CHAPTER - 1

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY
1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Education is an umbrella term; it covers a lot of practice and principle of variegated nature. It is interdisciplinary by itself. One cannot contemplate education without traversing into the realms of sociology, psychology, philosophy, technology and life as it is lived. This makes educational research a venture perse.

A new kit of tools has been invented to study human science. There was a time when the methods of studying natural sciences were considered appropriate even for social sciences. In one of his lectures professor Buch, M. B. [referred by Passi and Malhotra, 1993:9] remarked that in India the formal activity of conducting research studies in education has traveled a long path. Yet the substance of research problems and the methodology employed are in their infancy stage. The objectivism advocated by positivism and empiricism was on the peak. Positivist researches have claimed to establish cause effect type of correlation between variables. The human subject was relegated to a mere physical phenomenon. A rigorous observational, experimental, statistical method was applied to arrive at objective conclusions. The first doctoral research in education in India was completed by Chickermane in 1943.

Now with the advent of new phenomenological ethnographic paradigms; novel techniques of observation and analysis have appeared in the literature of educational research. Many of the recent critics of research assert that if educational research has to contribute its might to the development of the learners then the human being has to be thought of as a complete man functioning under a variety of contexts. With the need of explore new approaches the qualitative research techniques have to be applied. This study has tried to incorporate a qualitative methodology which would penetrate the reality in its natural setting and evaluate the verbal and actions of the subjects under investigation.

Education of today is topic of debate among teachers, parents and educators. Educational atmosphere of today leads a person to some beliefs about process of education. There are different views about educational process.
Some believe that education has become meaningless because the process of education has failed to reach its destination. Some believe that there must be some change in the structure of education. At this stage it is necessary to study the process of teaching and learning.

Many activities like training, conditioning, indoctrination are considered important for education, but teaching and learning are two major activities carried out in the arena of education. Both of these concepts are indefinable conclusively, for they entail the covert and overt behaviours of human beings. Teachers and students interact within a situation created by their perception and the ethos prevailing the locational and subjective culture. All these are amorphous in nature and heavily loaded with subjective elements. The practice of teaching and learning, like any other practice, is founded upon the perceptions of the practitioners. Teacher is considered a very important person in the process of teaching and learning. So it is necessary to know the perceptions of teachers towards teaching-learning practice. The perceptions are deeply embedded in the psyche of a person and act as silent guidelines for the actions. Perceptions are the root cause of the perceptible practice carried out by the teachers in the classroom. Therefore without studying the perceptions one can hardly analyse and interpret the overt practice. The main source of practice and behaviour is perception. It is only through this act of perception a person approaches the datum world, penetrates it and interprets it. Generally perceptions comprise of sensation, awareness, interpretation and categorization. They embrace beliefs, values, attitudes and communication style also. Perception always affects a person's everyday activities, it also affects their professional work. It is also true that our perception of the other person is influenced also by our own goals or the roles we occupy. An imposed truth is never transplanted into practice. So it seems that study of perceptions of teachers towards teaching-learning practice is an important area of research. This research upholds the importance of teachers' perceptions because they flow into their day-to-day practice.

Teachers know many theoretical definitions about teaching and learning. But it is important to know what are their perceptions about teaching? What are their perceptions about learning? Do they give importance to teaching and learning both? Perceptions of teachers may lead to get answers of these questions.
1.2 SELECTION OF THE PROBLEM AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The researcher is in the teaching profession and as a student of B. Ed. and M. Ed., she had some idea of teaching, learning and image of teachers. But sitting in the staff-room, looking at colleagues' teaching, hearing their advice and suggestions there emerged some questions as:

- Is theoretical knowledge not useful in practice?
- Can't we put into practice the pedagogical concept of teaching and learning?
- What are the reasons of difference between the views of educationists and views of practitioners?
- Do teachers agree with the theoretical opinions?
- If they agree with theoretical knowledge, will they put into practice? If their perceptions are different from theoretical views, what are the responsible factors for it?

