Chapter III

Objectives, Hypotheses and Methodology
CHAPTER- III
OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction:
In this chapter, the main objectives, hypotheses of the study and the methodology of approach adopted for this study are briefly outlined. In the objectives and hypotheses part, the overall objectives and hypotheses and the specific objectives and hypotheses have been given. In the methodology part, the nature of data used for this study, sources of data, time period taken for the study, sample size, tools used for the analysis of the data and the chapter outline have been explained. In the last section of the chapter, the utility and the limitations of the study are given.

3.1. Objectives:
The overall objective of the present investigation is to examine the nature and characteristics of socio-economic conditions of the unorganised Dalits or SC/ST workers in Tirunelveli District.

The specific objectives are:

1. to examine the level of education of the Dalits.
   1.1. the level of education of the Sub-castes of the Dalits, viz. the Pallars, the Parayars and the Sakkiliars.
   1.2. the level of education of the Dalit Hindus and the Dalit Christians.
2. to examine the nature of assets possessed by the Dalits in terms of land, house and livestock.
   2.1. the nature of the assets possessed by the Pallars, the Parayars and the Sakkiliars.
   2.2. the nature of the assets possessed by the Dalit Christians and the Dalit Hindus.
3. to analyse the sources of income, the pattern of expenditure, and the position of saving and debts.
   3.1. the sources of income, the pattern of expenditure and the position of saving and debts of the Pallars, the Parayars and the Sakkiliars.
   3.2. the sources of income, the pattern of expenditure and the position of saving and debts of the Dalit Hindus and the Dalit Christians.
4. to examine the nature of the occupation/employment especially in the agricultural sector, of the Dalits.
   4.1. the nature of the occupation/employment especially in the agricultural sector, of the Pallars, the Parayars and the Sakkiliars.
   4.2 the nature of the occupation/employment especially in the agricultural sector, of the Dalit Hindus and the Dalit Christians.
5. to investigate the impact of the welfare schemes of the government for the upliftment of the Dalits.
   5.1. the impact of the welfare schemes of the government on the Pallars, the Parayars and the Sakkiliars.
   5.2. the impact of the welfare schemes of the government on the Dalit Hindus and the Dalit Christians.
6. to examine the discrimination faced by the Dalits.
   6.1. the discrimination faced by the Pallars, the Parayars and the Sakkiliars.
   6.2. The discrimination faced by the Dalit Hindus and the Dalit Christians.
7. to suggest the ways and means to improve the present socio-economic conditions of the Dalits.

3.2. Hypotheses:
In the context of the above objectives, the following hypotheses have been proposed to be tested and proved.
The socio-economic condition of the Dalits is low. The socio-economic condition of the Pallars are better off than that of the Parayars and the Sakkiliars, and that the Dalit Christians are better off than that of the Dalit Hindus.
The specific Hypotheses are to be tested are:

1. the general education of the Dalits is at the Primary level.
   1.1. the level of education of the Pallars is better than that of the Parayars and the
       Sakkiliars.
   1.2. Religion has influenced the level of education.

2. Most of the Dalits are landless and their assets are adequate only to meet their short-
   term needs.
   2.1. The Pallars have a better position in holding lands, houses and livestock than
       that of the Parayars and the Sakkiliars.
   2.2. The Dalit Christians have a better position in holding lands, houses and
       livestock than that of the Dalit Hindus.

3. In terms of economic conditions, the Dalits are living below the poverty line. Their
   main source of income is coolie income from agricultural work. Their main
   expenditure is on food and clothing and mostly they do not have any saving.
   3.1. the economic conditions of the Pallars are much better than that of the Parayars
       and the Sakkiliars.
   3.2. the economic conditions of the Dalit Christians are much better than that of the
       Dalit Hindus.

4. Most of the Dalits are agricultural coolies and they are unemployed during most of
   the days of the year.
   4.1. Since the Pallars have land, they have more working days.
   4.2. Since the Dalit Christians are better in position, they are mostly employed.

