CHAPTER – 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
A STUDY OF THE DALITS OF
THE SYRIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN KERALAM

3.1. OBJECTIVES

3.1.1. General Objective

To understand and present the profile of the Dalits of the Syrian Catholic Church in Keralam, and the perceptions regarding discrimination against them.

3.1.2. Specific Objectives

1. To ascertain the socio-economic status of the Dalit Christians of the Syrian Catholic Church of Keralam.

2. To find out the socio-economic problems the Dalit Christians face.

3. To enumerate the interventions made by the various stakeholders to address these problems and to understand the perception regarding the effectiveness of such interventions.

4. To find out the perceptions regarding the discriminatory practices against Dalit Christians.

5. To find out the views of the Hierarchy with respect to the discrimination and development of Dalit Christians.

6. To examine the self-concept of the respondents with respect to their Christian identity and to assess their self-esteem.

7. To identify possible areas for social work interventions.
3.2. HYPOTHESES

This study explored the following hypotheses:

1) There is a significant difference in the socio-economic status of the Dalit Christians and the Non-Dalit Christians.

2) The socio-economic status of the Dalit Christians is influenced by the level of their concentration in a particular parish.

3) There is likely to be a significant difference between the perceptions of the DCs and NDCs regarding the ranking of the problems faced by the Dalit Christians.”

4) The ranking by the DCs themselves, of the problems faced by Dalit Christians is likely to be significantly different based on their concentration in parishes.

5) There is likely to be a significant difference in the views of the Dalit Christians and the Non-Dalit Christians with regard to the interventions made on behalf of the Dalit Christians
   
   a. By the Church
   
   b. By the State
   
   c. By the Dalit Christians themselves
   
   d. By all the stakeholders

6) There is a significant difference in the views of the Dalit Christians and the Non-Dalit Christians with regard to the effectiveness of the interventions made on behalf of the Dalit Christians

   a. By the Church
   
   b. By the State
   
   c. By the Dalit Christians themselves
d. By all concerned.

7) There is a significant difference in the perceptions of the Dalit Christians and the Non-Dalit Christians regarding the discrimination against the Dalit Christians in matters related to:

   a. Church involvement
   
   b. Neighbourhood relations
   
   c. Welfare schemes
   
   d. Education
   
   e. Government services
   
   f. Political involvement

8) There is likely to be a significant difference in perception between the DCs and the NDCs regarding their Socio-religious identity.

9) The majority of the Dalit Christians are likely to consider re-conversion to Hinduism as an option.

10) There is likely to be a significant difference between the self-esteem of the Dalit Christians and the Non-Dalit Christians.

11) There is a significant association between the socio-economic status and the self-esteem of the Dalit Christians.

12) There is a significant association between the self-esteem of the Dalit Christians and the level of their concentration in a parish.
3.3. CLARIFYING THE CONCEPTS

3.3.1. Dalit

The term is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘dal’ which means ‘to crush’. The word ‘dalit’ means that which is crushed, or torn asunder. The term ‘dalit’, as it is used today, in the broad sense includes all those who suffer oppression and injustice. Thus it has a wide connotation that includes the Scheduled Castes (the former untouchable castes), the Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Castes or Classes, Buddhist converts, minorities, women and the poor of the upper castes in Hindu society (Ram, 1998).

Nandu Ram (1998:104) uses the term ‘for the Scheduled Castes of the Hindu caste system and for those Scheduled Castes who have converted to Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism and Islam in India’. This is the sense in which the term ‘Dalit’ is used in this study.

In this study, ‘Dalit’ beginning with a capital ‘D’ is used as a noun form or as part of a noun form referring to a dalit individual or group. The italicised usage ‘dalit’ implies an adjective – e.g., dalit culture.

3.3.2. Dalit Christians

Those Christians in India who have accepted Christianity from the various Scheduled Caste groups are called Dalit Christians. They are also referred to as avama Christians, avasa Christians, putu Christians, Pulaya/Pulaya Christians. At times, in certain contexts, the term ‘Dalits’ (without the addition of Christians) is used to refer to them.

