Research
Methodology
This chapter deals with the methodology adopted for the study by the researcher. It includes the significance and scope of the study, its aim and objectives, research hypotheses, conceptual and operational definitions, the research design, description of the respondents of the study selected by the researcher, variables, tools of data collection, pilot study, statistical tests used, limitations of the study, and the outline of presentation of the various chapters of the research report.

Statement of the Problem

Religious conflicts are the basis of communal vandalism in India. Tamil Nadu which was a peaceful state located in south India came to be devastated by religious conflicts, which is a fairly recent development that was not there in the earlier period. In 1981, the conversion of Hindus to Muslim religion at Meenatchipuram (Thirunelvelli District) and the spot of trouble at Mandaikadu (Ramanathapuram District) remains to be an unquenched fire. In 1998, the serial bomb blasts of Coimbatore and consequent religious conflicts made the people to tread through the religious path. Each religion celebrates the culture based on the economic position of the people. This brings out a competitive and jealous feeling among the people leading to a problem.

Among the countries of South Asia, India is certainly the only country where democracy has come to stay, despite many weaknesses and problems relating to proper democratic government. The present study is concerned with Hindu – Muslim – Christian harmony only. This is however not to suggest that there are no other communal forces at play in the nation.

Communalism and communal violence in post independence India is of great significance. Our leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and others were of the opinion that with the creation of Pakistan, the communal problem has been solved and it would not raise its ugly head
in independent India. Also, they thought that with the spread of modern scientific education, people's mindset would change, communalism become a thing of the past, people's outlook would become more scientific and they would not be motivated in their social and political behavior by their religious affiliations (Engineer, 2004).

**Significance of the Study**

The present study assumes great significance in the present socio-political context in India since there is an upsurge of communal politics and sectarianism almost all over the country. In the recent years, the country has seen an outward manifestation of tussle between political parties and alliances driven by communal and secular philosophies. The Hindutva movement has gained momentum in the recent past and even the minority religious groups in the country have become more active in professing and propagating their faith vigourously because of a fear complex that their rights may be jeopardized by the government because of the communal forces behind the ruling parties in many of the Indian States.

Even though there have been numerous articles in the popular media and books highlighting the problems concerning communal conflicts in different parts of the country, there is a near total lack of scientific literature on specific issues relating to communal conflicts. There have been a lot of work on the sociology of religion but it is quite strange to find that there have not been many scientific research studies on religious attitudes, practices and secularity among the people. It is in this context, a thorough examination of the religious attitudes, practices and secularity becomes absolutely essential to understand the dynamic forces at play in communal conflicts and to direct future policies and programmes of the government.
Scope of the Study

The present study is a humble attempt to understand the religious attitudes, practices and secularity prevailing among the people living in Tiruchirapalli City which is one of the major cities in the state of Tamil Nadu. Tiruchirapalli has a sizeable population of all the religious groups and the city has religious centers belonging to the Hindus, Christians and Muslims in quite a large number. The city is vibrant with religious activities of different groups almost throughout the year. Even though the city is not considered to be communally sensitive, there have been many instances of conflicts between religious groups and there are a few places which are considered to be quite sensitive areas and they are constantly under vigil by the law enforcing authorities. Initially, before embarking on this study, the researcher had planned to carry out the investigation in another communally sensitive city in Tamil Nadu. But, when he approached the concerned authorities for permission, they denied permission saying that such an investigation might affect the religious sentiments of the people and may, trigger another communal conflict in the area. Hence, the researcher had to carry out the investigation in his own home town.

This study deals with the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the people living in Tiruchirapalli city, their religious attitudes, practices and secularity. In addition to these variables, the researcher has attempted to assess the level of insecurity feelings among the people and also associations among the variables. While there were rating scales for measuring variables such as religious attitudes, overall ecularity and insecurity, the researcher could not find any valid and reliable instrument to measure the religious practices of the people and hence, had to use only some specific questions in the self-prepared interview schedule to address issues relating to religious practices. The researcher has also made an attempt to compare people with less education and people with more education, people belonging
to majority religious group and people belonging to minority groups with reference to the key variables under investigation.

