Chapter III

Methodology
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Voluntary Agencies have an important role to play in supplementing governmental measures to promote development among the rural people for the purpose of alleviating their socio-economic difficulties. However, many research studies reveal that many VAs have limited resources and expertise and workers to serve as effective catalysts of development. The VAs reported to be not able to achieve optimum size and growth over a period of time in respect of (a) coverage of villages/beneficiaries, (b) programmes implemented, (c) number of workers, and, (d) allocation of annual budget. Hence this study.

The present study is an empirical exercise based on both primary data elicited from the heads of VAs and their personnel and secondary data collected from the relevant records of State Social Welfare Board, Nehru Yuva Kendras of different districts, the Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health and Family Welfare Trust and VAs in Dindigul District.

This chapter is structured as hereunder:

3.1 Statement of the problem

3.2 Title of the study
3.1 Statement of the Problem

The governmental organisation has its own hierarchical culture, structural edifice, concentration of power, procedural and functional rigidity, efficiency, norms—all highly formalized arrangements. In overwhelming contrast, organisations in the voluntary sector are supposed to have informal characteristics.

In a vast country like India, the sociology of development is such that the involvement of the people in their own development programmes is baulked by certain practical obstacles. The governmental organisation, with its bureaucratic structure, is ill-equipped to motivate the enthusiastic
involvement of the people in their own development efforts, because it is power-oriented.

Therefore an organisation rooted close to the people, with a simple organisational structure of informal nature, is felt necessary to supplement governmental efforts in the promotion of rural development. It is rather well known that all the rural development programmes in India, ever since the community development programme was launched in 1952, have created a culture of dependence among the rural people. It is in this context that one expects a VA to use its flexibility for bringing about a change of attitude, since it is people-oriented.

However, as a VA grows larger and larger it is more likely to lose some of the basic features in its structure and functions that originally set it apart from government departments. And hence this study.

3.2 Title of the Study

The title of the present study is “Growth Trends of Voluntary Agencies in Tamil Nadu: A Study.”

3.3 Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

1. to assess the average size of the VAs in Tamil Nadu with respect to the four dimensions mentioned hereunder:
i) Villages/beneficiaries covered,
ii) Programmes implemented,
iii) Workers employed, and,
iv) Annual budget; and,

2. to study and analyze the trends of the organisational growth of VAs at different levels under the dimensions mentioned above.

3.4 Area of the Study

In 1991, as per the Manorama Year Book (1996), Tamil Nadu had a population of 55.9 million, which makes it the seventh most populated State in the country and similar in population size to countries such as Turkey, Thailand, France and Italy. In terms of area, however, Tamil Nadu ranks eleventh in the country and, consequently, it is one of the most densely populated States in India, with 372 persons per square kilometer, compared to the all-India figure of 221. The population density of Tamil Nadu is less than that of Bihar (402 per sq. km), Uttar Pradesh (377 per sq. km), Kerala (654 per sq. km) and West Bengal (614 per sq. km).

At present, the average area of a district is about 6,500 sq.km and the average population of a district is over 2.4 million. Tamil is widely used by about 84.5 percent of the population. Among other languages
Telugu is the most important (8.7 percent), followed by Kannada (2.6 percent), Urdu (1.8 percent), Malayalam (1.4 percent), and Gujarati (0.5 percent).

Hindus constitute 88.9 per cent of the population of Tamil Nadu (in 1981). Christians, Muslims and followers of other religions (mostly Jains) form 5.8 percent, 5.2 percent and 0.1 percent respectively.

The State of Tamil Nadu was constituted as a linguistically homogeneous political unit on November 1, 1956, as the State of Madras, but it was renamed Tamil Nadu on January 14, 1969 and its capital Madras was renamed Chennai in the year 1998. When the State of Madras was formed there were only 13 districts. At present there are about double this number of districts, 55 divisions, 166 taluks, 1098 firkas and 17,029 villages under the revenue setup (Manorama Year Book, 1996, p.663).

Nearly 625 VAs were identified in Tamil Nadu by this researcher.

3.5 Respondents of the Study

To attempt this study of VAs the investigator sought the support of the State Social Welfare Board, Chennai, Nehru Yuva Kendras of different districts, Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health and Family Welfare Trust, Gandhigram, and VAs in Dindigul District to obtain a list
of VAs throughout the State. From the list, the researcher identified the postal addresses of and contacted 625 organisations and sought to obtain relevant data through a mailed questionnaire. These VAs constitute the universe of this study. One hundred and sixty three organisations returned the filled in questionnaire in the first instance. After a reminder to 150 VAs, twenty-four responded to the questionnaire. So, on the whole, 187 VAs provided data for the present study (Table I).