In this study, the term ‘Dalit Christians’ (DCs) refers to those Christians of the Syrian Catholic Church of Keralam belonging to families which are said to have been converted to Christianity during the 19th and 20th

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1 A more refined or sophisticated terminology is cēramar/sāmbavar Christians (as gathered from various interactions)

2 ‘Syrian’ comes from the ancient liturgical language of Syriac, which is said to have been the spoken language of Palestine during the time of Jesus. It is said to be same as Aramaic. The usual terminology for this Church in ecclesiastical circles is ‘Syro-Malabar Church’ or ‘Syro-Chaldean Church’ (Pathikulangara, 1993).
centuries from the so-called untouchable castes, especially the *Pulaya* and *Pulaya* castes, and having membership of the Arch-diocese of Changanachery, or the diocese of Kanjirappally, or the diocese of Pala.³

### 3.3.3 Non-Dalit Christians

These are the Christians who do not have their origin from among the Scheduled Castes. Generally they are called *paramparāgata* (traditional) Christians or Syrian Christians. (As the context demands, these terms have also been employed). Most of the families claim descendence from *Nampūtiri* Brahmin families said to have been converted by St. Thomas himself. The Dalit Christians usually refer to them as *savāṇa* Christians.

In this study, all those Christians who claim their ancestry not from the scheduled caste communities are included as Non-Dalit Christians (NDCs).

### 3.3.4 Syrian Catholic Church of Keralam

The Church of Keralam that belongs to the Eastern Syrian ritualistic tradition, claiming its founding from the apostle St. Thomas, and which accepts the spiritual leadership of the Pope of Rome in matters of faith and morals, is called the Syrian Catholic Church of Keralam. The more popular terminology is Syro-Malabar Church.

### 3.3.5 Profile

According to Webster’s Dictionary, profile is “the outline or contour of the human face...viewed from one side; or a vivid and concisely written sketch of the life and characteristics of a person”.

In this study, profile refers to the select characteristics of the respondents. These characteristics are: socio-economic status, self-concept and identity and perceptions about socio-economic problems and discrimination.

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³ The three dioceses of Changanachery, Kanjirappally and Pala belong to Syrian Catholic Church of Keralam.
3.3.6. Hierarchy

Hierarchy, according to Webster’s Dictionary is “an organized body of ecclesiastical officials in succession of ranks or orders (example): the Roman Catholic hierarchy”. Catholic Catechism defines it as the group distinguished from the laity.

In this study, Hierarchy includes nuns in addition to the priests and bishops who are technically in the Hierarchy as per the understanding of the Church. Though according to the norms of the Church nuns are part of the laity, due to their distinct life-style and positional leadership and influence, they are included in the definition of Hierarchy for this study.

3.3.7. Socio-Economic Status

Socio-Economic Status “In a system of social stratification, a combination of various social and economic indices of rank is used in research studies... Social characteristics (family background, education, values, prestige of occupation) and economic status (income) are combined into one socio-economic status ranking” (Scot, 1988: 399).

Social status is the ‘standing’, the honour or prestige attached to one’s position in society. Note that it is influenced by social position. In modern societies, occupation is the key element in determining the social status. Affiliations to or memberships of ethnic groups (like caste), gender, religion, voluntary associations etc. also influence one’s social status. Social status is a key element in social stratification. Modern sociologists tend to combine the concepts of social status and class together as Socio-Economic Status (SES). It is “usually operationalised as a simple index of income, education and occupational prestige” (Wikipedia4).

In this study, SES refers to the totality of the social standing of a household on the basis of its caste origin (whether Dalit or Non-Dalit), education, occupation, income, landed property etc. of the members of the household, amenities like housing, water and sanitation, access to information, ownership of vehicles and cattle, etc. This is calculated by

4 http://www.answers.com/socio%20economic%20status)
means of the weightage given to each of these items as stipulated by Aggarwal et al (2004). (A more detailed explanation is given later in this chapter in the section on tools.)

3.3.8. Socio-economic problems

Socio-economic problems are the problems identified by the respondents in the social and economic arenas of their life.

3.3.9. Interventions

To involve oneself in a situation so as to alter or hinder an action or development (Wikipedia\(^5\)). A standard dictionary\(^6\) defines intervention as an influencing force or act that occurs in order to modify a given state of affairs. In the context of behavioural health, an intervention may be any outside process that has the effect of modifying an individual's behaviour, cognition, or emotional state.

