;F&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
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<td>A&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;B&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;F&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
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#### Note: A : Generation Gap

- A<sub>1</sub> = Adolescents (14 - 20 yrs)
- A<sub>2</sub> = Parents (25 - 40 yrs)
- A<sub>3</sub> = Grandparents (above 50 yrs)

#### B = Sex

- B<sub>1</sub> = Male
- B<sub>2</sub> = Female

#### C = Caste

- C<sub>1</sub> = Upper advanced caste
- C<sub>2</sub> = Backward caste

#### D = Socio Economic Status

- D<sub>1</sub> = Higher SES
- D<sub>2</sub> = Middle SES
- D<sub>3</sub> = Lower SES

#### E = Education

- E<sub>1</sub> = College level
- E<sub>2</sub> = School level (Higher, High or Primary)

#### F = Family Category

- F<sub>1</sub> = Members from same family
- F<sub>2</sub> = Members from different families

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*Explanation of Symbols Used*
SCORING AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The responses of each subject have been scored as per special key meant for the scale (as shown in appendix - 4). These scores have been analysed by the adequate statistical techniques of Analysis of Variance and Least Significant Gap tests in order to study and examine the significance of differences in the main as well as interaction effects of the independent variables under study (as shown in appendix).

All the results of such statistical analysis have been presented adequately in the tables and charts or graphs, interpreted adequately following the guidelines for amount of scores (as shown in appendix - 4) and discussed under appropriate heads in the following chapters in the main body of the thesis, ending with list of relevant references, appendices, etc.