The present study, despite its limitations, would certainly provide useful insights into the dynamics affecting communal harmony. Besides, it is hoped that this study would be an eye-opener and form the basis of more methodologically rigorous studies on religious attitudes, practices and secularity and their role in communal conflicts. Such studies will provide a very useful empirical basis for future policy making and programming by the government.

**Aim of the Study**

The aim of the study is to find out the religious attitudes, practices and secularity among the people living in Tiruchirappalli city.

**Specific Objectives of the Study**

- To study the religious attitudes and practices among the people living in Tiruchirappalli city.
- To study their religious faith and capacity of adjustment among them.
- To study the level of secularity among them.
- To study the feeling of insecurity among them.
- To study the people's opinion regarding recent policies and practices of the state and how they affect their secular ideas.

**Background Variables**

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Marital Status
4. Religion
5. Educational Qualification
6. Occupation
7. Monthly Income
**Key Variables**

1. Religious Attitude
2. Religious Practices
3. Overall Secularity
4. Insecurity

**Hypotheses**

1. People with higher level of education are likely to have lower level of religious attitude than people having lower level of education.

2. People with higher level of education are likely to have a higher level of secularity when compared to people with lower level of education.

3. People with higher level of education are likely to have lower level of insecurity feelings when compared to people with lower level of education.

4. People belonging to majority religious group are likely to have higher level of religious attitudes when compared to people belonging to minority religious groups.

5. People belonging to majority religious group are likely to have higher level of secularity when compared to people belonging to minority religious groups.

6. People belonging to minority religious groups are likely to experience higher level of insecurity feeling when compared to people belonging to majority religious group.
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

Religion

"Religion originates in an attempt to represent and order beliefs, feelings, imaginings and actions that arise in response to direct experience of the sacred and the spiritual. As this attempt expands in its formulation and elaboration, it becomes a process that creates meaning for itself on a sustaining basis, in terms of both its originating experiences and its own continuing responses" (Paul Connelly, 2000).

Religious Belief

Religion as belief pertains to the convictions that people hold regarding such matters as God, truth, or doctrines of faith (Gordon W. Allport, 1966).

Attitude towards Religion (Religious Attitude)

Belief and instruction of psychological, cognitive and behavioral component from god that guide and direct behavior of individuals and groups in a society (Zaghal, 2000).

Religious Practices

Since the researcher could not find any definition of this concept, he himself has defined it as "the religious rituals and ways of worship, frequency of attending religious meetings, practice of reading religious books, visiting holy places and related practices such as consulting with religious leaders for personal and family or business matters".

Security

Freedom from danger or risk; one of the reasons for people living in a small town is the security that small-town provides; crime rates, for example, are much lower in a small town than in a large city.
Insecurity

Insecurity in the present study refers to the prevalence of emotional instability, feeling of rejection, inferiority complex anxiety isolation, jealousy, hostility, irritability, inconsistency and tendency to accept this worst general pessimism or unhappiness in an individual (Govind Tiwari and Singh, 1975).

Secularism

Secularism has been defined "as a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on consideration purely human and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite, or inadequate, unreliable and unbelievable" (Holyoake, 1986).

Riots

Gary Marx (1970) would prefer to define a riot as "relatively spontaneous illegitimate group violence contrary to traditional norms".

Harmony

To have agreement or accord in a relationship; to work together in friendship and cooperation. (Example: The class worked together in harmony to produce a beautiful collage). Commonly used phrase: Harmonious relations. (For example, The committee worked together smoothly and effectively because of their harmonious relations; everyone made an effort to cooperate and agree.

Operational Definitions

Religious Attitude

Religious attitudes have been measured in the present study by using the Attitude Scale toward Religion developed and standardized by Sandhya Sharma (1990). The total score obtained by the respondents indicate their level of religious attitude.
Research Methodology

Religious Practices
Since there was no standardized scale available for measuring the religious practices, the researcher used specific questions in the interview schedule to assess the various religious practices such as rituals and ways of worship, frequency of attending religious meetings, practice of reading religious books, visiting holy places and related practices such as consulting with religious leaders for personal and family or business matters.