In this study, interventions refer to the specific measures taken by the Church, the State and the Dalit Christians themselves to solve the problems or improve the situation of the Dalit Christians in the Syrian Catholic Community. The term ‘Church’ includes and refers to the Christian faithful of the Syrian Catholic community, its priests and members of the Hierarchy, and the organizations and associations that are affiliated to the Church.

3.3.10. Stakeholders

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a stakeholder as someone who has “...something to gain or lose by the turn of events, or to have an interest in an event or concern.” According to Freeman, a stakeholder is “...any group or individual who may affect or be affected by the obtainment of the organisation’s goals, objectives, decisions, policies, practices and operations” (Waggoner, 2001).

\(^6\) http://www.minddisorders.com/Flu-Inv/Intervention.html
In this study, the stakeholders are the Church, the State, and the Dalit Christians and their organization (specifically, Dalit Catholic Mahājana Sabha – DCMS).

3.3.11. State

In this study refers to the Indian republic and/or the state of Keralam, as represented by the respective governments.

3.3.12. Effectiveness

The extent to which any intervention has resulted in the desired end or result.

In this study, it refers to the progress in the socio-economic and communitarian aspects of the life of Dalit Christians or the reduction in the socio-economic problems they face as a result of the steps taken by the various stakeholders.

3.3.13. Perceptions

“...In studying perceptions, we are studying what it is that the organism experiences; not what the physical world contains or is made up of” (Bartley’s definition cited by Gould & Kolb, 1964:295).

“The selection, organization and interpretation by an individual of specific stimuli in a situation according to prior learning, activities, interests and experiences etc. Perception is a process and a pattern of responses to stimuli. It is factor of the... field, that is, of the configuration of stimuli as well as of previous social and cultural conditioning” (Scot, 1988:295).

“A group of sensations to which meaning is added from past experience” (Chaplin, 1968:330).

In this study, perception refers to the way in which the respondents articulate their experience or outlook on various issues.
3.3.14. Views

“The contemplation or consideration of a matter with reference to action; sight obtained of something from a position stated or qualified” (Webster’s Dictionary).

Here, ‘views’ refers to the way in which people like priests and bishops, who hold positions of ecclesiastical authority, look at the issues of Dalit Christians.

3.3.15. Discrimination

“The unequal treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of some, usually categorical attributes such as racial, ethnic, religious or social class membership. The term is usually used to describe the action of a dominant majority in relation to a weak minority, therefore implying immoral or undemocratic behaviour” (Scot, 1988:115).

“The unfavourable treatment of categories of persons on arbitrary grounds...which serves to maintain social distance between two or more categories or groups by means of a set of practices more or less institutionalised and rationalized” (Gould & Kolb, 1964:203).

In this study, discrimination means the phenomenon of treating or (having the feeling of) being treated as lesser (read, less equal) people, especially on the basis of one’s family, ancestry or caste.

3.3.16. Discriminatory Practices

Those practices involving discrimination, such as using derogatory terminologies to address or to refer to Dalit Christians, addressing them disrespectfully without consideration for their age, not involving them in religious and social functions, not giving adequate representation to them in decision-making bodies, not considering them equally in matters of welfare, etc.
3.3.17. Social Work Interventions

Measures taken by social work institutions to reduce, eliminate and eradicate the various problems under consideration.

In this study, the term 'Social Work Interventions' refers to the systematic, scientific and planned steps suggested in the light of this study, to be initiated by the various stakeholders to address the socio-economic problems faced by the Dalit Christians.

3.3.18. Level of Concentration

In the present study, the term ‘level of concentration’ is used with reference to the percentage of Dalit Christian households within a parish. (On the basis of average concentration, those parishes where the Dalit households were less than 10% of total households of the parish were categorized as low-concentration parishes, those with 10 – 19% Dalit households were classified as medium concentration parishes, and those with 20% or more Dalit households were categorized as high concentration parishes.)

Researchers in the field of health and social relations have used the concept of 'socio-cultural space' to understand the processes of conflicts, structure of expectations, (balance between mutual wills, capabilities and interests) and its disruption (Rummel, 1976). They use the concept of ‘clustering’ (Merlo et al, 2005) to refer to the use and distribution of geographical space by various people with impact on the physiological and other health aspects of life. This aspect is looked at from the angle of social development of the dalit community in the study.

