CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem
Objectives
Concepts Defined
Psycho- Social Perspectives
Aged
Problems of the Rural Aged
Old Age Homes
Old Age Pension
Nature of Study
Method of Study
Study Area
Sampling Design
Pre - Test
Interview Schedule
Focus Group Discussion
Case Study
Secondary Data
Collection of Data
Period of Data Collection
Statistical Analysis of Data
METHODOLOGY

The problem for the study, its objectives, and methodology are explained in the present chapter. The study attempts to investigate the psychosocial perspectives and problems of the female aged in the service villages of Gandhigram. The investigation is basically an explorative research applying the survey method to understand the socio-economic conditions and the welfare measures for the rural aged women.

Statement of the problem

The researcher was born and is living in a village. She completed her graduation from Gandhigram Rural Institute in rural services and worked as a community organizer. Being a research assistant in the Rural Extension and Evaluation Cell in Gandhigram Rural Institute, she developed good rapport with villagers and involved herself in village development programmes. The disintegration of joint family system and neglect by kith and kin may leave the old in distress. A national seminar was conducted by the Department of Applied Research in 1998 on the psycho-social characteristics and the problems of the rural aged and the strategies for the welfare of the aged in rural India. The seminar concluded that the female aged, particularly the widowed and the destitute female aged were the most
deprived section. The researcher took an interest in the status of the aged and decided to analyse the psycho-social perspectives of the rural aged females. The psycho-social factors such as adjustment, alienation, self-concept, role activity, ego-integrity, depression, loneliness and communication etc. have been examined in the present study. The study also attempts to identify the problems of the aged in villages, particularly with reference to health, income, education, generation gap, family, and satisfaction in life. Strategies for the welfare of the aged, particularly in rural regions will also be evolved based on the research findings.) As such, the study is entitled "Psycho-social Perspectives, Problems and Strategies for the Welfare of the Rural Female Aged".

**Objectives:**

The objectives of the present study are

- to examine the psycho-social characteristics of the aged females.
- to study the socio-economic problems of the rural female aged.
- to find the factors fostering happy ageing through qualitative analysis.
- to prepare profiles of the old age homes in Dindigul District.
- to suggest measures for the welfare of the aged in rural India.
Concepts Defined

Psycho-social Perspectives

Psycho-social perspectives refer to generation particulars, living arrangement, religiosity, social participations adjustment with the environment, talents and life style of the aged as perceived by them. The factors facilitating happy ageing have also been examined under the psycho-social perspectives. The rural female aged are often faced with physical and mental problems which affect their normal life. They suffer from psychological problems of loneliness, dementia, senility, depression, anxiety, worry, isolation, adjustment etc. These psychological problems are mostly interlinked with other social issues like lack of housing facilities, achievement skills, family care, leisure time activities, participation in public activities, poor recreational avenues and indulgence in bad habits. Lack of involvement in family responsibility, decision making and leadership also add to the psycho-social problems. Lack of awareness about social welfare schemes and inadequate health care also affect their psycho-social life. Life satisfaction and happy ageing, to a large extent depend upon family care, economic independence, social security and health care facilities.
Aged

Ageing is a natural phenomenon that refers to changes that occur during life and result in differences in structure and function between the younger generation and the older generation. The Indian census has adopted 60 years for classifying a person as old. For the purposes of the present study only the rural women above the age of 60 years have been included in the sample.

Problems of rural Aged

The aged are faced with multifaceted problems related to health, housing, income, occupation and interpersonal relations. In most cases they are conditioned by social customs, norms, culture and value system.

Old Age Homes

Old age homes are institutions for the aged established either by the government, voluntary organizations, charitable trusts or missionary institutions for the welfare of the inmates, providing facilities for their stay. The old age homes are either of the paid or the payment-free type.

Old age pension

Old age pension is the monthly financial assistance given by Central Government to the aged who are above 60 years and below the poverty line.
They are getting the assistance in both cash and kind and the amount varies from State to State in India.

*Nature of study*

An exploratory study of descriptive nature, it is a fact finding survey. “Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of a phenomenon. They are directed towards determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study. The aim is to describe what exists with respect to variables of conditions in a situation. The survey method has been used in this study with the help of a pre-tested interview schedule specially designed for collecting comprehensive information for fulfilling the objectives of the study.

*Method of study*

The success of any research work largely depends upon the methods and techniques adopted by the investigator without which the researcher cannot attain the designed goal of research. The correct result can only be attained when the methodology and the procedures used in the study are well organized. The survey method has been used and the data have been collected with the help of a pre-designed, field tested interview schedule.
**Study area**

The present study has been earned out in Dindigul District of Tamilnadu State. The district comprises three revenue divisions, 7 taluks and 14 blocks. There are 358 villages and 304 village panchayats in this district. The village panchayats have 14 panchayat unions to govern them. The present study is confined to three blocks, namely Athoor, Dindigul and Reddiarchatram, where the Gandhigram Rural Institute has implemented a number of extension programmes. The Institute has organized women's groups, youth clubs, balar sabhas and balwadies. Village planning committees have been constituted to implement several educational, income generation, sanitation, skills development, agricultural and developmental programmes in these villages.

Among the 30 Districts of Tamil Nadu, Dindigul district was chosen for the study and the study has been undertaken in the service villages of Gandhigram Rural Institute. There are 14 blocks in Dindigul District and 3 blocks, namely, Athoor, Dindigul and Reddiarchatram were selected for the study. Aged women who were 60 and above were selected as the respondents from rural hamlets of these three blocks. The sample consists of 325 aged females chosen from 11 villages of the three blocks in Dindigul District.
The villages were classified into developed and under-developed villages based on the health and infrastructural facilities such as medical centres, tarred roads, transport and availability of schools, ration shop, post office and public TV in the villages. The eleven villages were classified into two categories five under the developed and six under the under-developed categories.

