CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY

I Introduction:

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology that has been employed in the conduct of the present research.

“Research is an endeavour to discover intellectual and practical answers to problems through the application of scientific methods i.e. the procedure or mode of investigation to the knowable universe”. (Wilkinson and Bhandarkar: 1991: 1)

“Research” refers to “a critical and exhaustive investigation or experimentation having as its aim the revision of accepted conclusions in the light of newly discovered facts.” (Ibid: 9)

Donald Slessinger and Mary Steverson in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences define “research” as “the systematic method of exploring, analyzing, and conceptualizing social life in order to extend, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in construction of theory or in the practice of an art.” (Pauline Young: 1984: 30)

Stating it differently, “social research seeks to find explanations to unexplained social phenomena, to clarify the doubtful and correct the misconceived facts of social life”. (Ibid: 30)

The Concise Oxford Dictionary has given the definition of research as “the systematic investigation into and study of material and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions”. (Judy Pearsall (ed): 1999: 1217)

The Webster’s Dictionary proposes a very inclusive definition of research as “diligent inquiry or examination in seeking facts or principles; an experimental investigation, laborious or continued search after truth; as researchers of human wisdom”. (Dana Kellerman: 1913: 815)

Thus, research is a systematic investigation to establish facts. It is a search for knowledge.
II Focus Of The Study:

This study aimed at inquiring into the Socio-Cultural Change and Assimilation among the People of Indian Origin residing in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand where almost 60 percent of the People of Indian Origin live and are settled.

III Universe And Sample:

The term “Universe” or “Population” in the sense in which it is used in the sampling statistical parlance is constituted of all the individuals or things or events or documents or observation etc. conforming to a designated set of specifications, which a particular study should principally cover". (Wilkinson and Bhandarkar : 1991 : 251)

According to Pauline Young, “the entire group from which a sample is chosen is known as the population, universe or supply”. (Pauline Young 1984 : 325)

A statistical sample is a miniature picture of entire group that is the universe from which the sample is taken.

• Identifying The Universe:

For the purpose of this survey which forms the basis of the present study, ‘the Socio-Cultural Change and Cultural Assimilation among the People of Indian Origin in Thailand’, the researcher tried to identify the Universe of the study. Since, there was no authentic list available of Indians residing in Bangkok, the population of people having Indian origin had been estimated from the lists made by organizations such as Indian Study Center, Indian Embassy in Bangkok, and Sri Guru Singh Sabha which amounted to around 60,000 persons settled in Bangkok. It is almost 60 percent of the total population of Indians settled in Thailand.

• Selection Of The Sample:

In the present study a ‘Snow Ball Sampling Method’ was used for identifying the respondents. A respondent having Indian origin was identified with the help of above mentioned organizations. On approaching him/her three other names were sought through him/her and their addresses were procured. Then, one was chosen out of the three randomly.
Thus 350 respondents for the purpose of this study of The People of Indian Origin who are from the First, Second, and Third generation were chosen by using Snowball Sampling Method.

“Assimilation” is the major component and the focus area of the present research. Assimilation being the last stage of adjustment of migrants with the local native community and their culture, the researcher took special care of including 2nd and 3rd generation migrants in his research study sample, in addition to the 1st generation respondents. This led to the emergence of a holistic picture of assimilation of Thai Culture by the Indian migrants in Thailand.

The sample represented almost every area where People of Indian Origin in Bangkok inhabited. The sample covered the areas such as Pahurat Road which is known as the little India in Thailand, the business area like Silom Road, Surawongse Road, Sukhumvit Road. Furthermore, the big residential areas like Ban-Kheak Intersection, Saphan Kwai area, Ladplow Road, Charansanitwongse Road were also considered. Besides, International School, University (International Programme) where the young generation of the People of Indian Origin study, like Thammasart University, Mahido University, Assumption University were approached for covering students pursuing various careers. The sample also included the representatives of different sections such as businessmen, employers, employees, medical doctors, housewives, students, unemployed individuals, priests etc.