3.3.19. Re-conversion

Re-conversion in this study refers to the formal process of renouncing one’s Christian faith and accepting Hindu faith, as stipulated by the government rules.
3.3.20. Self-concept

Self-concept is equal to self when self means “individual as perceived by the individual in a socially determined frame of reference” (Gould & Kolb, 1964:630).

In this study, it refers to how the respondents perceive themselves in relation to the society they live in. A set of questions pertaining to the respondents’ identity as Dalit or Non-Dalit Christians belonging to Syrian Catholic Church of Keralam was used to gain an understanding of their self-concept.

3.3.21. Identity

Identity is “an assertion of belonging, or...of ascription and categorisation, and along with factors like culture and ideology, it is a means of articulating ethnicity or being classified by others as belonging to a particular ethnic unit” (Hooja, 1998:93).

In this study, identity refers to those aspects of the respondents’ existence that make them a Dalit or Non-Dalit Roman Catholic Syrian Christian. Based on this, questions were asked to find out their self-concept as well as their views on various issues pertaining to the Dalit Christians.

3.3.22. Self-Esteem

“Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one’s worth or value.” Rosenberg (1981) defines it as, “totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings with reference to himself as an object.”

“A person’s evaluation of himself in terms of the way (s)he perceives others’ opinion of him” (Scot, 1988:375).

In this study, self-esteem is measured using the scale developed by Rosenberg in 1965, as given in appendix 5.

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8 http://www.atkinson.yorku.ca/∼psycetest/rosenbrq.pdf
3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study design was descriptive with a diagnostic component built into it. Kothari (1985:46) defines descriptive and diagnostic studies: “Descriptive research studies are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or of a group whereas diagnostic research studies determine the frequency with which something occurs or its association with something else.” Since the study involves the presentation of facts and characteristics concerning the group under study as well as the examination of whether certain variables are associated, the study design falls under the category of descriptive-diagnostic.

3.5. POPULATION & GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF THE STUDY

3.5.1. Population

The Syrian Catholic Community of the state of Kerala was the population that was studied. Their strength is 3,428,232 and they are spread over 13 administrative units called dioceses spread over the entire state. The Syrian Catholic population of Kerala is 56.6% of the Christian population and 10.77% of the general population of the state (The Catholic Directory of India, 2005-06).

3.5.2. Geographical Area of Study

Central Kerala, which comprises the five Syrian Catholic dioceses of Ernakulam, Kothamangalam, Pala, Kanjirappally and Changanachery was chosen as the area of study. The region also includes the Syrian Catholic diocese of Kottayam having a Catholic population of 173,450. However, since this diocese is exclusively composed of an endogamous ethnic community claiming their descent from the Jewish settlers under the leadership of one Thomas of Cana (Knai Thomman) and hence has no

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9 The Syrian Catholic dioceses within Kerala State - from South to North - are: Changanachery, Pala, Kanjirappally, Kottayam, Kothamangalam, Idukki, Ernakulam, Irinjalakkuda, Thrissur, Palakkad, Thamarassery, Manthavady and Thalassery. Two dioceses of adjoining states, also have some Catholic population in the state, viz., Thuckalay (Tamil Nadu) and Belthangady (Karnataka). (Source, Catholic Directory of India 2006-07)
DCs in its fold, it has been excluded from the study. The Catholic population of the five dioceses mentioned above is given below, together with its percentage within the total population of the geographical region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diocese</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>469,287</td>
<td>10.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kothamangalam</td>
<td>226,900</td>
<td>31.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changanachery</td>
<td>382,068</td>
<td>3.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanjirappally</td>
<td>172,050</td>
<td>14.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pala</td>
<td>346,334</td>
<td>50.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,596,639</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This comes to 48.59% of the total Syrian Catholic population of the state of Keralam. The region is considered as a traditional Syrian Catholic belt and has the highest concentration of DCs belonging to the Syrian Catholic Church.

### 3.5.3. Target Groups

Though the Syrian Catholics of Keralam might appear to be a homogeneous community to an outsider, its claim to being an exclusive, caste-like community had come to an end with the conversions from the *dalit* populations of the state some time in the 19th century. Since then, two clearly demarcated divisions could be observed in this faith community, and this study has concentrated on these two sections, viz., the Dalit and the Non-Dalit Christians of the Syrian Catholic Church.

