CHAPTER – II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Research methodology is basically a constructor of the research processes of a study. This mainly involves the identification of an appropriate design in which data can be collected and analyzed. This chapter gives a detailed structure of processes followed in the research, as well as the systematic development of the processes to arrive at the methodology of the study. This chapter discusses details of methodology used to study the identified research problem, which includes research design, area of study, sampling methodology, and tools of data collection.

2.1 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Popular discourse believes that the demand (household factors) and supply-side factors (school factors) are the core influential factors in educational progress. The demand, as well as the supply, has tremendously improved, which is evident in the boost in the enrolment ratio; however, the retention in school and continuation of the education remain a distant dream. There is little or no attention given to the schooling process and learning experience of the children.

Though household factors play a role in educational attainment, they cannot be considered as sole factors for all the cases. If demand factors, academic returns, and proficiency gained by the students are considered to play major roles in ascertaining higher education, it has been proved that the academic proficiency gained out of schooling is different for different sections of the society. Academic proficiency gained out of schooling is not equal to all – children of lower caste tend to achieve
less than their peers (IHDS, 2015). Hence, the kind of learning experience enjoyed by the children of all social groups at school needs to be reviewed. From various studies, it was found that classroom engagement and the felt sense of belongingness at school play a very crucial role in understanding the student’s perceived importance in the classroom. According to Goodenow (1993a), among adolescents, perceived classroom support and belongingness at school and class were revealed as core influential factors for educational progress. Perceived support enhanced the value of education among the students. Various studies consistently acknowledge the importance of the sense of belongingness in the school environment for continuation and better participation of students. This directly influences the motivation level of the students (Osterman, 2000). Finn (1989) suggested that higher the perceived sense of belongingness, lower the chances of dropout among the at-risk students. The perceived belongingness reduces the alienation from the school, teachers, and peers, and helps them to continue schooling.

The sense of relatedness at school is strongly associated with the relationships with teachers and peers, which directly influence the interest in school, academic engagement, and motivation of the student. From the literature, it is understood that caste plays a central role in establishing a particular kind of school climate and supportiveness among children of various social groups. In order to understand the causes of less interest in schooling and of dropping out, it is essential to look at the sense of relatedness experienced and the association of caste with it. Hence, this study will find how the dropout children’s schooling experience was and how their felt sense of social relatedness at school among peers and teachers was. Further, the study will also find the effects of belonging to a social group and the nature of support received from peers and teachers.
2.2 NEED OF THE STUDY

Social-emotional skill development at school enhances the entire well-being of the child; but, unfortunately, this continues to be one of the low-priority areas (Noddings, 2005). As the focus is more on academic competence, the social and emotional abilities catered to at school are overlooked. However, studies show that the affective domain of student development will positively reflect in the student motivation and in academic engagement (Pickard & Toevs, 2006; Johnson, 2009; Peleg, 2011). Further, especially for the disadvantaged youth, support should be beyond the realm of academics to achieve success in the school (Lurthar, 2002).

The popular view is high intelligence brings high academic performance, whereas it is not so in the case of socially disadvantaged children; the likelihood of being academically inferior was high for socially disadvantaged children even when they possess same intelligence levels as those who were not socially disadvantaged (Singh, 1980). Ensuring the learning materials and physical infrastructure alone will not achieve equity in education. The kind of social, emotional experience, and learning environment enjoyed by the student at school has a significant influence in the academic outcomes. As our society is stratified on the lines of social groups (caste), it is imperative to understand the existing inequalities in the societal interrelation among various social groups. In order to improve the learning outcomes, along with physical and material things, the intrigues of social relations and their effects in the classroom climate need to be given due importance.