Secularity
Secularity has been assessed in the present study by using the Overall Secularity Scale developed and standardized by Prayag Mehta, Sinha, B.P and Gokulnathan, P.P (1982) and the total score obtained by the respondents indicate their level of secularity feelings.

Insecurity
Insecurity in the present study refers to the prevalence of emotional instability, feeling of rejection, inferiority complex anxiety isolation, jealousy, hostility, irritability, inconsistency and tendency to accept this worst general pessimism or unhappiness in an individual as measured by the security insecurity inventory developed by Govind Tiwari and Singh (1975).

Pilot Study
The researcher made a visit to Tiruchirappalli Corporation to find out the possibility of conducting the study and for getting the details regarding the wards in the city. During this visit, the researcher discussed with the Corporation officials regarding the feasibility, purpose, aim and objectives of the present study and permission was also obtained from them to conduct the study. After getting the necessary permission, the researcher made visits to a few wards and met with the local leaders in order to discuss with them the feasibility
of the study. They were very cooperative and gave useful ideas which helped in the designing of the interview schedule. The researcher also met quite a number of people informally and had discussions with them regarding their religious attitudes, practices and secularity. These discussions gave a lot of insights to the researcher which helped in going about with the study.

**Research Design**

Descriptive research study is concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group whereas diagnostic research study determines the frequency with which something occurs or its association with other variables. Descriptive-cum-diagnostic research design has been used for the present study. An attempt has been made, initially, to describe the background socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, and then the key variables namely religious attitudes, practices and secularity among the people and then finally, to study the associations between variables such as level of education, majority or minority religious group affiliation in relation to the key variables namely religious attitudes, practices and secularity.

**Universe and Sampling**

The universe of the present study includes all the people living within the 60 wards located in the 4 zones that fall within the Tiruchirappalli city corporation limits. Area sampling method was used for the selection of respondents for the present study. From the total number of 60 wards, initially, 5 wards were selected in a random manner. Then, from the total number of households in all the 5 wards, a sample of 300 households was selected using a simple random procedure using the voters' lists of the concerned wards as the Sampling Frame. From each of the 300 households thus selected, one person aged 18 years or above, was selected as respondents for the purpose of the study. Efforts were taken to ensure that majority of the
respondents were the male or female heads of the households. The following flow chart shows the entire sampling framework used for the present study:

**Sampling Framework**

![Sampling Framework Diagram]

**Fig. 2.**
Observational Design

The main source of data for the present study was primary in the sense that the researcher collected first hand information directly from the respondents using the interview schedule and the rating scales. However, the researcher used secondary sources of data such as published official reports and other documents, for getting the statistical information about the various communal riots that occurred in different parts of the country and also the census reports for getting data relating to the religious population groups in different parts of the country.

Tools of Data Collection

For the purpose of data collection, the researcher used the following tools:

Interview - Schedule

A self-prepared interview schedule which included the respondent’s personal details, such as age, gender, education, occupation, income etc, and religious practices such as rituals and ways of worship, frequency of attending religious meetings, practice of reading religious books, visiting holy places and related practices such as consulting with religious leaders for personal and family or business matters, perceived communal problems, opinions about government policies and practices and, opinions about religion.

Attitude Scale toward Religion by Sandhya Sharma (1990)

This scale was developed and standardized in the Indian context and used to measure the religious attitude among the respondents. It is a 30 item, Likert-type scale with a 3 point response mode (agree – disagree type). The maximum possible score on the scale is 90 and the minimum possible score is 30. Higher the score on this scale, higher the degree of favourableness toward religious attitude. The author of
the scale has reported the Split-Half Reliability as 0.683 and the Coefficient of Reproducibility (Cornell’s Technique) as 0.862. Besides, the author has reported that both the internal and external validity of the scale are good.