As the field of such a study was too large to be covered by a single individual, therefore, about 350 people were chosen for our sampled group who are of Indian Origin and are settled in Bangkok. Out of these, only 300 respondents’ responses which were found to be complete were taken into consideration while analyzing the data.

IV Research Design Of The Study:

The researcher found that a very few investigations were carried out about the Indian Migrants to Thailand and they did rarely touched upon the assimilation aspect. Therefore, the researcher had opted for the ‘Exploratory Research Design’. 

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• **Exploratory Study**:  
  "An exploratory study, in the main, aims at increasing the investigator’s knowledge about the phenomenon he wishes to study and this enables him in formulating a problem for more precise investigation and to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study. It also serves as a basis for clarifying concepts, establishing priorities for further research, gathering information about practical possibilities for carrying out research in real-life settings". (Wilkinson and Bhandarkar: 1984 : 92)  

  The researcher, in the present study had not attempted to formulate any hypothesis for verification and substantiation of the state of affairs, rather in the end; the present study raised some questions for further research in this field.

V **Sources Of Data**:

• **Primary Sources Of Data**:
  
The researcher collected data from the migrants of Indian Origin in Bangkok, belonging to – First, Second and Third generation and coming from a variety of vocational and professional background. It covered the primary source of data.

• **Secondary Sources Of Data**:
  
The researcher used library resources for a proper comprehension of existing knowledge. For the present study, the researcher had acquired up-to-date information about what had been thought and done in the specific area in terms of Migration, Culture, Cultural Change, and Assimilation.

  The secondary sources of data consisted of the reports of government of Thailand, reference books like Encyclopedias, the Dictionary of Sociology, Anthropology, concerned text books, books, articles and research reports related to the present study.
VI Methods Of Investigation:

A social science study can be made by using various methods of research, such as Historical Type, Descriptive Survey Type, Experimental and Statistical Type, Case Study Type and so on.

In the present study researcher had made the use of “Survey Method” as the main method. The other methods like “Historical” and “Case-Study” were used to a certain extent as supplementary to the main method.

• Survey Method:

Survey research is a very old research method which is still practiced today. Survey Research is frequently used, as a mode of observation and investigation in the social science research. It studies population by selecting and studying a sample chosen from the specified universe with a view to discover the relevant incidence, distribution and interrelation of socio-economic and psychological variables.

Merits Of Survey Method:

• The Survey method helps the researcher to directly establish contact with the respondents. Researchers can observe and see things by themselves.
• Survey research helps in collecting more accurate information within the sampling error ranges.
• It permits greater objectivity.
• Survey research is a suitable method of measuring attitudes, opinions, and orientation of a large population.
• Survey research is also an appropriate way of collecting original data for describing a population as it is too large and therefore difficult to observe directly in its entirety.

The advantages mentioned above led the researcher to adopt the survey method for the present study. However, the survey method has a limitation like unsuitability for sensitive issues and scope for bias. To offset this limitation of the survey method, Interview and Participant Observation were chosen as techniques to get qualitative inputs.
VII Tools And Techniques Of Data Collection:

In the present study, the tools and techniques used for collecting data included Questionnaire, Interview, Participant Observation and Case Study.

1. The Questionnaire:

A questionnaire is an indispensable tool in any social survey research as it facilitates the collection of information from the respondents in a written form in relation to pre-arranged questions. The questions used in the questionnaire can be open ended or specifically structured.

In the present study, the questionnaire is divided into 5 main sections and consists of numerous questions which are close-ended as well as open-ended questions. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents.

The use of questionnaire helped the researcher in the quantitative measurement of uniformly collected data. The questions were mostly structured and also open-ended so that respondents could give free and frank replies to the questions. Open-ended questions were used in this study with the intention of giving the respondents an opportunity to express their opinions frankly and in detail.

The researcher had been careful in making a questionnaire which was simple and easy to understand, using standardized words. This did help in minimizing the misunderstanding of the essence of the questions.

