


CHAPTER – III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology refers to various sequential steps adopted by a researcher in studying the problems with certain objectives in view. Methodology involves the sequential steps as follows.

- A statement of purpose is made in the form formulating the problem.
- A descriptive of the study design is given.
• The methods of data collection are specified.

• The results are presented.

• Frequently there follows a section on conclusion and suggestion.

Formulation of the Problem

Though the Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women, it is found that a majority of women do not enjoy their rights. This is especially so in the rural areas, where women are not even aware of their basic rights. The sex ratio, which in 2011 was 940 women for every 1000 men, is proof enough of the growing imbalance that exists in the Indian society.

Perhaps, it is the 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} Constitutional Amendment Acts, which took the bold step of acknowledging the role of women in the development of their own communities. In making the landmark provision of one third reservation for women, the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional Amendment Act opened the space for women’s participation in the political decision making processes and enlarged the possibility of change within the political discourse of the country. For the first time ever, one million women were elected to the local government. For the first time ever, there was a shift towards recognition of public voter of women.

The fact remains that women are now legally empowered to participate in the decision making processes of their villages. Over the years, there has been a shift from
proxy candidature and submissiveness to a situation where there is increasing number of cases where women have started handling the panchayat affairs confidently and efficiently. Numerous examples may be cited from across the country where women have demonstrated their initiatives in taking the lead in construction of link roads, building schools to closing down of liquor shops. Special mention needs to be made of Ms. Urmila Yadav, a widow Sarpanch of Kosli panchayat, Haryana. This Sarpanch succeeded in getting the encroached panchayat land vacated, negotiating soft loans and building a market complex that generated additional revenue for the panchayat, provision of safe drinking water and minimizing the risks of water borne diseases.

What is critical, however, is the need for sensitivity to the exercise of leadership by women particularly at the village level, given its highly challenging nature. For one, this is a major shift from the customs and norms of a typical Indian village society, where women’s voice in decision making processes is discouraged and unheard of. Secondly, there are factors like illiteracy, compliance with social restrictions, and lack of comprehensive understanding of roles and responsibilities which hamper the functioning of women leaders. While the Central Act has provided opportunities, it also needs to be re-emphasised that customs, traditions and norms that subjugated women still persist and women have to function in this framework. The fact remains that increasing numbers of women are standing upto the challenge, carving their own space in the political structure and voicing their opinions. The present research has been
proposed with an idea of investigating the participation of elected women panchayat presidents in Madurai District.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is an attempt to find out the role and aspirations of elected women panchayat presidents in Madurai District. Apart from studying the socio-economic background of the elected women panchayat presidents, the study has been designed with the following objectives.

- To study the past background of the elected women panchayat presidents.
- To study the present position of the elected women panchayat presidents.
- To study the future aspiration of the elected women panchayat presidents.
- To find out the factors responsible for the political empowerment of elected women panchayat presidents.
- To study the elected women panchayat presidents role in the rural development.

Research Design

The researcher has adopted descriptive research design for the study. Descriptive design helps to describe the phenomenon (what, when, where and how) under investigation. This design portrays the various strategies adopted by the women elected representatives to become a panchayat presidents, how they have entered into political
arena/sphere, how the elected women representatives are executing their assignments/role, what kind of adjustments do the family members have made, and what type of social support received by the elected women panchayat presidents in carrying out their tasks. This design also helps to arrive at logical conclusion based on the data.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was done before drafting a schedule. The Pilot study provided the preliminary understanding of the universe to get an early idea about it. On the basis of this information the actual schedule was prepared and developed the overall strategy for the research. The Pilot study was carried out in the Panchayat Unions at Vadipatti, Usilampatti, Chellampatii, Vadapalanji, District Rural Development Agency, the District Collectorate and the NGOs working for empowering women in Madurai District. The knowledge gained from the pilot study helped the researcher in framing the interview schedule and finalizing the tool for data collection and also framing the approach for the successful completion of data collection.

Map -1

Tamilnadu
Madurai district is one of the thirty two districts of the state of Tamil Nadu, in the southeastern India. Madurai is the third largest city next to Chennai and Coimbatore and the second largest municipal corporation in Tamil Nadu next to Chennai. It is bounded on the North by the districts of Dindigul, Thiruchirapalli and on the East by Sivagangai and on the West by Theni and South by Virudhunagar. Madurai is also called as “Temple City”, “Jasmine city”, “Athens of East”, “Koodal Nagaram” [City of Junctions], “Naanmadakoodal”, “Sleepless City” [Thoonga Nagaram], “Cultural Headquarters of Tamilnadu” [Kaalachara thalainagaram], “City of Festivals” [Thiruvizhilla Nagaram]. Madurai, located on the banks of the river, has been a major settlement for over two millennia. As this district is located in the middle of Tamil Nadu good communication network is available. It is considered to be a religious center in the southern India. This district has both traces of rural and urban culture.
Madurai is closely associated with the Tamil language as all the three primary congregations of Tamil scholars. The Three Tamil Sangams, were held in the city
between the 1780 BC to 3\textsuperscript{rd} century AD. The recorded history of the city goes back to the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century AD, being mentioned by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to India, and Kautilya, a minister of the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta Maurya. The city is believed to be of significant antiquity and has been ruled, at different times, by the Early Pandyas, Medieval Cholas, Later Cholas, Later Pandyas, Madurai Sultanate, Vijayanagar Empire, Madurai Nayaks, Chanda Sahib, Carnatic Kingdom, and the British. The city has a number of historical monuments, the Meenakshi Amman Temple and the Tirumalai Nayak Palace being the most prominent among them. The city celebrates several festivals, the most important being the annual 10-day Meenakshi Tirukalyanam festival (also called Chittirai festival), celebrated during April–May, that attracts 1 million visitors. Madurai is also known for Jallikattu, the annual bull taming event celebrated along with the Thai Pongal festival, organised in villages outside the city.