Hence, it is need of the hour to study the kind of interpersonal relationship enjoyed by the academically and socially weak children with their teachers and peers at school. This may help us to understand the areas which need to be strengthened to achieve
better participation of socially and academically weak children, which in turn may help in getting better educational outcomes from these children.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY

i) Social Identity Theory

The social identity theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner between 1970 and the 80s. The base of the theory is that intergroup and interpersonal behaviour is based on the social identity one poses (Ashforth&Mael, 1989).

A person’s identity is derived predominantly from the society, which categorizes individuals in various groups in the lines of culture, history, religion, language etc. Hence, the individual self-concept is derived from the group within which he or she belongs. It is not easy for any individual to just join any group of their wish. The permeability to other groups is restricted, especially when a member of a devalued group tries to be a part of other valued groups. Value of the group identity has significant influence on the choice of being in any group. A person belonging to a high valued group may be easily accepted by others than a devalued group member. Status of the group identity constrains the choice of group availability.

In the social identity theory, it is mentioned that ‘social identity’ is primarily derived from group membership. So, the status of the group decides the kind of social identity enjoyed by the individual. Being a member of any group influences the subsequent behaviour and attitudes of the person (Rivenburgh, 2000).

Social identity is more important in a society where the hierarchies are constructed on the roots of culture. In such cases, individual identity is less significant, how much ever one tries to grow out of the devalued group which they belong to, it may not be possible. In the case of a class-oriented society, an economic insurgence can change
the position of the group value whereas in the case of caste, it is social hierarchy which determines value and is not easy either to break or to permeate through into higher caste groups. In order to maintain the status quo and power, the dominant group will not only try to be closed and exaggerate the value of its group identity, but will also stereotype and dehumanize other out groups (Korte, 2007). Groups also discriminate internally. In order to preserve the group identity, similarities of the group characteristics and conformity among members will be nurtured and the members who differ will be stifled. When any member exhibits out group behavior, they are treated as “black sheep”. This black sheep effect is seen as a threat to group identity, as it may deconstruct the order of the group in the hierarchy. Hence, conformity to one’s group identity is essential to be a member of the group (Korte, 2007).

There are two important factors for motivation in education. The first is the perceived identity and the second is the perceived competence. Basically, the student-teacher relationship is mostly established on the grounds of student intelligence; greater the intelligence, greater the reciprocity from the teacher, and hence, the student is allowed more autonomous activity in the classroom process. The likelihood of being academically inferior was high for socially disadvantaged children even when they possess same intelligence level (Singh, 1980). It gives a feeling that the intelligence level is controlled by the social identity of the person, and the fact that the purpose of education is to acquire knowledge and not to compete is not paid adequate attention to here. Performance is evaluated by the quickness and efficiency in completing a task. Although everyone cannot progress equally efficiently, all students can accomplish tasks in their own pace. Since working in a pace comfortable to each individual
student requires a lot of effort, time, and care, it is normally overlooked. The research was framed on the grounds of this understanding.

2.4 AIM

This study aims to understand the influence of socio-economic status of the dropout children and their sense of relatedness in the school. (1) To study the schooling experiences of the dropout children, i.e. acceptance, belongingness, and discrimination experienced by the dropout children in their school. (2) To study the factors influencing their perceived acceptance, belongingness, and rejection in the school. (3) The study aims to understand and describe the facts leading to discrimination of children at school.

2.5 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To study the factors influencing the perceived student-teacher relationship and interrelationship between social groups

2.6 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the socio-economic status of school dropout children
2. To examine the influence of household factors on the education of children
3. To identify the importance of school environment in continuation of education
4. To study the importance of acceptance by teachers and peers at school in continuation of education
5. To understand the influence of academic efficacy on the decision of continuing education
6. To study the nature and forms of discrimination in school
7. To study the sense of relatedness felt by the school dropout children
8. To study the self-esteem level of school dropout children

2.7 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Perceived teacher support is an influential factor in the level of comfortness felt in school.
2. Perceived teacher support influences the sense of relatedness felt at school.
3. Negative discipline practices of the teacher negatively affect the comfortness felt in school.
4. Peer support is an influential aspect in the level of comfortness felt in school.
5. The discrimination experienced at school is associated with the social group to which the student belongs.
6. Discrimination experienced at school is affected by the academic competence of the student.
7. The discrimination experienced at school affects the sense of relatedness at school.
2.8 RESEARCH DESIGN

The following are the components of the research design:

(a) Research method to be administered for the study (b) Sampling design to arrive from universe to sample units (c) Tools and source of data collection (d) Analysis methods and techniques.