All these questions led towards this research problem and helped to formulate it into following words:

'AN INQUIRY INTO THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING'

1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS:

The key words of title are considered important for research because the study depends on specific definition and its meaning. Whitney explained importance of the words of title. He (referred in Desai 1973:398) said, "To define a problem means to put a fence around it, to separate it by careful distinction from like questions found in related situations and need". Clear definitions and interpretations of these words remove confusion of the readers and the researcher too. The topic of study is as under.

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So it is necessary to give clear interpretations of the terms: inquiry, school teachers, perception, practice, teaching and learning.
1.3.1 Inquiry:

Inquiry means investigation or to find out. It also means interrogation, research, a question or a query. Etymological English Dictionary (p. 287) interprets inquiry as a question, search for truth, information or knowledge, research scrutiny.

According to Law Laxicon. – The Encyclopedic Law Dictionary [Reprinted in 1999:982] inquiry is the aiming at or discovery of truth by questions, either formal verbal interrogation or a recourse to the proper means and sources of knowledge.

The meaning of inquiry for this study can be accepted as under:

Inquiry means research or to discover truth or falsehood with the method of verbal interrogation or a recourse to the proper means and sources of knowledge.

1.3.2 School Teacher:

According to Law Laxicon. – The Encyclopedic Law Dictionary [Reprinted in 1999:1729] school teacher is related to a pupil entrusted to his care by a parent or guardian, stands in loco parentis and can exercise the same authority as the parent and is responsible in the same manner.

In this study school teachers means those who teach different subjects in secondary and higher secondary sections of schools. Principals are also included in this definition.

1.3.3 Perceptions:

There are different opinions about perception. Generally people believe it to see, to notice or to be aware of it. Sometimes sensation is considered as perception. Sometimes sensation is considered as stimulation for perception.

As per Dictionary of Philosophy [Reprinted in 1971:228]. In contemporary psychology and epistemology perception is the apprehension of ordinary sense objects such as tree, house etc. on the occasion of sensory stimulation. Perception is distinguished on the one hand, from sensation and on the other hand, from higher ideational process of imagination, remembrance, conception.
and reasoning. In early modern philosophy perception was used in a much wider sense thus for Bacon, perception designated the mind’s subjection to external influence. Descartes and Spinoza designated by perception intellectual rather than sensuous apprehension. Leibniz understood by perceptions the internal state of one monad whereby it takes cognizance of other monads.

While a Dictionary of Psychology [1956:18, 201] suggest perception means the process of becoming immediately aware of something. When the object is recognized or identified in any way perception passes into apperception (Apperception is original sense clear perception in particular where there is recognition or identification.)

Thus it can be said that beliefs, attitudes, opinions etc are relatively transitory views held by a person, while perception is a concrete and active mental state.

1.3.4 Practice:

There are different meanings of practice as:

➢ Constant or customary use, a habitual action, custom.
➢ Repeated exercise to improve one’s skills or to learn some act.
➢ Actual performance. The Latin word of practice is practica, business. The deliberate application of a theory. Formerly an established custom; the pursuance of some traditional action. Now the organization of actuality according to some general principle.

It also means professional work, the business carried on by doctor, lawyer etc.

To practice is to exercise a calling profession. Practice means performance or operation of something, conduct. It means the professionally engaged in.

The word practice is here used for professional work of teachers. It includes classroom teaching ancillary school activities and experiential background supporting theoretical and practical consideration.
1.3.5 Teaching - Learning :

Teaching is considered the act or business of instructing. Teaching means also to impart knowledge, information and a lecture and discussion on a subject of topical interest. Teaching is also to shape behaviour, beliefs.

Learning is considered as the acquisition of knowledge or skill. Learning also means a relatively permanent change in knowledge behaviour or understanding that results from experience. It is distinguished from remembering which involves the recall of previous experience and therefore learning may take place without remembering.

