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METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.0.0 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter deals with the research design, data collection procedures, sampling techniques, construction and pretesting of tools used for the present study.

One of the prime difficulties experienced by the development administration, planners and researchers is that the data on basic population parameters and development indicators are often unreliable, if not incorrect. Social Science methods offer development agencies an effective and efficient approximation of critical development indicators, Pool, (1966).

In selecting the data gathering method for use, Zilditch, (1962) distinguishes three fundamental strategies; enumeration and samples, participant observation and interviewing informants. To these he applies two criteria for evaluating their appropriateness; 'informational adequacy' - the accuracy, precision and completeness of data sought; and 'efficiency' - the cost per unit of information. By these distinctions, survey interviewing is the prototype and best form for data that describe the formal properties of a system by repeating over a number of units.
3.1.0 SURVEY DESIGN

Survey Research is a cross-disciplinary approach of the social sciences used to further the objective study of human social behaviour. All those techniques of scientific investigation that are utilized to gather data from the field are considered as Survey Research Methods Rogers et al., (1976). Maccoby and Maccoby, (1954) Babbie, (1973) Sudman and Bradburn, (1974) Warwick and Lininger, (1975) Smith, (1975) Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook, (1976) have included interviews and questionnaires in survey research method. The questionnaire and individual interview are the most common instruments for data collection in survey research (Borg & Gall, 1979). Richardson, Dohrenwend, and Klein (1965) have given the rationale for using highly structured interview schedules or questionnaires. The average of the interview over the questionnaire has been discussed by Engelhart (1972). The methodological problems of interviewing have been discussed by Doob (1966), Hunt et al., (1964-65) Jones (1963) Mitchell, (1965). According to Galtung (1967), structured interviews are particularly amenable to statistical analysis. The basic theme behind good questionnaire or interview schedule construction is based on the formulation of questions which give “maximum opportunity for complete and accurate communication of ideas between the researcher (or interviewer) and the respondent” (Cannell and Kahn, 1968).

The term survey research denotes a systematic study with a statistically acceptable sample and one which conforms to a particular scientific method Roy et al., (1976). Survey research methodology has come to be virtually synonymous with social scientific methodology. Data collection procedures in the social sciences are heavily dependent on survey research methods (Brown and Gilmartin, 1969;
Phillips, 1971; Cannell and Kahn, 1968). Survey methods are extremely efficient in terms of providing large amounts of data at relatively low cost in a short period of time (Sudman, 1967). "Certain problems, certain kinds of population, samples and groups, certain kinds of data and other variables lend themselves to a particular research design and not to any other design" (McGrath, 1970). According to Brown and Gilmartin (1969), Phillips (1971), Cannell and Kahn (1968), the choice of methods should depend on the problem under investigation.

In allied fields like Sociology, Psychology and Education, under similar circumstances, survey research methodology was very effectively utilized. Other than the academic researchers, a large number of administrators also utilize survey methods for more and more field information. In those studies where there is a need for field information from weaker sections, particularly rural villages and urban slums, the survey research methodology is often considered as appropriate. Further, due to the very nature of the population, and types of questions raised, survey method was considered as suitable for the present investigation in the place of laboratory investigations. Hence this survey design was selected.

According to Kothari, (1991) the survey is a form of planned collection of data for the purpose of description or prediction, as a guide to action or for the purpose of analysing the relationship between certain variables. There are 2 types of survey:

- The descriptive/diagnostic studies.
- The Analytic/Relational type.
The research design in case of descriptive/diagnostic studies is a comprehensive design throwing light on all the points and must be prepared keeping in view the objectives of the study and the resources available. However, it must ensure the minimisation of bias and maximisation of the reliability of the evidence collected. Survey design takes into accounts all the steps involved in a survey concerning a phenomenon to be studied. The description survey is used for enumerative design as well as for fact finding although it should be added that data thus collected are often used to make predictions, for instance by comparing the results of surveys at different times. The analytic or relational survey is used to explore the relationship between variables.

3.1.1 Special Characteristics of Survey Design

Lin, (1976) has spelt out the following characteristics of survey design

1. It deals with a representative sample of a population. Thus, sampling especially probabilistic sampling is important in survey studies.

2. It seeks responses on the instruments directly from the respondents. The success of a survey depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of the instruments.