Research design is a structure which guides the collection and analysis of data by selection of research method and devising an appropriate sampling strategy. It defines the way in which the findings of the sample population could be generalized. It provides direction to the process of the whole research by collecting relevant data (Pandey, 2015).

Much of social research is conducted to explore a topic, to provide a beginning familiarity with that topic. This purpose is typical when a researcher is examining a new interest or when the subject of study is itself relatively new and unstudied. Exploratory studies are also appropriate in the case of more persistent phenomena. Exploratory studies are most typically done for three purposes (i) to satisfy the researcher’s curiosity and desire for better understanding, (ii) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more careful study, and (iii) to develop the methods to be employed in a more careful study (Babbie, 1995).

School dropout is a well researched area. Principally, the economic and household factors are analyzed to a large extent for understanding the phenomena of school dropout. Recently, the focus is shifting towards the schooling experience and a few notable studies were done to assess the discrimination faced by the SC children. Though school dropout is a much studied area, the components of social relatedness are rather new as an area of research. In the proposed study, the researcher focuses on understanding the schooling experience for different social groups, and the
interpersonal relationships shared between these groups at school. Since the area of study is relatively new, the researcher has adopted an exploratory research design to understand the existing social relations between peers and teachers of various social groups.

The aim of the study is to understand the schooling experience of the dropout children. In order to gather the factors contributing to discontinuation of schooling, four core areas were selected – household factors, academic competence, perceived psychological support, and discrimination were considered as the key factors which affects the decision of continuation of schooling. This study explores the factors that play a pivotal role in the construction of social relatedness at school, and will further describe the facts leading to discrimination of children at school. It will also study the influence of belonging to a particular social group and the perceived sense of social relatedness among the school dropout children.

Considering the purpose of the study, an exploratory design was adopted to identify the factors responsible for construction of social relatedness and to understand the factors of discrimination at school, leading to dropping out and discontinuation of education.

2.9 SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

The sampling framework comprises of

i. Profile of the selected district

ii. Profile of the selected block

iii. Sampling design
2.9.1 UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the State Human Development Report 2017, Villupuram and Tiruvannamalai districts were taken as the universe of the study. Villupuram is one of the bottom three districts in literacy rate – it only has a 72% literacy rate.

In order to check the replicability of the findings, the neighbouring district Tiruvannamalai was taken for the study, which is also one of the most backward districts in terms of education. The literacy rate of Tiruvannamalai is 74% and the gender gap in the literacy is 18 percentage points (State Human Development Report, 2017).

Based on the State Planning Commission Report 2015 and DHDR 2017 of Villupuram district, and the District Human Development Report 2017 of Tiruvannamalai district, the most backward blocks were identified and considered for the study area. Rural areas of Thirukovilur block from Villupuram district and Thandrampet block from Tiruvannamalai district were decided as the area of study for the research.

2.9.2 VILLUPURAM DISTRICT

i) Demographic Details of the Villupuram District

It is the largest district in Tamil Nadu, and is predominantly agrarian. The total geographical area of the district is around 7011 sq km. As per the 2011 census, 84.99% of the population of Villuppuram districts lives in rural areas.

There are five revenue divisions: (i) 8 Revenue Taluks, (ii) 2 municipalities, (Villupuram&Tindivanam), (iii) 16 Town Panchayats, (iv) 22 Panchayat Unions, and (v) 1490 Revenue Villages in the District. Thiyagadurgam, Ulundurpet, Rishivandiym, and Kalvarayan hills were the most backward blocks, and Koliyanur
and Sankarapuram were the most developed blocks (State Planning Commission 2007).