Thus teaching and learning are different activities but teaching and learning are connected also in some sense. Teaching and learning are processes in the education of a student which require interaction between the teacher and student. Teaching methods are useful to investigate or to help the learning process.

Etymology English Dictionary (318) also suggest one meaning of learn is 'to teach'. It means teaching and learning activities are related with each other. Learning is also considered skill or knowledge acquired by instruction or study or by being taught. The conventional sense of teaching is associated with learning. Chauhan [1994 : 04] rightly said that teaching is to cause the child to learn and acquire the desired knowledge, skill and also desirable ways of living in society. Thus teaching and learning both interact with each other.

The word teaching and learning are used here as practice of teaching and learning.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS :

The inquiry strive to answer the following research questions.

(i) How do the teachers perceive the act of teaching?
(ii) What is their perception regarding the process of teaching and learning?
(iii) Do they integrate their perceptions regarding the process with the practice of teaching and learning?
(iv) Which activities are conducive to and which are incompatible with teaching-learning according to the teachers?
(v) How do the teachers perceive their and students' role in the practice?
(vi) What are the overt and covert responses regarding the practice?
(vii) What are the major incidents and acts in a school/classroom situation which reflect the teachers' perceptions most effectively?

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

(i) To study the perceptions of teachers' act of teaching.
(ii) To study the perceptions of teachers' act of learning.
(iii) To study the integration between their perceptions and practice of learning and teaching.
(iv) To study teachers' overt and covert responses regarding the practice.
(v) To study classroom situation which reflect teachers' perceptions.
(vi) To arrive at some qualitative and quantitative conclusions regarding their perceptions and practice in relation to some variables like area, sex, qualification, experience and discipline of the study.

1.6 HYPOTHESES OF RESEARCH:

The researcher has tried to study the perceptions of teachers in relation to certain variables. The following hypotheses were formulated and tested.

(i) There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of urban group and of town group.
(ii) There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of urban group and of rural group.
(iii) There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of town group and of rural group.
(iv) There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of male group and of female group.
There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of common stream group and of science stream group.

There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of graduate group and of post-graduate group.

There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of 0-5 years experience group and of 6-15 years experience group.

There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of 6-15 years experience group and of 16+ years experience group.

There is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers of 0-5 years experience group and of 16+ years experience group.

1.7 DELIMITING THE STUDY:

This study is delimited as under.

(i) This study focuses only on teachers' perception; the perceptions of students, parents and members of the society are not studied.

(ii) This study involves only the teachers of secondary and higher secondary section of the school.

(iii) This is not a study of teachers' and students' views.

(iv) This study involves only the teachers of Anand and Kheda district.

1.8 NEED OF THE STUDY:

We find a lot of studies pertaining to teaching-learning process. Most of them intend to establish a novel method of learning and develop a scheme for teaching through that method. In spite of a great deal of enthusiastic tryouts and effective implementations, unfortunately, sometime the classroom teaching-learning has remained almost the same. The reality external to teachers and learners should meet its end. An imposed truth never gets transplanted into practice. The main source of practice behaviour is perception. It is only through this act a person approaches the datum world, penetrates it and interprets it. Thus
a reality is created through study of perceptions and it is that reality which holds a stamp of individuality. Only through perceiving man creates meaning of the world, society and the self.

Today we can see many differences between theoretical knowledge and practical work. Sometimes teachers can't use or do not use their theoretical knowledge of teaching and learning into practical work. This study ventures to reach the perception of teachers regarding the practice of teaching-learning. It is a step towards the reality held first by the practitioners in the field of education. Perception dictates practice. The nature and scope of present and near future practice of teaching and learning can be explained on the basis of this inquiry into the perception of teachers. The forced choice tools questionnaires, rating scales, fix questioned interviews may be elicit only confirmity, or non-confirmity with the existing knowledge reality. This sort of studies may not contribute anything more to the concerned field. Moreover the non-verbal or tacit responses tell more of a human being than more verbal articulations. Naturalistic method of this study may be present reality.