5. The welfare schemes of the government have had very little impact on the Dalits.
   5.1. The welfare schemes of the government have had very little impact on the
       Sakkiliars.
   5.2. The welfare schemes of the Government have had very little impact on the Dalit
       Hindus.

6. The Dalit Hindus and the Dalit Christians face discrimination.
3.3.0. Methodology:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the present socio-economic conditions of the Unorganised Rural Dalits (SC/ST) in Tirunelveli District. It is essentially a fact finding approach related largely to the present and abstracting generalisations by cross section study of the current situation of the Dalit. Methodology of research adopted for this study is explained in this chapter. This is an empirical research mainly based on survey method. Social research may be defined, “Scientific undertaking by means of logical and systematized methods, aims to discover new facts and verify the old facts and to analyze their sequences, inter-relationships as causal explanation and factual laws which govern them”\(^{96}\).

3.3.1. Formulation of Research Problem:

“Social scientists with different values choose different topics for investigation. The social scientist who knows which of his personal preferences have entered into the selection of his topic will be better able to guard against biases they might introduce into his research than one who works under the illusion that he is guided by scientific procedure can be maintained in the awareness of where and how they enter”\(^{97}\).

This can be true in the case of present researcher in selecting the topic for his study. His personal preferences have entered into the selection of his topic. The researcher is well aware of the problems normally faced by the Unorganised Rural Dalits due to his involvement with these people. He has worked among them and has studied a number of available relevant literatures in order to equip himself more with facts.

3.3.2. Pilot Study:

A number of visits were made to the villages before the study and certain facts were observed carefully by the researcher while living with them. A pilot study was undertaken in the study area, where the researcher got involved. Various sub-castes

among the Dalits like Pallars, Parayars and Sakkiliars were contacted at their houses with a view to understanding the actual problems faced by the rural Unorganised Dalits. In this process, the Collector of the District, Tashildar and the Village Administrative Officers were contacted to get the information regarding the availability of consistent, relevant, accurate and adequate data for the study.

3.3.3. Period of Study:
The data for the study related to 10 year periods that is from 1987-1997.

3.3.4. Selection of the sample size:
When the study was undertaken Tirunelveli District was divided into 10 taluks namely Sivagiri, Sankarankovil, Shencottah, Tenkasi, Tirunelveli, Palayamkottai, Ambasamudram, Naguneri, Radahpuram and Veerakeralampudur, of which some were industrially advanced, some were agriculturally prosperous and some others were drought-prone.

The researcher followed a simple random sampling for selecting 3 taluks for his study. These three taluks have covered Tirunelveli District representing the whole district. They are:
1. Sankarankoil- well fed agricultural economy
2. Palayamkottai- Riverbed agricultural economy.
3. Nanguneri - Drought prone and well irrigated economy.

Considering both the scope of the study and the resource constraint, the ultimate sample size was fixed at 250 rural Dalit workers to be selected in 12 villages of the three taluks. In each group of workers, there were sub-groups and they were adequately represented in the sample.

At Sankarankoil Taluk 4 villages were selected. They were Kurunjakulam, Kurivikulam, Puliampatty and Perumpathur.

At Palayamkottai Taluk 4 villages were selected. The villages Melapattam, Kilanatham, Naduvakurichi and Reddiarpatty were selected.

At Nanguneri Taluk 4 villages were selected. Muthalaikulam, Paruthipadu, Panangulam and Nellaiyappapuram villages were selected. Thus the sample covered 12 villages.

Secondary data were collected from the Village Administrative Offices (VAO's) of the sample villages on size of population of the identified groups and the sub-groups and for each group religion-wise.

On the basis of this information, the predetermined sample of 250 Unorganised rural Dalit workers was distributed in probability proportion in each group, Sub-group in each of the 12 villages. The required samples were selected by simple random sampling from among the workers in each of the sample villages.

