CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

Youth development and youth for development are the philosophy of youth empowerment. When youth get developed, in turn the youth develop the nation. It becomes real only when timely and systematic focus added with early interventions are made on young people. This could be achieved through providing both structural and functional support to youth in an appropriate manner.

The functional supports such as care, concern, cope, confidence, trust and recognition and structural supports viz., educational and skill development institutions are to be provided to youth. It is expected that all these supports are propositionally connected and given equally importance. Nevertheless the structural supports are given more preference than the functional supports by agents of social support systems.

Unfortunately the development of functional supports is left to the young people that they need to grow by themselves. It is expected that everyone in the society especially the primary social support systems, parents and family members, peer group and people in neighbourhood promote the functional supports. Such an effort makes the young people to participate in governance and decision making process by which build their functional supports like sense of belonging, commitment and leadership qualities.

This process of empowerment begins in late adolescents’ period (16-19 years) than in pre adolescents’ (9-13 years) and early adolescents’ (14-15 years) period. Since, it is in this stage that the self consciousness, rebelliousness, idealism, initiation into life choices and selection of particular behaviour starts developed. Any failures or negative impact on this period yield adverse consequences in youth themselves and on the society at large.

The society is responsible for the young people’s behaviours since their brain formation is inadequate and moved by emotions than cognitions. It is necessary to
integrate emotions with cognitions through better social support systems. The supports from the agents of social supports awake the young people and promote their loyalty to them and vice versa. The risk behaviours of young people; substance abuse and fight among class mates in schools etc., are removed. Hence, the youth are able to understand not only the society but also various issues in social, cultural and economic planes better. The empowered youth empower the nation.

In this context the research on social support systems on late adolescents in rural areas becomes innate. At this juncture it is also essential to probe into the following research questions to have a scientific understanding.

- Youth Perception on the support systems - parental and family members, friend and peer members, neighbourhood and educational institutions
- Role of support agents in building the empowerment of young people in rural areas
- Variations in perception on functional supports
- Level of functional supports that strengthen the positives and removes the negatives
- Gender perception on commonality and differences of functional supports

It is with these questions that the study explores the empowerment of young people provided by the four primary agents of society with various indicators of functional supports.

**Objectives of the Study**

The focal point of this research work was to explore the impact of social support systems in building the empowerment of young people in rural areas of Tamil Nadu. The specific objectives of the study are:
1. To identify the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents;

2. To assess the needs and concerns of respondents in study areas;

3. To observe the behaviours and characteristic of respondents;

4. To measure the levels of respondents’ perception on parental, family members, neighbourhood, peers and educators support;

5. To study the existing social support systems and its association with respondents empowerment;

6. To evaluate and to suggest the suitable measures to create a conducive environment for respondents empowerment.

**Scope of the Study**

Empowering youth and solving their problems are broad based in recent times and it includes families, professionals, community leaders, peer members, government and every one in society. This is the modern and community based approach to youth development which disapproves the traditional model that the ‘youth solve their own problems and develop them.’ It means that the community is the heart and soul of youth empowerment and it is the community that fulfils the needs of youth. Therefore the exploration on various support systems of a community and its positive association make progress in youth empowerment.

Simultaneously this study recognises the youth as sparks, inspirations, relationships, supports and connect them with the agents of social support systems. The youth who have been sparked are able to connect themselves with the supportive agents and perform better and experience success in life. Such youth are able to utilize the provided services and opportunities of the society for their betterment and welfare. Thus some source of spark in the society empowers youth, develops their soft, academics, career, and life skills.
Further the scope of this study is not only to make the young people enriched and problem free but also productive and builders of nation. Freeing youth from all risk factors, protecting and providing all types of resources itself are insufficient to transfer youth into empowered adulthood. Empowering youth is a joint effort and it calls for the stockholders; parents, neighbours, peers and educators to create an atmosphere conducive for the youth to develop.

Method of Study

Explorative research design had been chosen for this study as the most appropriate method to the objectives of this study. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected through prepared questionnaire in the vernacular in order to facilitate the respondents for more correctness.

Universe of the Study

Students who are studying two in higher secondary schools of Dindigul District at the time of study are the universe of the study.

Area of the Study

This study was conducted in Government Higher Secondary Schools in Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu has 32 districts in which Dindigul district had been selected purposely for this study since this district is a rural based backward district in education.

Data Base

Primary Sources of Data

Primary data were collected directly from the students both boys and girls studying 12th Standard in selected seven government higher secondary schools in the district. Based on the objectives of the study, Questionnaire was prepared and translated in Tamil - the vernacular language of the respondents.
Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary data were collected from published sources like books, magazines, thesis and unpublished records on the topic of research. Besides web sites on youth, research articles from e-journals, census reports and youth policies were also browsed for the study.

Pilot Study

The pilot study contacted in four higher secondary schools run by both government and private were visited. Discussions were held with students, teachers, administrators were done and necessary data were collected in order to understand the feasibility for the study.