**Overall Secularity Scale by Prayag Mehta, Sinha, B.P and P.P. Gokulnathan (1982)**

This scale was used to measure the secularity level of the respondents. This scale consists of a total number of 7 items. The items are based on the following dimensions: fundamental rights of citizens, respect for religion of own and others, tolerance attitudes towards material, cultural and social improvement of people of India, patriotism, nationalism and scientific attitudes. Separate scoring for each item is done from 1 to 5. As far as the standardization of the scale is concerned, the authors of the scale have not given any reliability and validity estimates in the original reference. They had just mentioned that the standardization process was in progress. In spite of sincere efforts and repeated attempts to contact the authors to get the details of standardization, the researcher could not succeed in getting the required information. Hence, the researcher has attempted to arrive at the reliability estimates in the present study using Split-Half Method and the reliability estimates is 0.473 which is fairly good.

**Security Insecurity Inventory by Govind Tiwari and Singh (1975)**

This inventory was developed and standardized in the Indian context and used to measure security and insecurity feelings among the respondents. The score obtained by the respondents on this inventory indicates the level of insecurity feelings among the respondents. The inventory has a total number of 70 items which are rated on a 3 point response mode (Yes, No and uncertain). The marks had to be allotted as mentioned below.
The authors have reported that the reliability and validity of the inventory are good. Since the research could not get the reliability and validity estimates pertaining to security insecurity inventory estimated by the authors of the scale. The present researcher made an attempt to determine the reliability of the inventory by using Split-Half method and the estimated value this 0.714 which indicates a fairly high degree of reliability.

**Pre-Test**

To test the suitability of the interview schedule and the scales and also to determine the feasibility of the study, the researcher did a pre-test with 25 members of the general public in the Tiruchirappalli city wards. The pre-test experience and results helped the researcher to finalise the interview-schedule and to plan the process of data collection. After the pre-test, a few items that were ambiguous were
deleted and a few extra items pertaining to some relevant aspects were added to the interview-schedule.

**Data Collection**

Data were collected from the respondents through personal interview. Standardized scales were translated into Tamil for collecting primary data. The collection of data was done from 30th June 2003 to 30th January 2004.

**Statistical Analysis of Data**

Analysis of the collected and codified data after transcription was done with both basic and advanced statistical procedures. The data collected with the help of the interview-schedule were of both qualitative and quantitative nature. These data were analysed by means of simple and cross-tabulations. The quantitative data (scores) collected with the help of the rating scales were classified into different categories indicating the level of measurement such as low, moderate and high using quartile deviation method. Measures of Central Tendency (Mean) and Dispersion (Standard Deviation) were also calculated.

In the second part of analysis, the data pertaining to different groups of respondents such as respondents with lower level of education as compared to respondents with higher level of education and respondents belonging to majority religious group as compared to respondents belonging to minority religious groups were disaggregated and then compared with the help of parametric tests such as Student’s t - test and multivariate procedure namely ANOVA. Qualitative data were subjected to comparative analysis using the non-parametric method of Chi Square Analysis. The specific hypotheses formulated for the purpose of the present study were verified with the help of t - test.

One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was attempted by dividing the respondents into three groups based on the score range on
each of the key variables of Religious Attitudes, Overall Secularity and Insecurity and then comparing those groups with reference to the score range on the other key variables.

**Limitations of the Study**

No research study can be one hundred percent perfect. Every study is likely to have at least a few limitations. In the present study, one of the major limitations has been the cross-sectional nature of the study. Religious attitudes, practices and secularity are aspects which are like to be more or less permanent among the people. However, due to changing personal, social, economic and political circumstances and depending on certain major life events and other experiences, there may be changes in these variables, which can be studied only from a longitudinal perspective. Another minor limitation of the study is the non-availability of reliability and validity estimates established by the authors of the Overall Secularity Scale. However, this limitation may not have any adverse impact since the researcher has attempted to do his own reliability estimation for the scale.

**Chapterization**

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