**Sampling design**

The primary purpose of study is to find out the perspective and problems of the aged. But studying a whole population of the aged to arrive at a generalization is not at all practicable. Here comes the importance of sampling in field research, the process of sampling makes it possible to draw valid inferences or generalize on the basis of careful observation of the variables in relation to a relatively small proportion of the population.

(Multistage random sampling was adopted to select the sample for the study. At the first stage, the villages in the three blocks were selected. The details of the female population above 60 years of age were collected from the Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Programme (TINP) centre register. Then the households of the respondents were listed from the TINP Registers. The respondents were contacted and the required information was collected from them. A sample of 325 females were selected. Also a sample of one
hundred and twenty five male respondents were chosen at random from the 11 villages. Details of the sample selected for the study are given in Table 3.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athoor</td>
<td>1. Alamarathupatti</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Chettiapatti</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dindigul</td>
<td>3. Sirunaickenpatti</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Ulagampatti</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddiar Chatram</td>
<td>5. Kondamanaiickenpatti</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (A)</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Developed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athoor</td>
<td>1. Kalikkampatti</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dindigul</td>
<td>2. Chatrapatti</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. A. Pappanampatti</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddiar Chatram</td>
<td>4. Pattathunaickenpatti</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. K. Puclur</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. S. Vadipatti</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (B)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Total (A + B)</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-test**

The present investigation is designed with a view to findings out the problems and status of the rural female aged. The required primary data had to be collected from the rural female aged. Since the majority of the aged were illiterates and lacked awareness of and exposure to the outer world, it was decided that the interview method through personal contact was the
right method to elicit the requisite information from the illiterate rural female aged. The interview schedule was pre-tested on a sample of 30 female aged selected from A.Velloodu Village in Dindigul Block. The pre-test helped the researcher to restructure the interview schedule with necessary modification and finalise the schedule.

**Interview Schedule**

The interview schedule elicited personal information pertaining to age, education, occupation, caste, socio-economic status, skills possessed, achievement in life, role in family, involvement in public activities, physical disability and health status, psychological status, decision making, problem solving, family responsibility and needs for happy ageing. The welfare programmes and benefits offered to the female aged were ascertained. Guidance from three field experts, three academicians and research specialists was also sought in finalizing the interview schedule. The schedule prepared in mother tongue (Tamil) enabled the illiterate rural female aged to grasp the meaning and to answer all the questions. A copy of the schedule both in Tamil and in English has been attached as Appendix ‘A’. Apart from the interview schedule the researcher also undertook field observation to comprehend the problems, status and the living conditions of the aged females in villages.
Focus Group Discussion

Key informants consisting of village leaders, self-help group members, local teachers, NGO workers, retired senior citizens, pensioners, and panchayat members participated in the focus group discussion. This was held in a common place in the village with a small group of 10-12 members participating in the discussion and deliberating on various aspects pertaining to the problems of the female aged. The psycho-social characteristics, socioeconomic conditions and welfare programmes for the aged and their suggestions for happy ageing were the topics for discussion in the group interaction sessions. The format of the focus group discussion is attached as the Appendix ‘B’

Case study

The data from the key respondents such as village elders skilled artisans, beneficiaries of welfare schemes, aged persons with special features etc., were obtained. Information relating to their family problems, role and status in family and society were analysed through case studies. The treatment of the aged by family and community members was also observed during the course of field work. The respondents narrated their unique life experiences and profiled their problems. It was a kind of live review which helped the researcher to know about the personal development and factors
related to happy ageing. The case study helped to investigate the depth of the problems and the causative factors.

Secondary Data

For the present study the data have been collected from both the primary and secondary sources. The secondary data were collected from the TINP centre registers and the records maintained in the block and district offices. Reports, newspapers, magazines and websites also constituted the secondary sources for the research data. Benchmark surveys and articles related to the aged were other valuable secondary sources. The researcher made sure that the documents were genuine, reliable and pertinent before collecting the relevant data from the secondary sources.

Collection of data

The researcher personally visited the villages selected for the study and collected the required data. The SHG members, balwadi (creche) and TINP teachers, village leaders and panchayat members helped by providing general information and in conducting the focus group discussion. The respondents were contacted at their residence and the data were collected through personal interviews. The respondents were given a patient hearing so as to enable them to recall the past events and the informations were recorded in the prescribed schedules. Rapport building with the respondents
play a significant role in eliciting information from the aged females and so they were spontaneous in stating their problems and status. Personally administered tools brought the researcher directly in contact with the respondents. The one to one conversation created an ambience of mutual trust and removed all fear and prejudice between the researcher and the respondents. The respondents were at ease, free and frank in giving the personal details for the study. The data collection process was carried out in a relaxed manner and the aged respondents were able to recollect and report all the details.

**Period of data collection**

The field investigation and data collection for the study were carried out during the period from October 2002 to January 2003. The data collected from 325 female from 11 villages were scrutinized and processed for analysis.

**Statistical Analysis of Data**

The data collected for the study were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. For the analysis of the data, SPSS software was used and qualitative interpretations were drawn creatively, combining methods of precision and validity. The data collected for the study were examined carefully. The investigator prepared a code design and classified and
grouped the data for the purpose of analysis. Both parametric and non-parametric tests were used for the analysis of the data ('t' test, chi-square test, Pearson coefficient correlation). The major findings with implications for developing strategies for the welfare of the aged are presented in the analysis chapter.