• Pre-Testing Of The Questionnaire:

A pre-testing of the questionnaire was made by testing it on 10 respondents from Pahurat area which is known as the ‘Little India’ in Thailand. The questionnaire was finalized after duly testing the initial draft with ten respondents as mentioned above. Required changes were made, few questions were omitted and some were revised. Thus, pre-testing enabled the researcher to ascertain the suitability and proper arrangement of the questions and to get an idea of the difficulties that the respondents were likely to face. Great care was taken in listing of the questions in proper order.
• Contents Of The Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was divided into 5 main sections. The details of each section are as below:

Section – I:

In this section, questions seeking information about the respondent’s individual and family information were included. Individual information comprised of age, sex, religion, caste, nationality, marital status, place of birth, educational background, occupational status, income, the duration of stay in Thailand, the generation of migration in Thailand. Besides this, questions concerning family information were also inquired into. These questions dealt with the type of family, number of family members, their economic activities, source of income, their own and family income.

Section – II:

In this section the questions were asked for seeking to know about the motivational aspects i.e. Push and Pull factors of migration, namely: – the generation of migrants to Thailand, their age when they first had the idea of leaving India, their age at which they actually left India, their financial position in India before coming to Thailand, their source of knowledge about Thailand, Their feelings about Thailand, the reasons for leaving India, the consultation made before leaving India for Thailand, the reasons for choosing Thailand as their destination, their feelings upon arrival in Thailand, their opinion about migration to Thailand, have been taken into account.

Section – III:

The outlook regarding life style in Thailand: mainly towards the general Thai practices, Thai people, Thai society, Thai way of life were the aspects that were covered here. The questions asked, were for seeking information about the change and adjustment of respondents to Thai society and the extent to which they get along with Thai people and Thai society. In order to judge these aspects, questions relating to frequency and eagerness of visits to their Thai friends and neighbours, enthusiasm for studying Thai traditions with the help of Thai people/neighbours, to communicate with Thai people in their language and getting to understand the general framework of Thai society as well as their relatives in India, family influence for learning the Thai language, for marrying within their own community, their preferences in maintaining
the Indian culture, as well as the activities in which the members of the family participate in the Indian as well as Thai associations in Thailand and the extent to which they take part in the activities of these associations were asked.

Section – IV:

This section was divided into 5 categories in terms of cultural variables. They were as follows: Symbols, Language, Values and Beliefs, Norms and Material Objects.

- **Symbols:**

  Questions regarding the realization and awareness of the people of Indian Origin, in Thailand, about Thai symbols and the extent to which the respondents assimilated these Thai symbols were asked in this section. Three major symbols of Thai institutions are The Nation, Religion and The Monarch. The questions mainly dealt with aspects such as respect and homage paid to the King of Thailand, the understanding of the rules of the Thai government, legal framework of parliament, identification with the country, readiness to contribute for the benefit of Thai society, awareness that Buddhism plays a vital role in Thai society, willingness to practice the principles of Buddhism in day to day functioning, agreement with the principles of Buddhism that influence the norms and values of Thai society, approval of monarchy and democratic government of Thailand, awareness of Thai history, Thai historical places and geography as well as the important tourist places in Thailand, had been given due consideration in this section.

- **Language:**

  This section dealt with the questions regarding the usage of Thai language by the respondents in their daily life and the extent to which the respondents were familiar with the Thai language by using and practicing it. The questions mainly dealt with language habits, interest and capacity to read, write and converse in Thai language in daily life. Questions also covered knowledge and correctness of the grammatical dimensions of the Thai language and literature.

- **Values and Beliefs:**

  The awareness and recognition of Thai Values and Beliefs which were mainly based on the Buddhism were tried to be identified through questions focused on the conceptual understanding and belief in the law of Karma, belief that a
transmigration/rebirth relates to all animal and human life, extent of materialistic influences, getting higher status with consumption of luxury goods in daily life, belief in superstitions or omens.