### 3.5.4. Unit of study

Household was chosen as the unit of study, the choice of which if properly exercised is said to be very effective in bringing out the social realities to the fore (Hamel, 1991). The primary focus of the study was on DC households. However, in order to understand their profile in comparison with the majority within the Catholic fold, households of the NDCs were also studied.
3.6. MAJOR DATA AND THEIR SOURCE

3.6.1. Primary Data

The major data was about the DCs of the community – their socio-economic status, the perceptions about the problems (socio-economic) they encounter, the steps taken by the Church, the government and the DC community itself to remedy these problems, its effectiveness, and the perceptions about discriminatory practices towards the DCs.

Syrian Catholic households of both these groups were identified as the main source of data. As household was taken as the unit of study, any one who was available at home and willing and able to provide information on the subject was taken as a respondent. Other primary sources were the leaders of the community, especially the bishops, priests and nuns.

3.6.2 Secondary Data

Diocesan records, minutes of Synods, Archives of Mannanam Monastery, Chethipuzha Monastery, Census Reports and other books and journals.

3.7. SAMPLING

A multi-stage sampling design was adopted.
### 3.7.1. Table Showing Sampling Procedure

**Table 3.1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Syrian Catholic Dioceses of Central Keralam</td>
<td>Concentration of RSC population</td>
<td>Researcher’s discretion based on data regarding Christian concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Dioceses (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changanachery</td>
<td>Concentration of RSC &amp; DC, and activities for them &amp; contiguity of the regions</td>
<td>Researcher’s discretion based on data regarding Christian concentration and consultation with experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kanjirappally</td>
<td>Pala</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Six parishes</td>
<td>Six parishes</td>
<td>Six parishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six parishes</td>
<td>Concentration of DC (high, medium, low)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six parishes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Households</td>
<td>10% DC households in each of the selected parishes, and an equal number of NDC households</td>
<td>Feasibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>Any one in the household willing and able to answer the questions</td>
<td>Availability of respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### 3.7.2. First Stage - selection of dioceses

On the basis of the opinions of the experts on Dalit Christian issues and the leaders of the Dalit Community, and on the basis of the concentration of Dalit Christian population and activities undertaken for them, the dioceses of Pala, Kanjirappally and Changanachery were chosen for the study. The Catholic population of these three dioceses taken together comes to 900, 452, which is 26.26% of the total Syrian Catholic population of the state.
3.7.3. Second Stage - selection of parishes

All the parishes in the three selected dioceses having 25 or more Dalit Christian households were listed. In order to categorize the parishes on the basis of the level of concentration of Dalit Christians, the average percentage of Dalit Christian households in all the parishes of the three dioceses was computed. This was around 10%. Those parishes having above 20% Dalit Christian households were categorized as high concentration parishes, those having 10% to 20% Dalit Christian households as medium concentration parishes and those having Dalit Christian households less than 10% of their total households as low concentration parishes.

From the list based on level of concentration, 2 parishes were chosen in each of these categories from the three dioceses using Tippet’s Table of Random Numbers. In this way, six parishes each from three dioceses were chosen. Thus the total number of parishes chosen was eighteen.

3.7.4. Third Stage - selection of households and respondents

Initially a list of all the Dalit parishioners and the Non-Dalit parishioners of the selected parishes was made from the parish registers. Depending on the number of dalit households in each of these parishes, a minimum of 10% of the DC households and an equal number of NDC households were selected as the sample, using simple random sampling. On this basis the total number of Dalit Christian households was to be 277, and an equal number of Non-Dalit Christian households were also to be taken. Thus the total sample size of the households was 544.

3.8. PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

Though it was planned to collect data from an equal number of DC and NDC households from each of the selected parishes, in a number of cases, there was considerable difficulty in getting respondents from the NDC section. On the other hand, the DCs in general showed eagerness to respond and spare time for providing information.

10 Details are given in Chapter 4 of the report
Though it was planned in the sample design to have 544 respondents, at the end of the data collection, there were only 419 respondents, mainly due to the lack of availability of the NDC for the interviews.

**Table 3.2**

**Diocese-Wise Distribution Of The Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diocese</th>
<th>Category of Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>NDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pala</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanjirappally</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changanachery</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 286 (68.3%) male respondents (DC – 165 & NDC – 121) and 133 (31.7%) female respondents (DC – 120 & NDC – 13).