**ii) Population Characteristics of Villupuram District**

The total SC population in the district is 10.15 lakhs, which is about 29 per cent of the total population. This is considerably higher than the state average of SC population, which is about 20 per cent. The ST population is about 75,000, which is 2.16 % of total population. It could be noted that out of 8 taluks, the SC population is more than 30 percent in five taluks viz. Tindivanam, Vanur, Thirukovilur, Kallakurichi and Ulundurpet. Most of the SC population is concentrated in rural areas. ST population is present significantly only in one taluk, i.e Sankarapuram (about 12 per cent). The district has recorded the highest Scheduled Caste population (31.54%) in the state. The district has recorded the 3rd highest Scheduled Tribe population (0.23%) in the state (DHDR, 2017).

**iii) Literacy status of Villupuram District**

Villupuram is ranked second lowest among 32 districts in Tamil Nadu, based on Human Development Index (HDI) (2013-14). The district is ranked third lowest in terms of literacy rate in the state. While the state’s average literacy is 80.1%, the literacy rate of Villupuram is only 71.88%, in which male literacy is 80.55% and female literacy is only 63.15%. The gender gap in education (17.4 percentage points) is very much a cause for concern in the district. Villupuram is one among the 13 districts where female literacy is less than 70%. Another challenging area is the disparity in the literacy rates of urban and rural areas. Literacy rate in rural areas of Villuppuram district is only 69.59%, as per 2011 census data.
iv) Dropout Rate in Villupuram District

Dropout rate is a negative indicator for development, and a higher dropout rate is related to both socio-economic conditions and to the prevailing education system. The Dropout rate is one per cent for the district as a whole and it is 1.08 per cent for boys and 0.91 per cent for Girls. This is slightly higher than state figure which is 0.95% for the same year (PRIA, 2015).

Overall, the primary school dropout rate is 1%, whereas dropout rate in Thirukovilur is 1.51%, which is highest among all the blocks except for Villupuram block. In the Educational Development Index (EDI) of the district, among the 22 blocks, Thirukovilur stands in 19th position (PRIA, 2015).

2.9.3 TIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT

i) Demographic Details of Tiruvannamalai District

Tiruvannamalai stands in the 13th position in population among the districts of Tamil Nadu, as of 2011. The district had 79.9% of its population living in rural areas, and 20.1 per cent living in urban areas. The district has four municipalities. Cheyyar and Tiruvannamalai are the two Revenue Divisions of Tiruvannamalai district. Tiruvannamalai district consists of 7 Taluks, 18 Community Development Blocks, 4 municipalities, 10 Town Panchayats, and 8 Census Towns. The total number of Revenue Villages in the district is 1095. Of these, 1039 villages are inhabited. The Scheduled Tribe population in the district constitutes 3.7% of the district’s total population. The Scheduled Castes population constitutes 23% of the district’s total population (DHDR, 2017).
ii) Human Development Index of Tiruvannamalai District

Human Development Index is a composite index measuring the average achievement in three dimensions – standard of living, health, and education – at the district level. The HDI value is between 0 and 1. Among the blocks, Thellar takes the top position. The next three positions are taken by Arni, Tiruvannamalai, and Chetpet, where the index value in standard of living and education has contributed significantly to the high value of HDI. Jawadhu Hills is placed at the lowest ranking in the bottom five category, followed by four other blocks namely Thandrampet, Pudupalayam, Chengam, and Kalasapakkam with HDI values ranging between 0.37 and 0.63 (DHDR, 2017).