3. Inferences and generalisation usually require a large sample size. Thus, the survey usually involves many respondents when compared to other methods of data collection.
3.3.0 LITERACY INDIA TRUST - A VOLUNTARY AGENCY

Voluntary organisations play a vital role in accelerating the process of integrated rural development through their active, meaningful and catalytic participation.

According to Thomas, (1988), "Voluntary Agencies are self-financing, non-profit organisations of people who came together voluntarily to unite their efforts to achieve certain objectives by carrying out an activity or providing a service".

Inspired and committed leadership, individualistic style of functioning, independent of bureaucratic constrains, pragmatic and flexible approach are some of the characteristics attributed to voluntary agencies.

Voluntary organisations generally adopt a holistic approach of development and ensure high degree of people’s participation at micro-level with right motivation at various stages of planning process and decision making.

Voluntary agencies in India excel specially in implementing successfully the vital programmes like elementary education, adult education, health care, etc.

Leaders of the voluntary organisations are not only accountable for the funds of the projects, but also for the quality and quantity of the product of the organisation.

It is possible to achieve social and economic development in rural sector, if a meaningful rapport between voluntary agencies and government departments exists and they work-together in partnership.
Experience gained by voluntary agencies which have been engaged in social and development work in the rural areas for long periods should therefore be taken full advantage of. One such voluntary agency involved in adult education work for the past nine years is the Literacy India Trust, Madras.

Literacy India Trust is a voluntary agency founded in 1984 by the dynamic, devoted and committed leader Dr. Mrs. Joyce M. Scott for eradicating illiteracy in India.

The sole objective of this organisation is to eradicate illiteracy and work towards transformation and holistic development of the less privileged masses. The heart beat of Literacy India Trust (LIT) today is adult literacy and its dream is to see "India as a literate nation in a literate world". LIT is totally committed to this task. Literacy India Trust:

- provides training both to the Adult Literacy Project Officers and the grassroot level workers called Animators.

- provides suitable curriculum installing moral and ethical standards.

- provides assistance and support on partnership basis to conduct adult education classes in needy areas.

- works in partnership with the grassroot level indigenous voluntary organisations to implement adult education programmes.
- provides support to literacy and adult education work of non-governmental organisations in India.

Non-recurring and recurring projects are both accepted for scrutiny if they needed. LIT believes in small viable projects with 5 to 10 adult education centres with a maximum of 30 learners in a class. It enables the project officer to devote his/her time to visit the centres and supervise the classes efficiently and effectively.

Adult Education Project Officers' Orientation Seminar

The Adult Education Orientation Seminar for the project officers are conducted on an all-India basis, twice a year. At these seminars, the project officers who completed their adult education programme and the potential project officers who would start the adult education programme have an opportunity of learning and sharing together. These project officers work purely on voluntary basis and are appointed by their respective partner agencies. These are a liaison between the implementing agency and LIT and are responsible for implementing the adult education programme and accountable to LIT.

Adult Education Training Programme for Animators and Project Officers

Literal India Trust (LIT) conducts Animators' training programme to the grassroot level workers at the regional level twice a year within a few weeks after the project officers orientation seminar. LIT believes that it is the grassroot level worker who delivers the goods. Much of the success depends upon him/her. At the same time LIT insists the project officer to take the training along with the animator, so as to understand the whole process of the programme, the animator and his skills, abilities
and leadership. Both the project officer and the animator play a vital role in monitoring and implementing the programme successfully at the village level. The training curriculum includes practical field surveys to ascertain problems and needs, principles of education, roles, functions and leadership of animators, adult psychology and general behaviour of rural adults, methods of motivation and rural communication techniques methods of teaching illiterates - both theoretical and practical - methods of organising adult education centres, awareness building, organising people for starting co-operatives and developmental activities, conducting evaluation and reporting, etc.

One of the important aspects of the training programme is to train the animators as agents of change to bring behavioural change in individuals by imparting knowledge and skills and guiding them in solving their social and economic problems by themselves. The Animator is given an honorarium Rs. 150/- per month for a period of 10 months in a year, whereas the project officer involves himself as a purely volunteer basis.

**Organisation of Adult Education Centres**

A genuine adult education programme involves community enthusiasm and cooperation. Both the literates and illiterates must feel the sense of responsibility in carrying out the programme to success. In the process of organisation of adult education centres, the project officer and the local animator play a vital part in organising a local village committee with three to five persons for literacy and development activities.
A central and neutral location is selected for conducting the adult education classes regularly. The classes are conducted for 10 months in a year starting at any part of the year. The animator conducts the classes for five days in a week normally from 7 to 9 p.m. and the saturdays are exclusively set apart for conducting awareness programmes, group discussions, problem solving, sports and games, cultural activities and developmental programmes.