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool of Enquiry</th>
<th>No. of VAs receiving questionnaires</th>
<th>No. of responding VAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mailed Questionnaire</td>
<td>625 (First instance)</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>150 (Second appeal)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides obtaining data through the mailed questionnaire, the researcher personally visited 33 VAs for various purposes as mentioned hereunder:

12 VAs for interviewing the grassroots personnel,

12 VAs for interviewing the heads, and,

9 VAs for conducting case studies.
3.6 Tools of Bata Collection

The following tools were adopted in the present study for collecting the data;

i) Mailed questionnaire,

ii) Interview with guidelines of

   a) Heads of the VAs,

   b) The field level personnel of the VAs, and,

   iii) Case studies of selected VAs.

The details are as hereunder,

3.6.1 Mailed Questionnaire

A very brief questionnaire that could be accommodated in the space available in an inland letter was finalized to include the following details;

a) Details about the origin and duration of existence of the organisation, and,

b) Growth profile of the organisation under the four dimensions of the study, namely (i) villages/beneficiaries covered, (ii) programmes implemented, (iii) workers employed; and, (iv) annual budget,
A very brief questionnaire was resorted to partly because of the technique chosen (i.e., mailed questionnaire) and partly because the researcher intended to personally visit and establish contact with some VAs to obtain data through interviews.

The study is aimed at analysing all the four dimensions mentioned above as obtaining at the time of the commencement of the VA and as at present so as to assess the average size of the VAs in terms of changes in these dimensions.

A pre-test was conducted by the investigator in five VAs in the vicinity of Gandhigram Rural Institute to refine the questionnaire,

3.6.2 Interviews

In order to trace the trends of organisational growth, data was gathered from field level personnel as well as heads of VAs through interview method; case studies of nine VAs selected through simple random technique were also undertaken. The relevant details are presented hereunder.

For the purpose of analytical study, the one hundred and eighty seven VAs from whom the filled in questionnaire was received have been classified under three analytical categories on the basis of the duration of their existence as hereunder:
1. those with less than five years of standing (SUV₁)
2. those with between five and ten years of standing (SUVᵢ)
3. those with over ten years of standing (SUV₃)

VAs with branches (VABs), which were 45 in number, have been included under category 3 above for purposes of analysis.¹

3.42.1 Field level personnel

As for the Held level personnel 39 workers from three VAs of the SUV, category' provided information. In the case of SUV₂ category, responses were obtained from 43 personnel including part-time workers from another three VAs; responses were also obtained from 30 workers of three VAs of the SUV', category and from 33 workers from three VAs of the VAB category. The details of the distribution are furnished in Table 2.

¹ The reference to the duration is a ₁₉₉₅ in 19% when the mailed questionnaire transaction ended.
Table 2
Distribution of Field Level Personnel Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No.</th>
<th>Category of VA</th>
<th>No. of personnel in each VA</th>
<th>No. of personnel interviewed</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>SUV₁</td>
<td>A 11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B 15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C 13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>SUV₂</td>
<td>A 137</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B 32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C 30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>SUV₃</td>
<td>A 25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B 25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C 20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>VAB</td>
<td>A 35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B 30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.2.2 Organisational beads

In order to verify the views of the field level personnel, direct interviews were conducted with the heads of VAs and information was gathered from them on the organisational growth of the VAs. In order to cover all the four categories of VAs, three VAs from each category were randomly chosen but excluding those VAs whose field level personnel had already been interviewed.

The labels A, B and C have been adopted for the VAs chosen for interviewing the field level personnel.
Table 3

Distribution of Organisational Heads Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ss. No.</th>
<th>Category of VA</th>
<th>No. of VAs</th>
<th>No. of Heads Interviewed</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>SUVi (I, M &amp; N)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>SUV₂ (L, M &amp; N)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>SUV₃ (L, M &amp; 1M)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>VAB (L, M &amp; N)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.3 Case Studies

Besides administering the mailed questionnaire and interviewing the personnel and the heads of VAs, nine VAs were selected by simple random technique and case history method was adopted to gather detailed information about the growth of the VAs. For the sample for the case studies, all the remaining VAs that remained after drawing the samples for the interviews with personnel and organisational heads were clubbed together. This was done because the researcher visualised that data collected through case studies on organisational growth could be studied without reference to the duration of existence of the VAs. The four categories of VAs were created for the purpose of analysis and the

So the ease of VAs chosen randomly for interviewing the heads/ , the labels L, M and N have been adopted.
analysis of organisational growth through case study without reference to
duration of existence was expected to serve as a cross-check on the data
from the analytical categories.

Table 4
Respondents of the Case Studies^*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI. No.</th>
<th>Category of VA</th>
<th>No. of organisations selected</th>
<th>No. of organisations studied</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>SUV1 (X, Y &amp; Z)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>SUV2 (X, Y &amp; Z)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>(SUV3X) and VAB (Y&amp;Z)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above analysis could lead to clearly identifiable trends of
organisational growth and facilitate pinpointing the levels at which the
different categories of VAs stand as of now.