In studying inter-communal relations, either individual or household could be taken legitimately as the unit of study (Koilparambil, 1982). As the researcher had chosen household as the unit of study, efforts were made to give due consideration to individual related factors like sex, age, etc. of the respondents. Efforts were made to ensure a fair representation of women in the sample. (However, in the matter of NDCs, this was found to be more difficult as fewer women were available or forthcoming with
the answers. Their non-involvement and lesser conscious contact with this population could be the reason). Similarly, efforts were made to have respondents from all age groups.

In consultation with the Dalit Christian leaders, lay leaders of the Church and members of the Hierarchy were also interviewed.

In the end, the sample for the study had an adequate representation of dalit/non-dalit, male/female and young/old categories with proportionate representation from the three dioceses selected. A proportionate representation was also ensured from the high, medium and low concentration categories of parishes.

From among the clergy:

The three (3) Bishops of these dioceses, five (5) priests and five (5) nuns involved with the activities concerning Dalits in the corresponding dioceses, and parish priests of the selected parishes (18) were also interviewed.

3.9. TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

3.9.1. Table Showing the Tools of Data Collection for Each of the Objectives & their Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Section 1 in the Interview Schedule (IS) to measure the SES of the respondents</td>
<td>Based on the scale developed by Aggarwal et al (2004)</td>
<td>SES measured in terms of 6 categories from Upper High to Very Poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>a) Section 2 of IS to find the ranking of the problems faced by DCs according to</td>
<td>Ranking developed by the researcher with provisions for weighted scores.</td>
<td>Mean percentage score (MPS) calculated for each item on the basis of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>the respondent categories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b) Focus Group discussion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>which ranking of the problems done for each respondent category</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 3 | a) Section 3 of the IS to find out the interventions and their effectiveness according to the respondent categories | A set of semi-structured questions with provisions for listing the measures taken | List of measures taken obtained, and presence and effectiveness of the measures calculated by arriving at an MPS |
| 4 | a) Section 4 of the IS b) A scale for finding the perceptions regarding discriminatory practices and attitude towards the DCs c) Focus Group discussion | a). 6 sets of questions pertaining to 6 domains of possible discrimination b). A scale developed by the researcher to measure the presence of discriminatory attitudes towards DCs | MPS for each domain in the IS section and each area in the scale arrived at |

| 5 | Interview Guide for the Hierarchy | Areas corresponding to the sections on discrimination against and measures taken/to be taken for the DCs were included | Overview on the DC problems and official church stand |

| 6 | a) Section 5 of IS dealing with self-concept as a Christian b) Self-esteem scale | a) A set of eleven questions regarding one’s Christian and caste background b) Self-esteem scale (standardized) by Rosenberg (1965) | a) MPS for self-concept arrived at b) Self esteem score arrived at, helping to understand the group in categories of high, medium and low self-esteem. |
7. a) Sections of IS inviting suggestions  
b) Observation and insights of the researcher & experts  
a) A set of six questions in Section 6 of IS, one question in section 3 and two questions in section 4.  
Providing pertinent and practical suggestions for SW interventions for the development of the DC community

3.9.2. Listing of the tools

The tools for data collection were:

(1) A detailed *interview schedule* (IS) was constructed with various sections in order to gather data pertaining to each of the objectives from both the DC and the NDC households. This was pre-tested and modified; a pilot study was undertaken on a small sample of 40 to assess the feasibility and the schedule was finalised after rectifying the problems identified in the pilot study. The schedule is divided into 6 sections.

(2) *Scales*: Scales for assessing SES, self-esteem and disposition towards DCs were used with the interview schedule.

(3) *In depth interviews* with the members of the hierarchy using an *interview guide*.

(4) *Observation* by the researcher.

(5) *Focus group* and informal discussions with various groups.

(6) Reference to *secondary reference sources*.