The total sample number is 250 families. Among them 127 families, (50.8%) from the Pallar group, 91 families (36.4%) from the Parayar group and 32 families (12.8%) from the Sakkiliar group were represented, and among the families 215 families (86%) are Hindus and 35 families (14%) are Christians. In general, the sample was fairly representative giving required attention.

3.3.5. Preparation of Schedule:
The schedule contains a detailed, classified planned and seriated list of items on which information is required. It helps in obtaining quantitative and objective data direct from the sources. The researcher has structured the schedule used in this study with utmost care in consultation with the guide. The stipulated principles necessary to prepare a schedule were adopted and three types of Schedules have been used for this study. The Schedule I deals with the general living standard of the Dalits. The Schedule II deals with the 'Levels of Livings' and the Schedule III deals with the 'Political and Social
Participation of the Dalits. Before launching into the real investigation a pilot survey was done by the researcher in 5 villages in order to verify whether the questions are straight and simple to get the reply from the villagers. It was done for a month.

3.3.6. Collection of Data:
Data pertaining to this study were collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected directly, (interview method) from the Unorganised Dalit families. The researcher visited all the villages and made a survey by interviewing them face to face.

3.3.7. Tools:
The collected data were fed in the Microsoft Excel program. The researcher has used the averages, percentages, tables, charts, and diagrams. to facilitate comparison. Moreover, to test the hypotheses the researcher has made use of z-test, Co-efficient of Variations and Chi-square test.

3.3.8. Utility of the study:
Each research has its own significance. This study micro-level study of the socio-economic conditions of the unorganised rural Dalit workers has its own utility.

1. The present study is a sincere attempt to evaluate the implementation of the measures taken to uplift the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

2. It is to show that how far the downtrodden Dalits have improved their socio-economic conditions due to various benefits given by the Government.

3. It is to reveal the position of the Dalit Christians who fight for the inclusion in the Constitution on par with the other Dalit Hindus.

4. It is an attempt to compare the socio-economic conditions among the Dalits, the Pallars, the Parayars and the Sakkiliars.
3.3.9. Chapter Outline:
The various objectives studied in this research work on the basis of the methodology and the other details connected to the present study are presented in the various chapter as follows.

In the first chapter, the importance of the study, the origin of the caste system, the origin of the Dalits, the question of pollution and untouchability, the life situation of the Dalits in 19th century in India, in particularly Tirunelveli district are briefly discussed. This chapter also introduces the specific problems faced by the Dalits.

Some research works undertaken in the field of the socio-economic conditions of the Dalits in the past and in recent times have been reviewed in the second chapter. This review does not intend to cover all the works undertaken in the field. Rather, this review is given to provide an idea about the various research works undertaken in the filed and also to understand the need for the present work. The concepts and definitions are also clarified in this chapter.

Chapter three briefly presents the specific objectives and the hypotheses. The formulation of the problems, the selection of the sample villages, sources of data, time period of study, tools that are used, are described in the section on methodology. The subject matter of various chapters is also given in this chapter. Finally the usefulness and the limitations of the study are given in the last section.

In the fourth chapter, the profile of the study is discussed. In this chapter, the main elements which are needed for the specific study, are elaborately noted down.

Chapter five is the main body of the study, because it analyses the Primary data, which are collected in the filed. In this analysis, the objectives and the hypotheses of the study are studied and statistically verified.

The summary, main findings, conclusions and the suggestions of the study are presented in the last chapter.
3.3.10. Limitations:

* This study is mainly confined to the unorganised Dalit rural weaker section of labour and excludes the other non-Dalit rural sections and also the urban Dalit labourers.

* The present study is based on a sample survey, which is taken on selected areas of Tirunelveli District. It is a micro level study giving very little scope for repetition and generalisation for the whole district, Tamil Nadu and India.

* The relevant data were collected from the memory of the people and not from any record. In this context, the memory bias and its defects affect it to some extent.

* Since the target groups are illiterate, the data given by them may lack precision.