This study can build a fresh reality related to the practice of teaching and learning. It might point out the crux of the present day educational crises. Quantitative and qualitative both methods of this study may be given difference of perceptions between theoretical knowledge and practical work. Even some new definitions and dimensions of teaching-learning activity may emerge from this study.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Teaching and learning is a part of education system. This study is about teaching and learning. So it may be useful to every person who is connected with education.

Some topics which are connected with this study as harmony between theoretical and practical aspects, experiences and observations of teaching and learning situations, perceptions of teachers’ and students’ competency, classroom climate, teacher and students’ relationship, factors affecting teaching and learning, feelings of teachers and students, methods to open the class work,
types of teaching situation, temperament of the class, non verbal expressions, teachers’ role, concept of effective classroom teaching, criticism and praise of students and teachers, real situation of classroom may be useful to teachers in their everyday work. It can be useful to think about their own perceptions and may be used to change their some perceptions about students, their work and education system etc. This study can change teachers’ outlook to see their duty and practice.

Principal is also one of the important factors in the school. This study may be helpful to form their view towards teachers, students, discipline etc.

This study can be helpful not only the persons engaged in this formal education system but also parents and members of society. They can think over effect of their indirect role in teaching and learning practice because after all teachers and students both are part of society and their perceptions are formed from their sensation and experiences when they are engaged in work.

Thus the reality prevailing in the classroom, when seen with inquisitive rigor, would help the teacher, principal, educators, policy makers educational psychologists and persons who are connected with formal education system and also who are not directly connected with this system. It may be useful in suggesting valid solutions and real remedies for the prevailing problems. At least this inquiry would come out with an authentic picture of the teaching-learning process going on in the minds of the practitioners in the classroom.

1.10 SCHEME OF CHAPTERIZATION:

Planning is necessary before starting any work. Planning is a mirror of work which will be done in future. This study is based on quantitative and qualitative methods. One of the characteristics of qualitative method is its tentative design. During study there is not any fixed design of chapterization but progression of study evolves the scheme of chapterization. This study is reported in six chapters.

Chapter 2 presents reviews of related literature. Researcher has tried to give a brief summary of research work done in this area. The Ph.D. theses, M.Ed. dissertations, books, articles and research papers are reviewed here. Review of
researches based on teachers' beliefs and practice, teachers' attitudes, values and personality, teaching expectancy and results of learning, experienced teachers' social construction, teachers' knowledge about teaching, influence of classroom practice on students teachers' thought, quality teaching, perceptions of teachers, teaching efficiency, classroom behaviour, self concept and self perception and achievement, teaching learning process, etc. are briefly reviewed and presented in an integrated form.

Chapter 3 is based on theoretical aspects of perception, teaching and learning, concept, process, factors affecting perception and abstracts of theories of perception are presented. Concept of teaching and learning are presented in detail. Different concepts, features, perspectives, factors, reviews of theories of learning are also presented. It leads to teaching-learning as a process. Future perspectives of teaching and learning also presented here.

Chapter 4 is connected with methodology of research. This is an important chapter, since a new paradigm is employed here. Researcher has explained the difference between conventional methods of research and naturalistic inquiry. The salient features of Naturalistic Inquiry, its design etc. are presented at length. The later half of the chapter describes how the new model is utilized for this study. This chapter also describes population, sample, tool construction and methods of data collection and data analysis for this study.

Chapter 5 is central to this study. It includes qualitative and quantitative data analysis and interpretation. A detailed description of data analysis and interpretation is presented. Results gained from $x^2$, t test, open-ended responses are described. The perceptions reflected through observation, interviews and overheard conversation are presented in summarized form and as direct quotes.

Chapter 6 consists of conclusions and suggestions. The conclusions derived from the qualitative and quantitative data are presented in detail. The similarity and difference of the findings are described. Researcher has tried to show how the findings of this study can help future studies. The techniques of peer-debriefing also used. Lastly researcher has also tried to share her feeling as to how this experience has affected her academic and professional concerns.