3.9.3. Description of the tools in detail with respect to the Objectives

3.9.3.1. Section I of the IS: Objective 1 - Measuring SES

An instrument prepared by O.P. Aggarwal, S.K. Bhasin, A.K. Sharma, K. Aggarwal, and O.P. Rajoura (2004) in consultation with experts was used to assess the SES of the households. It differs from the most frequently used scales in the Indian context, viz., that of Kuppuswamy (1981) which
is used in urban settings, and that of Pareekh (1981), which is used for rural areas. (Kuppuswamy’s is based on per capita income and the education and occupation of the head of the family. Pareekh’s scale is based on 9 characteristics viz., caste, occupation, education of the head of the family, level of social participation of the head of the family, landholding, housing, farm power and material possessions.) The scale used in this study covers 22 items and the authors claim that it can be applied to any setting, irrespective of urban-rural differentiation. The scale divides households under six socio-economic categories: Upper High (>76), High (61-75), Upper Middle (46-60), Lower Middle (31-45), Poor (16-30) and Very Poor (15 or less).

The items are monthly per capita income, education of either husband or wife (whichever is higher), occupation of the husband or wife, number of earning members in the family, number of children of the head of the family, all children going to school/college, type of family residence, type of housing, other houses owned, family possessions, possession of vehicle, possession of agricultural land, possession of non-agricultural land, presence of milch cattle, presence of non-milch (pet) animals, essential facilities in the house (like tap water, electricity, etc.), employment of a domestic servant, members of the family gone abroad in last three years, caste, positions held by any one member of the family, parental support in the form of non-movable property and total tax paid.

3.9.3.2. Section II of the IS: Objective 2 - Socio-Economic problems of the DCs

The second section dealt with the perception regarding the problems faced by the DCs. The respondents were asked to rank each of the listed problems. They were also asked to give the reasons for each of the problems.
3.9.3.3. Section III of the IS: Objective 3 - Interventions to address these problems

The third section was an enquiry regarding the interventions made to solve these problems by the various stakeholders in the Dalit Christian issue, viz., the Catholic Church and its subsidiaries (parishes, organizations, institutions). In this section, the respondents were asked to mention the interventions and to assess their effectiveness as Very Effective, Somewhat Effective or Ineffective. There were also provisions to gather additional qualitative information regarding the interventions and their effectiveness and suggestions for future interventions from the respondents.

3.9.3.4. Section IV of the IS: Objective 4 - Discriminatory Practices against the DCs

In the fourth section of the interview schedule, experiences and perceptions regarding discrimination were studied. The section had six sub-divisions relating to six fields to understand the phenomenon of discrimination. The sub-sections were 1) the Christian community 2) neighbourhood interactions 3) the field of education 4) welfare services, 5) government offices and 6) the political field. Under each subsection, provisions were made to gather additional qualitative information.

3.9.3.5. Scale on Discrimination (developed by the researcher): Objective 4 - Discriminatory Practices against DCs

A scale was constructed to assess the attitude of the respondents towards the Dalit Christians. A list of 50 items was made, and experts were asked to classify them into statements implying negative and positive attitudes towards the Dalit Christians. After this, the number of statements were reduced to forty based on the remarks made by the experts. This list was tested during the pilot study with 3 options (Agree, Disagree, Agree to Some Extent). The scale gave a score of 0.61 in the Chron Bach Alpha test. Based on the t-values of the items, those that were found to be of lesser significance were eliminated and the scale was finalised with 34 statements. The options were limited to two (Agree or Disagree). This
scale gave a score of 0.69 in the Chron Bach Alpha test. It was administered to all the respondents. Based on the total score obtained by the respondents for the 34 items, the MPS for the scale was calculated. Based on the Standard Deviation of the MPS obtained by the respondents, they were categorized into High, Medium and Low groups with regard to their disposition towards the Dalit Christians.

This was administered at the end of the interview with the interviewer reading out and the respondent making tick marks against their choice.

**3.9.3.6. Section V of the IS: Objective 5 - Self-Concept**

The fifth section concerned the self-concept and identity of the DCs as Christians. The questions were about the religious faith and its practice, and explored the way the respondent felt about her/his socio-religious identity. A sub-section dealt with how the various appellations given to the DCs were accepted or resisted.

**3.9.3.7. Self-Esteem Scale by Rosenberg: Objective 5 - Self Esteem**

In addition to the interview schedule, a widely used self-esteem scale by Rosenberg (1981) was used for both categories of respondents in order to assess their self-esteem. Based on the scores obtained, the respondents were categorized as those having high, medium or low self-esteem.

**3.9.3.8. Interview Guide: Objective 6 - The views of the Hierarchy**

For the community leaders & experts, interview guide was used.