Sampling Design

Census method was used by the researcher to select samples. In the first stage the list of all the government higher secondary schools in the district was obtained. The total schools were 79 located in panchayat, town panchayat and municipality areas. In the second stage the co-educated schools in rural areas where boys and girls study together were identified and found to be 27 in the district. Co-educated schools were selected as number of researches suggested that there is a prevalence of natural atmosphere where both gender study together. In the third stage 25 per cent of the schools out of 27 co-educated schools were selected using cluster random sampling of schools; thus finally SEVEN schools were selected.

The identified schools were located in Narasingapuram, Nallamanayakkanpatti, Agaram, Sengurichi, Senthurai, Sullerembu and Sanarpatti. In all the seven schools; data collection was done, some schedule were dropped and some others were rejected due to incompletion and errors. However 614 samples were found in which boys 297 persons and girls 317 persons.
Operational Definition of the Concepts Used in the Study

Youth / Young People / Adolescents

In reference to India youth policy 2014 the above terminologies were interchangeably used to denote the people aged 15-29 years of all genders; married and unmarried. However for the purpose of this research the respondents aged 17-19 years considered as young people.

Social Support Systems

Social supports were classified as structural and functional supports. Nevertheless the only concern of this research was the functional supports provided by the four major support systems of society; parental and family members, friend and peer members, neighbourhood and educational Institutions. Hence the identified functional supports were recognition, acceptance, coping, socialization, companionship, confidence, consolation, belongingness, security, motivation, guidance and intervention etc.

i). Parental and Family Members Support

The supports extended by the respondents’ family that consisted of parents, siblings and all other family members who were biologically related, living together and supporting one another were called the parental and family members support.

ii). Friend and Peer Members Support

The Respondent’s perceived support from a trust worthy person of same age either boy or a girl and similar the respondents’ perceived support from the schoolmates and the village mates were called the friend and peer members support.

iii). Neighbourhood Support

Respondents perceived supports from the men and women of their neighbourhood families in a village were called the neighbourhood supports.
iv). Schools Supports

The extended support to respondents by their teachers, students and school administrations were called the school supports.

**Tool for Data Collection**

The prepared questionnaire was translated into Tamil and used to collect the data. The data on respondents’ family background characteristics followed by the data on four domains such as a) parental and family members, b) friend and peer members, c) neighbourhood and d) schools were collected.

Under the domain of parents and family members; recognition, acceptance, coping and socialization were added.

In friend and peer members domain; companionship, confidence, consolation, belongingness and security were included.

On the domain of neighbourhood; motivation, guidance and neighbourhood interventions were inserted.

Finally on the domain of schools; the academic success, teachers support, schools boundaries and expectations and schools susceptibility were incorporated.

In each sub domain five questions were asked from the respondents.

**Tools for Data Analysis**

The number of indicators had been used to assess social support systems and youth empowerment. The three point Likert scales ranging the maxim percentage and classified as three levels < 50 percent low, 51 to 80 percent moderate and 81 to 100 percent as high were used. The analysis attempted to bring out the need and implication of rural youth empowerment through perceived supports, trust and connection, felt alienation from the supports of parents, neighbours, peers and educators.
Pre-Test of Tools of Research

7 Pre-test ascertains the clarity and validity of the tools for data collection. The translated interview schedule in Tamil was administered by the researcher among a few respondents. This test was carried out in all the selected schools of research as per the research design. During the per-test the researcher learnt to modify and alter the interview schedule for better administration and response. This pre-test data was processed in SPSS (statistical package for social sciences).

Reliability Test

The reliability of an interview schedule ‘social support systems for rural youth empowerment’ was determined by reliability test. Thus reliability test was administered to 30 percent of sampling size of the respondents (N=185). The total items tested were 105 and the result is given below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.886</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td>0.105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reliability value was 0.894, which is good enough to administer the schedule.

Chi-Square Test

Chi square test was done to find the association between students’ gender, religion, caste, socio, economic and cultural background Vs parental and family members, friend and peer members, neighbourhood and educators’ recognition, acceptance, coping, socialization, susceptibility and etc.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was done and the analysis highlighted the highly contributing factors and the corresponding variables that strengthened the support systems of family, peer, neighbourhood and schools.
Scope and Limitations

As the present study is based on the samples from co-educated higher secondary schools of Dindigul district, it is bound to be limited in its scope and applicability. The scope was concerned, it was focused on the support systems of young people in four major areas; parental and family members, friend and peer members, neighbourhood and schools. In which the variables covered were recognition, acceptance, coping, socialization, companionship and confidence etc. The research aim was to explore the existing support systems of young people, to evaluate and to propose the measure to be undertaken in order to promote the support systems of young people.

The findings and outcome of this research were the opinion of respondents alone that were gathered through prepared questioners. Nevertheless the respondents were motivated and guided to answer the questioners given to them. None of the respondents’ opinions were either verified or clarified with anyone. Thus the collected data were edited, recoded, entered into SPSS and analysed. The outcome explored the connection among four support systems and its association with selected variables.