- **Norms**:

The questions regarding Thai norms which are derived from beliefs were also asked. They dealt with conventionality and tradition. The questions were focused on knowing the views of the respondents concerning the Thai concepts of merit (charity to poor, donation to monastery, non violence to animals etc.), importance given to participation in cultural events and Thai festivals like Loykrathong, Songkarn etc., knowledge and participation in activities revolving around Buddhist holy days, awareness and participation in big festivals held in Thai society such as International New Year, Songkarn day, Chinese New Year, Christmas day etc. participation in Thai cultural activities and rituals, like wedding receptions, house-warming ceremonies, funerals and such other occasions, manner of greeting people, familiarity with and usage of the word “Sawaddee”, strictness with the Thai greeting customs, belief in material wealth and recognition from society, belief that being well dressed and possessing ornaments symbolize a person’s social status, interference of hierarchy and social status while interacting with others for any purpose, worshipping “Spirit House”, basic understanding and extent of respect for the fundamental Thai law. Thai influence of gentle and polite manner of interaction.

- **Material Objects**:

Questions asked under this heading; dealt with the respondents’ consumption of Thai Material Objects, both traditional and contemporary. The questions covered different aspects such as dressing like other Thai people, wearing a Thai traditional suit, on special Thai cultural occasions, observance of Thai fashion, knowledge about the Thai classical perfume, possession of precious ornaments and jewellery made in Thai style whether the respondents ate/cooked food in the Thai way, how frequently did they do so and whether they liked the taste of Thai food, knowledge of the ingredients and method of cooking Thai food, house decoration in contemporary Thai style and interest in collecting Thai antiques.
Section – V :
This part consisted of questions which sought to understand the respondents’ opinion towards Thai culture. The questions covered related to aspects of Thai culture that were either acceptable/unacceptable according to Indian Ethics and moral standards and reasons for the same, opinions and impressions about Thai culture and society.

• Administration Of The Questionnaire :
The questionnaire was printed in the form of a booklet. They were distributed to the respondents personally. To avoid inconvenience, meetings were arranged when the respondents had leisure time for filling up the questionnaire.

The respondents filled the questionnaire by themselves. For the few respondents who were less educated or old and did not have good eyesight, the researcher interviewed them and simultaneously filled up the questionnaire as a schedule for them. Some questionnaires had been sent to the respondents by electronic mail (e-mail) which is convenient, speedy and a cheap mode of communication.

2. Interview :
The researcher used interview as an alternative technique for collecting qualitative data. It is an excellent tool to observe respondents while in a face to face interaction.

Merits Of Interview Technique :
• The interviewer can observe respondents and ask questions directly.
• Face to face interactions are thought to be useful to maximize trust and co-operation between interviewer and interviewee.
• The interviewer can clear all points to interviewee. So, it decreases the number of “don’t knows”, “no answer”

The researcher tried to use interview technique for getting information on sensitive issues like marriage, material positions, economic status and the depth of
interpersonal relations. Thus interview helped in eliciting and clarifying some of the controversial responses.

3. Observation:
Observation is the technique of taking note of a phenomenon scientifically. As a data-gathering device, direct observation may make a direct contribution to descriptive research. Observation as a research technique is directed by a specific purpose, systematic, carefully focused and thoroughly recorded.

In the present study, the researcher acted as a participant observer to gain insights into the manner of living of migrants of Indian origin to Thailand. Participant observation is an observation in which the observer becomes more or less one with the group under observation and shares the situation as an attentive listener, an eager learner, registering, recording and interpreting the behaviour of the group. Here the researcher tried to understand the frame of reference of the group he is investigating, by joining the members in their regular activities in order to experience things as they do.

However, systematic observations of human behaviour, in natural settings are to some degree, an intrusion into the dynamics of the situation. It is widely believed that individuals do not behave typically when they know that they are being observed.

4. Case Study:
Social researchers often speak of case studies which focus attention on one or few instances of some social phenomenon, such as a village a family, or a migrant group. As Charles Regin and Howord Becker (1992) point out, there is little consensus on what may constitute a case. The term is used broadly.

The chief purpose of case studies may be descriptive, as when an anthropologist describes the culture of a preliterate tribe. The in-depth study of a particular case can yield explanatory insights, as when the community researchers Robert and Heley Lynd and W. Lloyd Wanner (1949) sought to understand the structure and process of social stratification in a small town of USA.