iii) Literacy Status of Tiruvannamalai District

Average literacy rate of Tiruvannamalai in 2011 was 74.21% compared to 67.39% of 2001. Gender wise, male and female literacy were 83.1% and 65.3% respectively. Literacy rate in rural areas of Tiruvannamalai district is 71.62%, according to census 2011. Gender wise, male and female literacy stood at 81.18% and 62.05% respectively. From these figures, it can be observed that both in overall literacy rate as well as in rural literacy rate, the gender gap is almost 18 percentage points (DHDR, 2017).

iv) Dropout Rate in Tiruvannamalai District

The proportion of girls enrolling in primary school is 48.7%, of which 31.7% are SC/ST children. The overall enrolment of girls for upper primary remains the same at 48.6%, but the enrolment of SC/ST girls drops to 27.5%. Dropout rate for the district in primary school is 1.06%, and 2.12% for upper primary (DISE 2009).
The dropout rate during the primary education in the district has decreased from 1.12% (2011-12) to 1.10 % in 2013-14, which seems to be a good step in retention of the students, even though this is not a significant increase. The dropout rate continues to be higher than the State average (0.98%). However, the interblock variations show the highest dropout rate of 11.64% in 2013-14 in Jawadhu Hills, and next to Jawadhu hills is Thandrampet block, with 2.31% (DISE, 2011). At the high school level, the dropout rate reduced marginally from 61.06% in 1997-98 to 57.29% in 2000-04. It is still a major area of concern (Shanmugam, 2012).

2.9.4 SAMPLING

Sampling is the statistical process of selecting a subset (called a “sample”) of a population of interest for purposes of making observations and statistical inferences about that population.

In non-probability sampling, the organisers of the inquiry purposively choose the particular units of the universe for constituting a sample, on the basis that the small mass that they so select out of a huge one will be typical or representative of the whole (Kothari, 2004). The samples of the study are school dropout children. Definite data on the dropout details was not available. In identifying the universe, the researcher had problems like lack of data about village-wise school dropout children.

In schools, the children who were not attending for a long period were classified as long absentees, and not as dropouts. It was told that those who are considered as dropped out of school as per their norms are taken care of by the Block Resource Centres (BRC). The reference of dropout information were provided to BRCs, and then the dropped out children were immediately identified and either rejoined or referred to residential bridge schools. So, as per their statistics, hardly any child
between 6-14 years had dropped out. So, acquiring the year-wise list of students who dropped out from the education department was almost impractical. The next major challenge in getting the details of universe was the availability of dropout children in the village. Most of those who dropped out were not allowed to simply sit at home. So, most of them were engaged in some kind of economic activity, and even those who were not employed would not be present at their home. To identify these children, that too in a rural area, was a difficult task. The next major issue was the availability of the respondents due to migration and the nature of work of the dropout children. Without a definite universe, it would be difficult to administer probability sampling.

Considering the purpose of the study and the practical difficulties, purposive sampling was used to ensure reach toward desired study population so as to gain appropriate data. As there were no definite details of dropouts, the sample identification was done in two steps. First, a preliminary data collection on the details of school dropout children was conducted in every village of the identified blocks, excluding the municipal areas. The details gathered in the preliminary survey includes the name, age, class from which the student dropped out, year of drop out, availability in the village, and, in case of migration, the expected return. Then, with that basic information, the respondents who fit into the inclusion criteria of the study were approached. Based on their willingness to participate, they were included as participants of the study.
2.10 SOURCE OF DATA COLLECTION

i) Secondary Source

The secondary source of data is the existing literature available for review and analysis. From the secondary data, existing available resources on the study area were gathered and analysed to derive the concept of the study. This helped to develop an understanding of the research problem, to arrive at a theoretical/conceptual framework for the study, and to identify the key variables of the study. For statistics, reports such as human development reports, education status report, and reports from the ministries and national and international organisation such as NUEPA, UNDP, and UNESCO were referred to. To understand the study area and to find the opportunities and scope of research in the study area, books, journals, articles published in the national and international journals, previously done researches and theses were thoroughly checked into. Both library resources and e- resources were used to collect secondary data. Mainly, the library of Loyola College, the Madras School of Social Work, and the Anna Centenary library were accessed for book review.