Use ofPrimers

In the process of learning the graded Adult Literacy primers are used for reading, writing and doing simple arithmetic. 'Content Sheets' on important topics of awareness on health, personal hygiene, ante-natal and post-natal care, immunisation, drinking, drug addiction and AIDS, poverty alleviation programmes, civics and keeping simple accounts etc. are used as collateral materials in between the course materials. 'Picture-word' method which is a revised method of Frank Labauch has been used for teaching the literacy primers. The literacy primers are designed to help a person to attain an educational level of 5th standard especially language learning. The adults are encouraged to use note books, pens and pencils if they feel shy of using slates and chalks like children for writing purpose.

Literacy Festival

At the end of 10-month course, each project conducts a Literacy Festival participated both by the neo-literates and the public. Here the neo-literates will have an opportunity to demonstrate publicly their ability to read and write and partake in
the development activities. Individuals testify and share the behavioural changes taken place in them and their families as a result of attending the A.L. classes.

Post Literacy

Continuing education must be a part and parcel of a good adult education project. As part of this programme LIT developed and introduced EACH ONE TEACH ONE programme by the neo-literates. The adults who finished the 10 months course in LIT projects are encouraged and helped with reading materials to find some one in his/her family or neighbourhood and teach them to read and write for 10 months.

The partner agencies are also encouraged to establish village libraries, cycles libraries, correspondence courses and Jana Siksha Nilayams in each project. Besides this LIT sends reading materials to all the neo-literates enrolled with them once in two months. LIT offers consultancy services and conducts seminars to encourage cooperatives and other income generating projects for the betterment of the neo-literates.

Field Staff

LIT has a pool of Area Coordinators as field staff some of them work honorarily. They visit the Adult Education projects periodically to sort out communication problems, to share information from the head office, to inspect the projects on different aspects of the programme, evaluate progress of the learners, check finance and encourage the project officers, animators and the learners to achieve their goals and maximise their results.
Field staff is a vital link between the partner agencies to give feedback and contribute to the growth and development of the LIT programmes.

In the light of work done by such devoted functionaries, with a sole objective of developing the rural areas and raising the quality of life of the rural adult learners through adult education, the researcher intends to study how far their efforts have borne fruit. Hence the sample for the study is taken from the adult education programmes conducted by the LIT in partnership with indigenous groups at the local level.

3.4.0 SAMPLING DESIGN

A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from the sampling frame. It refers to the techniques or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting some sampling units from which inferences about the population is drawn. Sampling design is determined before any data is collected.

At the first stage, from the various districts in which LIT, is conducting adult education programmes, two districts, namely South Arcot and Coimbatore in the State of Tamil Nadu were selected for the purpose of study. It was found that South Arcot is most backward districts in Tamil Nadu as far as adult education is concern. At the second stage, 24 villagers, 17 from South Arcot and 7 from Coimbatore districts have been selected (Refer Appendix: A) Each village has one adult education centre and therefore all the 24 centres formed the final sampling units. At the last stage, interviews were conducted for all the learners who were present at the time of the researcher's visit to the centres.
3.5.0 SELECTION OF THE LEARNERS

The learners had first completed a 10 months course. A structured interview schedule was constructed and pre-tested for the data collection. Out of the 720 learners only 697 learners were available for interview. Thus the sample size of learners was 697 and the animators assisted the researcher in conducting the interview.

3.6.0 SELECTION OF ANIMATORS

All the 24 animators of the 24 selected adult education centres (17 from South Arcot and 7 from Coimbatore districts) were chosen for the study. All of them were from local background. A questionnaire was constructed and pre-tested for collecting data from the animators.

3.7.0 SELECTION OF PROJECT OFFICERS

All the 3 project officers incharge of the 24 centres (17 from South Arcot and 7 from Coimbatore district) were selected as sample. As the number is small, interview was conducted with a structured interview schedule which was pre-tested.