**3.9.3.9. Section VI of IS: Objective 7 - To identify possible areas for Social Work Interventions**

The sixth and final section asked for suggestions regarding the interventions to be taken on behalf of the DCs. Besides this, one question in Section 3 and two questions in section 4 were asked with this objective in view.
3.9.3.10. Focus Group Discussion

Tropman (1995)\textsuperscript{11} describes the use of Focus Groups in the need assessment in Community Organisation process. A Focus Group is a specifically assembled collection of people who can respond, through a semi-structured or structured discussion, to the concerns and interest of the assessor. The members of the group are invited and encouraged to bring up their own ideas and issues. For all objectives in general, Focus Group discussions were held with five groups for generating additional data.

3.9.3.11. Observation

During the fieldwork, the researcher himself, staying in the localities chosen, through house visits and other group (formal and informal) interactions, observed many things about the life and development of the community. As cited by Denscombe (1999:148)\textsuperscript{12} this method involves participation by the observer “in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time”. In the context of Community Organisation, Tropman (1995)\textsuperscript{13} speaks about participant observation: participant observation allows the assessor of community needs to get information by “hanging around,” seeking to join ongoing activities, and asking questions. The purpose is immersion in the community and getting the feel of what is going on.

3.9.3.12. Reference to secondary sources

Dissertations on Dalit Christians and related areas, DCMS & Church documents like Chronicles etc., and journals & works on Caste and Inequality were referred to.

\textsuperscript{11} In Encyclopaedia of Social Work, 1995:567.
\textsuperscript{13} In Encyclopaedia of Social Work, 1955:567.
3.10. DATA COLLECTION

The primary data of the interview were collected through interviews with the respondents from Dalit Christian (DC) and Non-Dalit Christian (NDC) households using the various tools of data collection. For this, the researcher did intensive fieldwork for about 4 months. Prior to the field work per se, pilot visits were made to the various pockets, and sufficient consultations were made with leaders and directors of DCMS. The experts were interviewed using an interview guide. Some local help was sought in order to find the way to the houses that were in very remote corners. Supplementary information was gathered through focus group discussions. There were also numerous informal interactions with the Dalit Christian representatives which have provided added shades of knowledge on the subject of study.

3.11. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through the various tools were coded and transferred into computer using the software SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 11) and were analysed from the angle of objectives.

The SES scores were calculated as per the scale by Aggarwal et al (2005) to find the various socio-economic categories of the respondents as Upper High (>76), High (61-75), Upper Middle (46-60), Lower Middle (31-45), Poor (16-30) and Very Poor (15 or less).

All the item-wise scores in each of the sections of the IS (mentioned above) were added up with due weightage, and a composite score indicating a specific feature was arrived at. The MPS for each subsection was calculated for easy comparison of the scores and for further tests.

The ranking (Section 2 of the IS) by the respondents was given weightage (first rank equalled 10 points, second 9 points and so on). This weighted rank was multiplied by the position of the problem in the order of listing in the IS. (If poverty was the first problem, it was multiplied by 10 and so on.) The points obtained by the respondents for all the problems were added and Weighted Mean Percentage was calculated. This is the ratio between the scores obtained by the individual and the
maximum possible score multiplied by 100. After this, the Mean Percentage Score for both the categories was calculated, and the ‘t’ test was done to see the difference in the scores.

Similarly, based on the total scores of Rosenberg’s scale as well as the scale developed by the researcher, the MPS for each was calculated. The first set was used to classify the self-esteem of the respondents as High, Medium or Low; and the second, to classify disposition towards the DCs as Highly Positive, Positive or Negative.

To test the various hypotheses, the ‘t’ test, one way ANOVA, and two way ANOVA were applied as deemed necessary. The Chi Square Test was employed to see whether there were statistically significant associations between the various variables.

3.12 LIMITATIONS

1. Study confined to rural areas; no conclusion could be drawn about DCs of the Syrian Catholic Church in urban areas.

2. Limited number of female respondents, especially from among the NDCs.

3. Lack of documented data regarding the numbers, organization and activities of the DCs.
EPARCHY OF KANJIRAPPELLY

Archdiocese of Changanacherry

Arch Diocese of Madurai

Diocese of Kothamangalam

Upputhara

Kattappana

Anakkara

Kumily

Mandakayam

Kanjirappally

Komad

Erumely

Angelvally

Konni Reserved Forest

Chinnandmala