Tamil is spoken predominantly in and around Madurai. Madurai Tamil is the standard dialect spoken. Other languages spoken are Sourashtra, Urdu, Hindi and English. However the words of some of these languages have Tamil words mixed in with them.

According to the 2011 census Madurai district has a population of 3,041,038, roughly equal to the nation of Oman or the US state of Iowa. This gives it a ranking of
119th in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 823 inhabitants per square kilometre (2,130/sq mi). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 17.95%. Madurai has a sex ratio of 990 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 81.66% and 60% of the district is urbanized.

Madurai district comprises 13 Blocks which are Thiruparankundram, T.Kallupatti, Tirumangalam, Kallikudi, Sedapatti, Usilampatti, Vadipatti, Melur, Madurai East, Madurai West, Kottampatti, Alanganallur and Chellampatti. The district comprises seven taluks namely Madurai North, Madurai South, Thirumangalam, Peraiyur, Usilampatti, Vadipatti and Melur.

Madurai is an important industrial and educational hub of the South Tamil Nadu. The city is house to various automobile, rubber, chemical and granite manufacturing industries. It has developed as a second-tier city for Information Technology and some software companies have opened their centres in Madurai. Madurai has important government educational institutes like the Madurai Medical College, Homeopathic Medical College, Madurai Law College, Agricultural College and Research Institute that provide education to aspirants in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu.

Universe of the Study
All elected women panchayat presidents of thirteen blocks of Madurai district. The details of women panchayat presidents are given below in the form of table.

**TABLE NO – 3.1**

**Village Panchayat Presidents of Madurai District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panchayat Union</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Women (General)</th>
<th>S.C (General)</th>
<th>Women (S.C)</th>
<th>Total No. of Panchayats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madurai East</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madurai West</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirupparankundram</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottampatti</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alanganallur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadipatti</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usilampatti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chellampatti</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedapatti</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirumangalam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Kallupatti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kallikudi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Census

Universe of the study includes the women representatives with respect to panchayat raj institutions in Madurai district. There are 166 elected women panchayat presidents in Madurai district (*Government Reservation for Women 147 Seats*). Under this the researcher has taken 2006-2011 for his research. Census method is adopted for the study.

In the present study, women representatives of Madurai district are selected for interview. The prominent areas of this present study are socio-economic status of women representatives, their political awareness, family support and problems faced in the political carrier and the like the study is considered significant in the district.

Pre-Testing

A pretest was conducted among the twenty elected women panchayat presidents in order to examine the validity and effectiveness of the questions. The words of the schedule were rearranged based on the responses given by the mothers and observations made by the researcher. Modifications were carried out in the interview schedule specially with respect to their expression of self and other family members in executing the assignments and role of panchayat presidents, attitude of family members, relatives and neighbours when carrying out tasks and while taking
decisions, and views about contesting in the future election. Based on the modifications the interview schedule was edited, modified and finalized.

Sources of Data Collection

The primary data were collected through interview method. Structured interview schedule was prepared and administered to the respondents. The interview schedule consisted of both open-ended and close-ended questions in order to elucidate adequate responses from the respondents. The items in the interview schedule included past background of the women panchayat presidents, awareness about role of panchyat presidents, problems faced by the women representatives when performing their roles and strategies adopted by the women panchayat presidents to overcome their constraints. The researcher established good rapport with the respondents in order to win their confidence. The interview was conducted with the elected women panchayat presidents. The secondary sources of information were collected from various books, journals, magazines and internet. The researcher has analyzed the data both quantitatively and qualitatively.
Limitations

- Despite extensive planning, the following difficulties were faced in the conduct of the study.
- A very few respondents failed to furnish reliable accounts of their income. However, this did not materially affect the depth of the study. Mostly interviews were conducted at the Respondent’s houses and Panchayat board offices.
- In view of time and cost constraints, the present study is limited to Madurai District. Therefore the result cannot be generalized for the entire Tamilnadu as the agrarian structure, cultivation practices, and irrigation differ from one region to another region. The researcher found much difficulty in convincing the panchayat presidents and clearing their doubts.

Chapterisation

This study has been divided into seven chapters as follows:

- The first chapter in detail deals with the introduction of the study.
- The second chapter presents the review of previous literature.
- The third chapter explains the methodology adopted for the study.
- The fourth chapter discusses the Socio-Economic background of the elected women panchayat presidents.