3.8.0 CONSTRUCTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCHEDULE

The questionnaire and the schedule were developed strictly in accordance with the principles of questionnaire construction. Next to the choice of a suitable topic and the population, probably no other aspect of a survey is more crucial to the success of a study, than the adequacy of the questionnaire itself. The basic theme behind a
good questionnaire construction is dependant on the formulation of questions which gave "Maximum opportunity" for complete and accurate communication of ideas between the researcher and the respondent, Canel and Kahn, (1968). The first step in the construction of an adequate questionnaire is to attain a thorough grasp of the field and a clear understanding of the objectives of the study and the nature of the data needed. Thus the construction of the questionnaire began with an exhaustive review of literature and previous research studies in the area of adult education and rural development, series of discussions with persons familiar with the fields such as Adult Educators, Statisticians, Rural Development Workers, Project Officers, Animators and the Learners.

Then the questionnaires were constructed keeping in mind the required 3 conditions for an effective questionnaire, namely (1) the question asked should be clearly understood by the respondent. (2) The respondents should attribute the same meaning to the questions as does the researcher. (3) Questions need to be phrased in such a way that respondent can answer out of his own experience or feelings and not on what he thinks he ought to say or believes that the investigator wants him to say or thinks that some one else like him might say.

3.9.0 FREE RESPONSE CATEGORY - QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The contents of the open ended questions on their perception of development in political, economic, cultural, personal and social areas as a result of attending the adult education programme for the duration of ten months were analysed and included as part of qualitative research to supplement quantified data.
3.10.0 PILOT STUDY

In order to perfect the schedule design, a pre-test was carried out. For the purpose of conducting the pre-test, three villages were selected, two from South Arcot district and one from Coimbatore district. It was decided that the villages selected for pre-testing would be excluded for the purpose of final study. The pre-test was conducted in the 3 adult education centres and 80 learners were available in the 3 centres. The interview took place in the centres or in their residence.

The researcher during the interview noted down the difficulties encountered by the respondents both in understanding and answering the questions. It was also found that collection through schedule took a maximum of 35 minutes. After completing the pre-test, the responses obtained were tabulated. In the life of the pre-testing experience certain questions had to be eliminated and some had to be modified and the most of the questions were closed type. Some questions were suitably reworded to enable the respondents comprehend the questions without much difficulty. Also the reliability and validity of the interview schedule was found out to be 0.69 and 0.72 respectively. The modified schedule (see Appendix) was used in the final studies for collecting data from the neo-literate learners.

3.11.0 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ANIMATORS AND PROJECT OFFICERS

Brief questionnaires were constructed for the Project Officers and the Animators separately. In addition to the demographic data, the Project Officers were asked about the number of centres they supervised, the frequency of their visit to each centre, their participation during the supervision, their observation about the
animator, their contribution towards social, cultural, political, personal and economic development of the learners and the community, the reasons for their taking up this jobs, the benefit of the training programme and finally their suggestions for the improvement of the adult education programme.

The questionnaire for Animators contained their socio economic characteristics, their method of starting the class, method of teaching, use of the primers, use of aids, participation of the learners in the discussion, the average attendance, the drop-out if any, regularity of the attendance, issues discussed in the classes for awareness apart from literacy and numeracy. Skills taught for income generation, reasons for the choice of adult education the number of classes per week, the timing and the duration, the activities undertaken to motivate the learners, the physical facilities in the centre, the adequacy of the training programme, the problems they faced in conducting the classes and their suggestions for the improvement of the programme. As the number of animators is only 24 and the project officers 3, only the face validity of the questionnaire were established.

3.12.0 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS

In order to fulfill the objectives proposed in the study, a suitable interview schedule was constructed. A critical review of literature pertaining to the null hypotheses was made and appropriate variable were identified. Sex, age, occupation, marital status, size of family, age at marriage, number of children and income were considered as demographic variables. Since the target population was rural neo-literates, from the feasibility and suitability points, sophisticated interview schedule preparation was avoided. All the variables identified for the present study were
translated into comprehensive items as indicators of rural development, some of the variables even in their simplest form were able to provide quantitative data.

The other part included the reasons for their being illiterate, the difficulties they faced as illiterates, reasons for joining the adult education centres now, the person behind their joining the adult education course, the problems they face to attend the centre, their satisfaction regarding the primer, the topics, they feel to be included, their views regarding the sufficiency of the literacy and numeracy.

3.13.0 CONCLUSION

The chapter dealt with the selection of the sample, construction of the interview schedule, their pretesting, and establishing the validity and reliability of the tools. The next chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.