METHODOLOGY
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The present study, an empirical study of the material management system with special reference to stores management in Textile Mills in Coimbatore district is an empirical one based on primary data collected from the ground. As such, the survey method was utilised and the required information collected by conducting interviews with the store keepers / purchase officers and if needed with managers of the Textile Mills with the help of the specially evolved interview schedule.

The study was carried out with the following objectives:

- to study the stores management system in the textile mills.
- to identify the average lead-time.
- to analyse the inventory turnover.
- to identify the non-moving items.
- to analyse the causes for non moving items (NMI).
- to suggest suitable measures to avoid accumulation of NMI.
- to analyse the impact of NMI on the stores inventory.
- to analyse the use of computers in the stores management.
- to study the difference in distribution between and among the three segments of mills classified.

The procedures adopted for the study comprised the following steps:

1. Selection of the area
2. Selection of the sample
3. Selection of the tools for the study
4. Developing the interview schedule
5. Pre-testing the interview schedule
6. Conducting the interview
7. Organising, Tabulating and Critically analysing the data.

SELECTION OF THE AREA

The study was taken up in Coimbatore District, in the state of Tamilnadu. The Coimbatore District, the Manchester of South India is the most industrialised district of Tamilnadu, next to Chennai. The vast infrastructural facilities available in and around the district are made use of for the development of the district. The district has an area of 7469 sq. kms. surrounded by the blue hills in the West, Nilgiris district in the North, Periyar district in the East, and Anna district in the South. The district has 8 Taluks namely Coimbatore North, Coimbatore South, Mettupalayam, Pollachi, Udumalpet, Valparai, Avanashi and Palladam. The Black Cotton Soil of the district contributes high variety of cotton. There are a number of textile mills in the district which involve in spinning and weaving activities.

SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

The study is confined to Coimbatore district, which is mainly concentrated with Textile mills-Yarn manufacturing units. By scouting the area and establishing a
rapport with South India Textile Research Association (SITRA), and The South Indian Mills owners Association (SIMA), the details about the mills located in Coimbatore district was collected. It was found that 300 Textile Mills were engaged in manufacturing of textile yarn in Coimbatore district. The simple method used in this survey was stratified random sampling method. Stratification was done on the basis of the capacity of the textile mills, as classified by the research organisation (SITRA). The classifications are (i) high spindlage mills, (ii) medium spindlage mills and (iii) low spindlage mills. High spindlage mills are those mills having a capacity of 25,000 spindles and above. Low spindlage mills are those mills having a capacity less than 10,000 spindles. Medium spindlage mills are those mills falling between the above two categories, i.e. having a capacity between 10,000 and 25,000 spindles.

A sample of 75 textile mills were selected from the total number of mills located in Coimbatore district. (i.e.) from the total population 25 percent was selected as samples. Care was taken that the sample had an equal representation from the three stratification done which crystallised to 25 mills in each category.

SELECTION OF THE TOOLS FOR THE STUDY

The method followed was interview method. As a guidance for conducting the interview, it was felt necessary that an interview schedule will help to conduct
the interview. Hence, an interview schedule for collecting data from the textile mill managers/storekeepers/purchase officer was used for the study.

DEVELOPING AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview schedule for the collection of primary data was constructed by the investigator after a proper observation of the area. Enquiries were made with the experts and Textile research institutes in order to identify the variables of study. Few top management personnel of textile mills were contacted to get the needed information for construction of the interview schedule. The schedule was designed and developed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. Care was also taken to make the schedule as simple as possible to make it understandable.

PRETESTING THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

In order to find out the suitability of the tools, the interview schedule thus developed was pre-tested on a sample of 6 Textile Mills belonging to Coimbatore district representing the three segment/stratification and not included for the study. The pre-testing was helpful in deleting irrelevant questions, in adding suggested questions which seemed to be important for the study and in modifying the language of the questions which were not easily intelligible to the respondents. Thus the interview schedule for the study was finalised.
CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

For the study, each and every Textile Mill was taken as a unit of inquiry. The data was collected with the help of the finalised interview schedule. The investigator personally contacted the store keeper/purchase officer for the collection of data after getting due permission from the mill authorities. Before the opening of every interview the purpose of the survey was clearly explained to the respondents in order to clear out any suspicion and doubts from their minds and also to increase their motivation to co-operate with the investigator. They were assured that the responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purpose. The schedule contained structured and unstructured questions. Care was taken in explaining the meaning to the respondents and drawing the correct answers. The answers of the respondents were noted down then and there verbally word by word. Certain information which the store keepers/purchase officer were not able to give was collected from the managers of the mills. At the close of every interview, the filled in schedule was edited by the investigator, in order to check that all questions that were asked and answered were recorded. After the interview schedules were filled in, the data collected were carefully scrutinised to detect omission and errors and inconsistency in the answers recorded. Thus responses from 75 textile mills were collected. The field work was spread over a period of 12 months and the time taken for interviewing each respondent and recording his response was on an average of 90 minutes.
ORGANISING, TABULATING AND CRITICALLY ANALYSING DATA

The data obtained from interview schedules were exhaustive, although informative. It was extremely difficult to accomplish the simplification, quantification, statistical analysis and generalisation. Each and every respondent had given their individual opinion about the mills and were entirely different from others. The data collected were consolidated, tabulated and analysed using percentages and other statistical treatments for comparison and described in detail in the next chapter.