CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Health is the most important development indicator. Initiatives in the global level such as World Health Organization’s Health For All and Millennium Development Goals portrayed the importance of this key aspect of development. But struggle of nearly three and a half decades could not reach to the attainment of Health For All. Governments in the developing countries tried their best in terms of revising National Health Policies, implementing Integrated Health Care Programmes, allocating more fund to health care etc. But still the health indicators are reluctant to grow. This shows that there is a gap between the Government and the beneficiaries. The voluntary sector stepped in as an alternative entity to provide health for all. The grass-root level organizations could do wonders, with their dedicated staff, available financial and other kind of resources, bottom-up planning approaches and ensured community support.

India witnessed an NGO boom in the 1980s, and the number of NGOs is increasing day by day. Health finds a place in the multi-dimensional objective list of almost all NGOs and a significant number of them are working exclusively in the health sector.

The whole platform of healthcare is open to the voluntary sector, and some NGOs have proved their significant role in enhancing the health status of the community they serve. In this context the researcher is trying to explore what are the health system strengthening activities of NGOs in Kerala and how do they intervene in health sector. The methodology used for this exploration is detailed in this chapter.
4.1 Research Question & Objectives

In the context of ever increasing needs for effective health care programs, and mushrooming of Non-governmental Organizations across the state, the researcher posed the following research questions:

♦ What are the Health interventions undertaken by Non Governmental Organizations?

♦ How do the Non Governmental Organizations intervene in health sector?

The key objective of the study is

To assess the Role of Non Governmental Organizations in health system strengthening

It is further divided in to the following specific objectives:

¨ To document the history of involvement of Non Governmental Organizations in health sector in Kerala

¨ To identify and analyse the Health Interventions undertaken by Non Governmental Organizations

¨ To assess the relationship between government and Non Governmental Organizations with regard to interventions in health sector.

¨ To assess the role of Non Governmental Organizations in advocacy, lobbying and networking for health system strengthening

¨ To evaluate the intervention strategies of Non Governmental Organizations, specifically involved in health system strengthening
4.2 Research Design

Mixed Methodology is applied in the study. As a method it focused on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. The researcher chose a mixed methodology, in order to address the research question at different dimensions. A quantitative approach is necessary to understand the nature and characteristic of NGO health interventions where as a qualitative approach will help in detailed evaluation of the health NGOs. As per John Creswell’s categorization of mixed methodologies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), the selected design is Sequential Explanatory Research Design. The study begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data.

4.3 Universe and Sampling

The study is conducted in Kerala, a state of India. Kerala is the at the southern end of India with a population of 3,33,87,677 that is 3.34% of India’s total population. The urban population is 1,59,32,171 and rural population 1,74,55,506. The state has development indices comparable to that of the most developed nations in health and education status. Kerala is mainly divided in to three geographical regions that are the high land, mid land and low land. There are 14 districts, 152 blocks and 1364 villages. The total number of Grama Panchayaths is 978 and that of municipalities is 60. The health care system of the state is well flourished with government and non government entities. There are a total of 809 PHCs in the state. They serve as the initial point of health care services to the rural poor. The quantity and quality of super speciality hospitals in Kerala is top when compared to other states.
The first phase of the study aimed at preparing a list of Health system strengthening activities by Non Governmental Organizations and analyzing the characteristics of the health interventions. The second phase was set for in-depth analysis of organizations specifically working in the health sector.

It proved to be a difficult task to include all NGOs registered in the state of Kerala as the universe of the study, since their number is more than 4 lakh as per 2015 statistics. Thus the researcher opted a single district with the highest number of NGO registrations till 2011. Ernakulam qualified this criterion with a total number of 36,548 registered NGOs till 2011.

Ernakulam is located at the middle of the state with a total area of 3068 square kilometre and is on the coast of the Arabian sea with a coastal line of 46.2 km. It is informally called as the commercial capital of Kerala, since the district is home to umpteen number of business ventures. It is the third most populous district. The number of international and domestic tourists visiting Ernakulam is highest among other districts. The total population is 3,279,860. Density of population is 1069 per sq.km which is much higher than the state average. Percentage of literacy is 95.

Thus the Universe of the study constituted all the Non Governmental Organizations in Ernakulam registered either under Travancore Cochin Literary Scientific and Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1955 or the Charitable Trusts Act, 1952 and are involved in implementing health interventions for at least two years and are not making any profit out of their services.
The total number of NGOs registered in Ernakulam till 2011 December is more than 30,000. Number of NGOs registered in the following three years is 963, 914 and 1067 respectively. Apart from this statistics, there is no data base that provided updated information about the active NGOs in the district. Through archival research and expert interactions the researcher identified the following databases that provide details of NGOs in the state

- Directory of Non Governmental Organizations in Kerala Prepared by ICSW (1987)
- NGO Partnership System Website by the Planning Commission of India (2009)
- District wise List of NGOs updated by ICSW (2009)

A preliminary list of NGOs in Ernakulam was prepared from the above databases, and they were contacted for the screening process. The NGOs were checked with regard to the inclusion criteria. After the screening process, 40 organizations in Ernakulam were selected as health NGOs and they were surveyed in the first phase of the study. The total number of health interventions run by these health NGOs are 113. From this quantitative information, a heterogeneous sample of 8 health specific NGOs were chosen for the second phase of the study.
4.4 Tools of Data Collection

An information proforma was devised to collect data in the preliminary phase. The first part of the proforma assessed the profile of the organizations, nature of their interventions, their access to and utilization of resources, involvement in networking and advocacy, relationship with government and other non governments and accountability practices. The second part of the proforma collected data on the nature and extend of their health interventions, the planning process, extend of community participation in planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, stakeholder analysis, and sustainability measures. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS-descriptive statistics.

An interview guide based on the evaluative framework proposed by the researcher was used for the qualitative part of the study. It included six major themes namely the attainment of health specific goals, Resource Utilization, Management Capacity, community participation, stakeholder analysis and SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) Analysis.

Face to face interviews, telephone interviews, archival research, web based review of documents, observation, stakeholder interactions and participation in NGO activities were used as the techniques for data collection.
4.5. Pilot Study

The feasibility of the proposed study was checked in Ernakulam Social Service Society, a well established NGO in Ernakulam. The researcher had discussions with the health coordinator and the staff involved in health intervention programs of the agency. The interaction with beneficiaries of the health interventions in their own community helped the researcher to witness the potentials and possibilities of NGOs in dealing with the health care needs of people.

An informative discussion with the director of Kerala Voluntary Health Services helped the researcher to expand her understanding of the historical context, current relevance and future implications of the selected area of research.

4.6 Pre-test

The information proforma was pretested by collecting data from 5 NGOs involved in health care activities. The tool was tested through telephone interviews and direct visits. Internet seemed to be an appropriate platform for collecting the intended preliminary information from NGOS that are web-friendly. Thus the researcher also developed an online data collection tool in which the NGO officials can log in and fill the required details, and update the details as per their convenience.
4.7 Data Collection & Data Analysis

The data collection and analysis in sequential stages as depicted below:

1. Listing of active NGOs in Ernakulam District
2. Screening process to check inclusion criteria
3. Selection of Health NGOs

   Collection of preliminary data regarding the nature of health NGOs and characteristics of health interventions
   (Quantitative in nature, Information Proforma)

4. Analysis of the preliminary data
   (SPSS, descriptive statistics)

5. Selection of samples based on significant results

6. In-depth study of selected cases
   (Qualitative in nature, using evaluative framework)

7. Findings & Suggestions for better involvement of NGOs in Health System
   Strengthening