ii) Primary Source

Primary information are those collected directly from the field, using various tools such as interview schedule, questionnaire, observation etc. For this study, the researcher has used a structured interview schedule for quantitative purposes; and focus group discussion for qualitative purposes.
2.11 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION
The tools are designed either to gather qualitative or quantitative data. Quantitative data is basically defined by counts and frequencies, and qualitative data is used to understand perceptions and opinion. In any research, quality is equally important to quantity. With numbers, only the prevalence and the association of indicators can be established, but to determine the causal factor, it is important to have meaningful qualitative data to support the quantitative findings; or it could be vice versa. Therefore, the blend of both qualitative and quantitative data can yield a better understanding of the studied research problem.

As the research area is focused on socio-behavioural aspects, the researcher used a mixed method. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using appropriate tools.

2.12 Quantitative Data Collection

i) Structured Interview Schedule
A structured interview schedule was prepared by the researcher to acquire information from the respondents. The interview schedule comprised of both closed and open-ended questions. The interview schedule was organised into sections to collect information on household factors, infrastructure and facilities, academic performance, perceived peer and teacher support, and experience of discrimination of school dropout children.

The information were collected under the following sections

a) Personal profile
b) Socio-economic background
c) Prevalence of dropout and the perceived value of education
Apart from the interview schedule, the researcher also administered three scales to capture self-esteem, social relatedness, and discrimination experienced by the respondents:

a) Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale was administered to assess the self-esteem of the sample.

b) Psychological sense of school membership developed by Goodenow in 1993 was used to understand the perceived school environment of the students.

c) Discrimination scale – this was adapted from the Ethnic Identity, a subscale of teen conflict survey developed by Bosworth and Espelege in 1995.

Since the open-ended questions on the discrimination experienced captured the individual experiences of discrimination, in order to avoid repetition of information, discrimination scale was not used in the analysis.

Reliability test for the scales were done. For the psychological sense of school membership, the cronbach alpha score was .957, and for the discrimination scale, the cronbach alpha score was .823. Therefore, the scales can be taken as reliable.

Pre-test of tool was done during a pilot study. The tool was modified based on the observations and gaps identified from the pilot study and finalized.
2.13 Qualitative Data Collection

In any research with quantitative data, only frequencies and significance can be determined; but to bring a meaningful causal relationship between the variables, qualitative findings are important. In this research, to acquire qualitative information, the techniques used were observations, informal talks, open-ended questions in the interview schedule, and focus group discussions. For focus group discussion, questions were framed to facilitate the discussions. The observations and informal talks in the villages helped to understand the interaction between the social groups in the village, overall community perception of education, and perception of girl child education.

i) Focus group discussion

In order to understand the factors which influenced the parents’ affection and disaffection towards schooling of children, focus group discussions were conducted. Totally, eight focus group discussions were conducted; four in SC colonies and four in residential villages of other castes. As mentioned earlier, the availability of the parents at their village was the key selection criterion; in many villages, the parents were not available due to migration. For example, in Anandhal village, an MBC residential area in Tiruvannamalai district, most of the families left the children in their native places under the care of elders, and migrated to various cities for livelihood. Hence, FGDs were organized by taking into consideration the availability of the parents in the village. However, the researcher tried to arrive at a common pattern in the selection of villages based on the location of the schools. Around 132 parents participated in the FGDs, which is close to one-third of the interviewed respondents.
ii) Focus Group Discussion – SC Colonies

a) Tharadapattu – School located near SC colony  
b) Vadamaruthur – School located near SC colony  
c) Venmar – School located near MBC village  
d) Mogalar – School located near MBC village

iii) Focus Group Discussion - MBC Villages

a) Radhapuram – School located near MBC village  
b) Vadamaruthur – School located near SC colony  
c) Vengur – School located in common place  
d) Periyanoor – School located near MBC village

2.14 INCLUSION CRITERIA OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents who dropped out of school within three academic years were taken for inclusion. The minimum age was set as above 10 years. Since most of the children are from families which had migrated, their schooling age varied. Hence, only the minimum age and the year of dropout were considered for respondent inclusion. Children who dropped out in the upper primary and above classes were considered as respondents. Further, children who failed in the 10th standard public examination were not taken as respondents.