In the present research, the researcher had made use of this method with an intention of getting to know the process of migration of the People of Indian Origin in
Thailand in more clear and authentic manner. He conducted 15 case studies of selected respondent migrants. The report is presented in appendix one.

VIII Difficulties Encountered While Collecting Data:

In the beginning, the researcher was worried about administering the questionnaire and collecting the data from people of Indian Origin who are scattered all over Bangkok. The researcher first consulted the Indian Study Center, Thammasart University. At the institute, the researcher got the list of names of the key persons who work for those associations as valuable advisors.

The researcher wanted to collect data from diverse respondents belonging to different generations as well as age grades and religions. Then, the researcher asked for cooperation from an International School in Bangkok where people of Indian Origin were enrolled. There were six departments which co-operated while the three denied help.

One of the problems was that there were some respondents who could not understand English properly. So, the filling up of the questionnaires took more time and energy. A few respondents complained that the questionnaire was rather more detailed. Some of the respondents failed to fill up the entire questionnaires thus about 50 questionnaires remained incomplete.

The chance to meet the big group of respondents was on Sunday morning before noon when most of them gathered at temples or places of worship such as Visnu Temple, Sri Guru Sigh Sabha, Namdhar Sangat, Hindu Smart, etc. To meet and to get acquainted with them took around 4 months. But it helped in developing a good rapport with the key respondents.

The target of collecting the 300 completed questionnaires as well as 15 cases of the In-Depth Interview was a big task for the researcher. Further more, the researcher acted as a participant observer to gain insight into the respondents' way of thinking. He also opted to make a few case studies with an intention of getting in depth knowledge about the process of migration of People of Indian Origin to Thailand. The researcher sometimes joined the respondents in their daily activities, in
order to experience things as they do. The researcher worked on the fields everyday for nearly 7 months and visited Bangkok 2 times in the years, 2004 and 2005.

Finally, the researcher received co-operation from the Indian association in Thailand, People of Indian Origin and Thai people to cope up with this research. Thus, there was no major difficulty faced in the field work.

 IX Data Analysis:

Collected data becomes meaningful when it is properly analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study.

The researcher has used both qualitative and quantitative approaches for analysis. Since it was an exploratory study, no elaborate statistical testing was done. Quantitative analysis was made by preparing frequency tables and calculating percentages and average scores. Scaling was widely used in the Questionnaire to assess the magnitude of the responses. The weightage assigned to each point on the scale ranged from 5 to 1.

In qualitative research, the data gathered by means of open ended questions, interviews as well as observation are generally analyzed by using qualitative description that can be used to uncover and understand what is hidden behind the phenomenon being studied and explain the intricate details of phenomenon that are difficult to convey through the quantitative method.

The researcher in this study put the same into practice. The data obtained through open ended questions, interviews and observation were categorized into various categories and was analyzed quantitatively, by putting up similar types of responses into a category.

 X Interpretation Of Data:

Since the study attempted to understand Socio Cultural Change and Assimilation among the People of Indian Origin who migrated to Thailand, the analysis was done in the light of the theoretical framework. The theories used were related to 1) Migration, which dealt with Push-Pull factors 2) Theories related to
Social Change 3) Theories of Assimilation of Culture and these theories were applied while interpreting the data in the present study.

XI Organization And Presentation Of Data:

The report of the study of “Socio-Cultural Change and Cultural Assimilation among the People of Indian Origin in Thailand” is divided into 9 chapters as mentioned in Chapter I:

I Introduction
II Methodology
III Demographic Profile of Thailand, Bangkok and Thai Culture
IV Profile of India and Indian Migrants
V Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents
VI Push and Pull Factors
VII Socio Cultural Change
VIII Cultural Assimilation
IX Summary, Conclusions and Suggestions

Tabulated data were presented in tables. At the end, the Appendices are given which consisted of case studies of the selected cases, and the Questionnaire. Bibliography was given at the end of the research report.

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