3.7 Operational Definitions

3.7.1 Voluntary Agency/Voluntary Organisation (VA/VO)s

A Voluntary Agency/Voluntary Organisation is any agency/
organisation that is established by a few committed individuals with the
objective of promoting rural development activities. The present study

^* The labels X, Y and Z have been used for the VAs subjected to case study.
regards the two terms synonymous and mostly uses the term *Voluntary Agency (VA).*

3.7.2 Single Unit Voluntary Agency (SUV)

Those small-scale village-based single unit VAs supposedly thriving on a shoestring budget have been categorized as SUVs.

3.7.2.1 Single Unit Voluntary Agency of less than 5 years (SUVi)

Those small-scale village-based single unit VAs supposedly thriving on a shoestring budget with a standing of less than 5 years have been categorized as SUVi.

3.7.2.2 Single Unit Voluntary Agency with a standing of between 5 and 10 years (SUV2)

Those small-scale village-based single unit VAs with a standing of between 5 and 10 years have been categorized as SUV2.

3.7.2.3 Single Unit Voluntary Agency with a standing of above 10 years (SUV3)

Those small-scale village-based single unit VAs with a standing of above 10 years have been categorized as SUV3.

3.7.3 Voluntary Agencies with Branches (VAB)

Those large-scale VAs with branches, funded almost as a rule from foreign sources, and having a standing of 10 years or more have been categorized as VABs.
3.7.4 Organisational Growth

Organisational growth is defined as the growth of VAs in size in terms of organizing more programmes, employing more people and increasing the annual budget. As a compound effect of the three factors mentioned above, the coverage in terms of villages and beneficiaries also increases.

3.8 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been framed for the present study;

(1) as a VA grows in size and extends its activities, its growth dimension of number of villages/beneficiaries covered will differ significantly from that of a VA that does not grow but remains small;

(2) as a VA grows in size and extends its activities, its growth dimension of number of programmes implemented will differ significantly from that of a VA that does not grow but remains small;

(3) as a VA grows in size and extends its activities, its workers will become more committed than those of a VA that does not grow but remains small; and,
as a VA grows in size and extends its activities, it will exhibit a greater predilection towards bureaucratic tendencies than a VA that does not grow but remains small,

3.3 Framework of Analysis

The descriptive and explorative method of analysis has been used for the present research. The primary data collected has been checked and coded to facilitate analysis. The data has been organized and presented in the form of tables, straight as well as cross-compared. Measures of central tendency like mean, standard deviation and standard error have been computed for all tables involving comparisons. Besides, Y values have been calculated in order to demonstrate the statistical significance of the difference between the means. In all other instances of tabulation percentages have been furnished. To facilitate presentation of data with clarity, flow charts, bar diagrams and systemic diagrams have been employed.

3.1 Limitations of the Study

Although the number of VAs responding to the mailed questionnaire in terms of percentage is quite acceptable for research purposes, the fact that a large number of VAs did not respond even after a
second appeal does cause concern, particularly with respect to
generalize arguments either for or against organisational growth.

The mailing list is based on a long list of VAs in Tamil Nadu
appearing in earlier directories not quite up to date.

Ultimate generalization of the effects of organisational growth
would have to be ascertained only by the people. The present researcher,
owing to limitations of manpower, could not go to all the villages in
person.

The major data emerges from the mailed questionnaire, which
certainly delimits the flow of data. Although the data obtained in this
study is amenable to generalised observations, any well grounded
theorisation is possible only on the basis of a bigger study sample with
some other direct method of data collection supported by a large number
of investigators.

The interviews with the personnel and the heads of VAs have
produced some interesting and relevant data. It would be advisable to take
more samples to add vigour to the arguments.

But for time constraints the researcher would have conducted more
case studies. Ironically the constraints were more with the VAs than with
the researcher. Curiously, the personnel of VAs whose work schedule
would allow spare time for a researcher cannot speak authentically and those who can do so have little time to spare for a researcher. Therefore the researcher had to rely on reports published and prepared by VAs and also cut down on the number of case studies.

3.1.1 Summing Up

In sum it may be said that as the thesis takes an exploratory approach for the study of the functioning, organisation, arid growth of VAs, it follows certain techniques to analyse the data collected. VAs have been selected through simple random techniques. Data has been collected by direct interview and by mailed questionnaire technique. Case studies also form pari of the methodology of understanding the VAs.

In the analysis part, which follows this chapter, the data collected has been analysed under four major headings, namely, dimensions of growth, advantages and disadvantages of growth, images of growth and profiles of growth. The case studies are meant to supplement the above four parts of the analytical framework.