2.15 PILOT STUDY

Firstly, 20 school dropout children who studied in the Arcot Lutheran Church residential school, in Tiruvannamalai district, were identified and in-depth interviews were used to collect information on the history of dropout. This process was adopted
to understand the appropriateness of identified variables as well as to identify the areas which were not covered in the variables list.

2.16 PRE-TEST OF TOOLS

Based on the observation and learning from the pilot case studies, a draft interview schedule was formulated. Then, the draft schedule was administered among 20 school dropout respondents from Anandal village, Tiruvannamali district. The draft schedule was administered to identify the lacunae in obtaining information as well as the flow of questions. Based on the identified areas for improvement and suggestions, the tool was then corrected and finalised with necessary incorporation of field observations.

2.17 DATA COLLECTION

After the pilot study and pre-test of tools, the researcher spent a total of 7 months in the field for data collection. The researcher went to Tiruvannamalai district and spent about four months, from October 2016 till January 2017, in the district for data collection. As the associated NGO, the ALC School, was closed in the month of January 2017, the researcher had to take a break from the field visits. So, data collection from Villupuram district started in March 2017 and completed in May 2017.

2.18 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS and the qualitative data was analysed using the analysis chart. Cross tabulation was used to see the frequency and the characteristic nature of the variable, and their relationships with other variables. Chi-square was used to see whether each variable was dependent or independent on the
other, and also to see the level of significance in their association. To analyse the interplays between the variables and also their significance, factor analysis was used.

**Figure 2.1: Analysis Chart of the study**

**Principal Analysis Chart**
2.19 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since most of the respondents were minors, the parent's informed consent was obtained before proceeding with the study. In the case of respondents who were above the age of 18, their personal informed consent was obtained. The respondents were briefed on the nature and importance of the study before consent was obtained. Only those who were willing to participate in data collection were taken as respondents.

As the area of study comprised of rural villages, written consent was not welcomed by the participants. They felt signing in papers may place them in unwanted situations. So, the researcher took oral consent in the presence of a witness.

2.20 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

i. Availability of the data on dropouts

Identifying the respondents/sample was one of the key challenges faced in the field. The villagers as well as the children, at first sight, were not willing to trust and give details about the dropout children. The children presumed that the researcher was a teacher who had come for enrolment, and due to this suspicion, were hesitant to reveal that they had dropped out. In the visited village, many of the villagers were aware that child labour is an offense against the law; and since many of the dropout children were working, they were not willing to reveal information regarding dropout children. To explain the purpose of data collection and get their confidence to give information of school dropout was particularly difficult.

ii. Identification of the sample units

After collecting the details of dropout children, the next challenge was the availability of the dropout children. As many of them were working in other
cities, they could be met only during festivals or important village functions. For others who were working in nearby villages and towns, working hours were a major issue. Mostly, they left for work in the early morning and reached back only by late evening. On mornings, as they were in a hurry to catch their buses, they weren’t comfortable with participating in the research as respondents, whereas in the late evening, the researcher couldn’t afford to stay long due to safety concerns.

iii. Problems faced in the data collection

In order to meet the respondents who migrated to other towns, the researcher had to get information about the festivals for which these respondents would come to their native places, and to interview them in that time. Holidays were chosen for interviews to meet the respondents.

