CHAPTER 3

PROBLEM, HYPOTHESES & METHODOLOGY
PROBLEM & HYPOTHESES:

The scientific research aims at providing explanation for the phenomenon under study. Every explanation must contain a statement of the events to be explained. Science is not united by its subject matter rather by its methodology. What set the scientific approach apart from the other modes of acquiring knowledge is the assumptions upon which it is based and its methodology. The scientific methodology is a system of explicit rules and procedures upon which research is based and against which claims for knowledge are evaluated. It is a self-correction process and relies upon the methods of developing and testing hypothesis for assured conclusions.

Scientific Knowledge is knowledge provable by both reason & experience (Observation). Logical validity and empirical verification are the criteria employed by scientists to evaluate claims for knowledge. These two criteria are translated into the research activities of scientists through the research process. The research process can be viewed as the overall scheme of scientific activities in which scientists engage in order to produce knowledge; it is paradigm of scientific inquiry. The research process consists of eight principal stages:

♦ Problem

♦ Hypothesis
Thus, the research process starts with a problem and ends in a tentative empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena. The scientific research is systematic, controlled and empirical.

Problem

Each and every research starts with a problem and the basic elements of research which help to transform an idea into concrete research operations. Although our knowledge about child's sexual abuse and neglect has increased, there is still a lot that we do not understand and with which we struggle. We still do not have workable operational definitions of various forms of child's sexual abuse, and only a vague understanding of what causes the maltreatment of children. We are still developing intervention and treatment methods and are just beginning to evaluate their effectiveness. On the basis of above background, the title of the problem is "HIV PRIMARY PREVENTION AMONG STREET CHILDREN".
This research proposal will deal with these three questions:

1. What are the patterns of parent-child relationship?
2. What is the pattern of behavioural signs among street children?
3. What is the pattern of Street Children's reactive and proactive behaviour?
4. What is the influence of counselling on behavioural signs, parental abusive behaviour, and reactive proactive behaviour?

**Conceptual Clarification:**

**HIV**

HIV disease is a chronic condition in which the asymptomatic phase, i.e. without symptoms, may last for many years. Although most medical interventions are directed towards the control of diseases which occur as a result of the lowered immune function, an increasing ranges of anti-retroviral drugs which inhibit the replication of HIV.

**Counselling**

The primary aim of counselling is the production of constructive behavioural and personality children. It involves rigorous exploration of presenting problems, clarifying conflicting issues, confused assumption and searching for solution.
Street Children

Street children describe children who live or work on the streets. Some of these children live with their families (who are also living on the streets). Other street children live and work on the streets but do not live with their families. The term can also include child labourers, sexually-exploited children, and war-affected children, who may also be forced to live or work on the street.

Family Therapy

It is widely used tool that social care professionals can learn to practice or to refer clients family therapy is considered as an issue of mental health. It aims to bring situation into the open, in order to discuss implication for the whole family, and to free people to take their own decisions regarding their future.

HYPOTHESES

There is a little doubt that hypotheses are important and indispensable tools of scientific research. They are tentative answers to the research problems. They are expressed in the form of a relation between independent and dependent variables.

They are tentative conjectures because their veracity can be evaluated only after they have been tested empirically. When a researcher
suggests a hypothesis, he or she has no assurance that it will prove true or false.

Hypothesis can be derived deductively from theories, directly from observations, intuitively or from a combination of these. Thus, the hypothesis is the most powerful tool man has invented to achieve dependable knowledge. They are the predictions and even if they are not confirmed, they have power. Negative findings are sometimes as important as positive ones; they cut down the total universe of ignorance and sometimes point up fruitful further hypothesis and lines of investigation (Mc Guigan, 1969).

Every research has assumed tentative solution before final starting of study. In this connection investigator also assumed certain relationships among the variables to get direction for further research theses tentative relationship were as follows:

1. They will be reduction in problematic behaviour signs after the counselling and family therapy sessions.

2. The level of parental abusive behaviour will be lower down after the counselling and family therapy sessions.

3. Child’s reactive and proactive behaviour will be managed after the counselling and family therapy sessions.

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METHODOLOGY:

RESEARCH DESIGN

There are several methods of data collection. A systematic and scientific methodology, which is referred to as research design (Festinger & Katz 1970, Selltiz et al. 1959), determines the correctness and accuracy of the obtained results. The most valid and reliable method of scientific investigation is one characterized by observing the effect of experimentally manipulated variables while the extraneous, systematic or relevant variables are under control and other variables possibly introducing errors are minimized, if not totally eliminated. The present study is an experimental type of research. A variable is a symbol to which numerical or values are assigned; it is a property that takes on different values, i.e., something that varies. Variables can be classified into several ways. The most important and useful way to categories variable is 'Independent Variables' and 'Dependent Variables'. This categorization is highly useful because of its general applicability, simplicity and special importance in conceptualizing and designing research and in communicating the results of research. The variables expected to explain is regarded as the 'dependent variable' and the variable expected to explain change in the 'dependent variable' is known the 'independent variable'. The independent variable as the explanatory variable is the presumed cause
of changes in the values of the dependent variable. The dependent variable is the expected outcome of the functioning of the independent variable. Dependent variables are also termed as Criterion Variables and Independent Variables as Predictor variables (Nechimas & Nechimas, 1976).

It is only an "Experimental Method" by which the causal relationship between two or more variables can be established. But the applications of this method are drastically limited by the great constraints that are involved in the adoption of this method. Experimental manipulation of many and complex psychological variables is not possible.

Many psychological variables cannot be presented in their natural form and intensity and the saturation in the laboratory conditions also deprives spontaneity and natural operation by its artificiality in the form of controls over many concomitant variables. Thus a limited aspect of psychological variables alone is capable of being investigated experimentally. Complex variables which operate in natural settings alone compel to be studied in their proper context only. Though such field setting studies don’t yield casual factors yet they provide the next best level of results by revealing the degree of low variability of correlation among the variables of interest.
D'Amato (1970) describes the co-relational research as 'that in which the variables under study are not directly manipulated by the researcher, rather variation in the variable of interest is achieved by some sort of selection procedure. The present problem is dealing with Individual’s characteristic in relation to visual search. This problem can be directly manipulated by the experimenter. Since factors like experience, motivation, attention, Intelligence and retention are involved in the study. It is an experimental study in which independent variable has been directly manipulated by the experimenter under control conditions.

In the present study, an attempt was made regarding HIV prevention among street children in which independent variable is manipulated with the help of selection process. In the present research work, counselling and family therapy is a set of independent variable, whereas the level of behavioural signs, parental abusive behaviour and child's reactive and proactive behaviour was taken as set of dependent variable.

To control the sequence relevant variables, all the tests were administered in same sequence to all the subjects. To maintain the homogeneity of the sample, the street children were taken from Railway Station, Bus Stations and street areas of Anand City. Only rag-pickers were selected for the present study as street children.
The following tests were used for the present investigation:

1. **Signs of Child’s Possible Sexual Abuse (Behavioural Signs)** — by *Kelly et al. (1991)* reported that prevalence rates (for under 16 year olds) of 18 per cent of men an 43 per cent of women for all abusive experiences. Nevertheless, there are many difficulties in estimating the rate of prevalence because of a lack of precise and generally agreed definitions of what constitutes sexual abuse. The very intimate nature of sexual activity inhibits people from disclosing their real feelings or experiences in order to provide an accurate overall picture. Identification of sexual abuse is not easy, as many of signs shown in the questionnaire and particularly the behavioural signs, are associated with the child under emotional stress and do not necessarily indicate in isolation that a child is sexually abused or has been abused in the past. The awareness of these indicators will enable the social worker to consider sexual abuse as a possibility. Sudden changes of behaviour which has two other possibilities of emotional stress may indicate sexual abuse. In the present questionnaire, 28 items are given and the responses are recorded in 5 categories like often, always, sometime, occasionally and not at all.
2. Parental Abusive Behaviour (by Iwaniec, 1995) reported that parents and careers who persistently criticize, shame, threaten, humiliate and put down a child who induce fear and anxiety in a youngster, and who are never satisfied with thy child’s behaviour and performance, are emotionally abusive and cruel. A negatively-charged interaction between a child and parents can induce pain, anxiety, confusion and cognitive distortion; therefore, it is also described as emotionally harmful. While examining emotionally, abusive parental behaviour, the present questionnaire could be help. In the present questionnaire, 22 items are included and the responses are recorded in 5 categories like often, always, sometime, occasionally and not at all.

3. Child's Reactive and Proactive Behaviour (by Iwaniec, 1995) reported that the reactive and proactive behaviour like playing freely, laughing, smiling, running, talking freely, responding to affection, attention, at ease when parents are near, taking active part in the family matters. This questionnaire consists of 12 items and the responses are recorded in 5 categories like often, always, sometime, occasionally and not at all.
Sample

In the present investigation, initially 400 street children are selected with the help of purposive sampling technique from Railway Station and Bus Stations and other such parts of the Anand City. After that with the help of randomized sampling technique, 200 street children were selected irrespective to the sex. Their age range was 9 years to 18 years. All of them are belongs to the similar kind of family system i.e. the joint family system and were living by and large in similar condition. The total family income was not more than Rs.6,000/- only. As it is mentioned supra that maximum street children were rag-pickers.

Procedure

The following steps are taken after recording of the responses on all the three tests viz., Behavioural Signs, Parental Abusive Behaviour and Reactive and Proactive Behaviour. In the first session of pre-test counselling and family therapy, the following points are considered:

♦ explain what the test means and what it does not tell

♦ alert to possible ramifications of a positive test result

♦ assess personal risk

♦ discuss the advantages and disadvantages of knowing HIV status
• develop coping strategies
• identify social support, who to tell and why to be circumspect
• educate in safer sex and safer injection practices
• explain confidentiality of test result

After pre-test counselling and family therapy, in the second session of post-test counselling, the following points are considered:

• focus on the reason for the session
• give clear, simple, unambiguous information
• clarify the meaning of an HIV positive test
• expect emotional reactions: shock, denial, anxiety, anger
• address individual’s immediate concerns
• identify and address issues of immediate importance, e.g. who to and who not to tell; who to use for support; safer sex and injecting practices
• provide a lifeline, e.g. 24-hours helpline telephone number and written information about HIV, giving details of services available
• give a further appointment within a few days.

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