iii.a. Travel

The villages close to the town only have minimal road facilities, and most of the villages in interior regions have no proper roads. Commuting to these villages and back, by any means, is difficult. The distance from the town to the end of block villages was also large. The travel involved for collection data was tedious. Further, public transportation was ill-equipped to provide access to these villages; hence, the researcher travelled to all villages on a motorcycle.

iii.b. Spatial limitation

Another major limitation was space. It was almost impossible to find a quiet and private place for interviews. The interviews were sometimes conducted in open places, where villagers would gather and listen, and this certainly affected the answers of the respondents. In many places, the researcher was
unable to ask sensitive questions such as those related to discrimination and differences between social groups. When the elders of the village were present during the interview, the children did not feel comfortable in answering questions about discriminatory experiences as well as acceptance and rejection of peers, especially in the OBC villages. In case peers were present, the respondents were hesitant to share the discriminations experienced, probably from the fear that they may be teased after the interview. In order to get some privacy during data collection, the respondents were taken to a private area while the staff of the ALC would engage with the interested onlookers. However, the influence of a lack of privacy cannot be ruled out in the responses given by the participants.

iv. **Lack of different social group respondents**

In the study area, the identified respondents were belonging to two major social group i.e. MBC and the SC community. Only very few numbers of dropouts were identified from BC; in order to restrict the variance, they were not considered for the study population. This constrained the identification of social interactions between the upper caste and the MBC. So, the whole study has become binominal in terms of communities represented.

v. **Married girl children**

Due to the unwillingness of parents and in-laws, married girl children from the MBC community didn’t participate in the study. To identify married girls itself was a challenging task, since people were generally unwilling to give information about married girls, as they were well aware of the judicial consequences. Though through observations and informal talks the researcher could find that the ideology of endogamy was the key reason for early
marriage in the MBC community, it couldn’t be established due to lack of respondents.

vi. Non-Probability Sampling
The researcher, due to lack of universe, couldn’t use probability sampling, which restricted the application of parametric tests in the study.

vii. Applicability
Bearing in mind the sensitivity of the topic and the geographical spread of the units of the sample, the findings cannot be applied to dropouts everywhere. Applicability is limited to the situational factors that have been studied.

2.21 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

a) Child
Any person who has not completed eighteen years of age is a child.

b) School Dropout
A child who is enrolled but not attending school is considered a dropout. Further, only the children who had not attended school for more than six months were considered as dropouts.

c) Academic Performance
Academic performance is a set standard adjudged by the current education system; i.e. 35% is pass, 60% is first class, and 80% is distinction. Those who get less than 35% are considered as poor performers in that particular subject.

d) Social Relatedness
It is the interpersonal relationship enjoyed by the respondents with their teachers and peers at school.
e) Discrimination

It is the unequal treatment of individuals compared to others at school, based on their education competence, category of social group, gender, or religion etc.

2.22 CHAPTERISATION

Chapter I

This chapter covers the introduction to the study, review of literature, differential achievement of social groups in education, importance of inclusion, importance of learning experience, importance of affective engagement, and review of past studies.

Chapter II

This chapter covers the theoretical framework, need of the study, aim, objectives, hypothesis, research methodology, field of study, research design, sampling frame, sources of data collection, tools of data collection, pilot study, analysis and interpretation, and operational definitions and limitations.

Chapter III

Analysis and interpretation of data

Chapter IV

Main findings of the study

Chapter V

Suggestion and conclusion of the study
Conclusion

Considering the purpose of the study, an exploratory design was adopted. Due to non-availability of a definite universe, and also considering the nature of the study, a non-probability sampling method was adopted for the study. The process of identifying the samples was done systematically by collecting dropout details from every village of the selected blocks. Then, with this basic information, the respondents who fit into the inclusion criteria of the study and who were willing to participate were included as participants of the study. As the research area focused on the socio-behavioural aspects, the researcher used a mixed method. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using appropriate tools.