CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Chennai is one of the major metropolitan cities in India. It also happens to be the State Capital of Tamil Nadu. It has the distinction of being described as the "Intellectual Queen of India" by no less than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It prides itself as the oldest Municipal Corporation in India. Yet it has not escaped the fate of other Metropolitan cities of India in facing the problems such as mushrooming of slums and sportive pavement dwellers. The scanning of available literature and field situation revealed the ever increasing number of slums and the families living in the low lying areas, on the road margins, railway borderlines, canal banks, on the vacant lands earmarked for public utility. These slums were hindrance not only to the Municipal Authorities in implementing civic and development works, also affecting the quality of life of the total city population in various ways. The slums and its population are inevitable to the development of urban areas, since they are inter-dependent on each other for services. Women from these low income groups constitute 50 per cent of the population and are major contributors in informal and service sectors.

Women's lack of access to credit, training, shelter and services, to education and to decision-making positions which prevent women from improving their living conditions and participating in developmental programmes. In many of the poor households, woman is the head of the household with the onerous responsibility of being the breadwinner. It is the
women who have to turn a shelter into a home and who must in the first place set up the family's survival system i.e. basic amenities, education, health care, safe and protected shelter, water and sanitation facilities. Apart from the above, women have to face the consequences due to problems like Illiteracy, large families, alcoholism, child labour, illhealth, underemployment, lack of awareness and poor decision-making power.

Keeping in view the necessity and importance of empowerment of women through formation of Self Help Groups, an attempt has been made to study their levels of awareness and decision-making in the family and community and quantify their self, group and overall empowerment. Women's status can be improved only in handling issues affecting them in the families, environment and the community in which they live. The formation of Self Help Groups has shown attitudinal and visible changes among women. The formation of Self Help Groups served as decentralised channels for reaching benefits to the poor women who have so far been beneficiaries rather than partners in the developmental programmes.

3.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The poor women in general have limited access to and control over resources in relation to those who own productive assets. Women have comparatively less access and control over resources than do men. Women thus get doubly marginalised - by virtue of being poor and being women (Srilatha Batliwala, 1993). Development programmes that tend to ignore women's needs and contributions have often miserably failed. Unless and until the women are empowered to fully participate in the national programmes and programmes
by gaining access to and control of both material and information resources they will not be able to challenge patriarchal ideology, transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality. So development is incomplete without developing the human resource of a given community. The infrastructure and economic development cannot yield expected benefits unless the people are first prepared through attitudinal and motivational change.

The empowerment of women and the improvement in their status enhances their decision-making capacity in vital areas, especially in reproduction. Education is one of the most important means of empowering women and of giving knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary, to be full partners in the developmental process. It is also argued that individual and community empowerment programmes will be strengthened significantly involving local people in the problem definition, data collection, decision-making and implementation process. The Third World looks at people as the greatest asset and believes that true development must focus on people on the premise that they have to develop themselves by participating in activities that affect their lives. As the participation of women is integral to development, they must involve themselves in the decision-making, implementation and evaluation of the programme in which they have participated.

Urban slum community is heterogeneous in nature. Therefore forming them into groups and involving them in the process of development of their families, groups and the whole community is a unique experience for any organisation working for urban slums. The indicators for measuring awareness levels, decision-making, self, group and overall empowerment have not been undertaken in any of the studies earlier.
Empowerment is envisaged as an aid to reduce gender gap. In the Indian context, this would mean helping women to enjoy their constitution and legal rights to equality in real life. Moreover, the term 'empowerment of women' is gaining popularity than terms like women's welfare, upliftment, development or awareness building. Though in the context of women development the word 'empowerment' is frequently used, neither the term nor its dimension had been understood properly.

3.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The available literature reveals that hardly there has been any effort to make an in-depth study on the empowerment of women with particular reference to urban areas. Many Non-Governmental Organisations and institutions in India and International Organisations have launched programmes on women's empowerment by organising socio-economic activities. But these welfare programmes have been restricted to credit and thrift, literacy, income generation programmes, formation of trade unions, handling alcoholism by Self help group members in certain districts, health and participation in Panchayat Raj. The above programmes are implemented with the assistance of Government of India and International Funding Organisations in rural areas and small and medium towns where the Self Help Groups are mostly homogenous in nature. Thus, a thorough investigation through recognising and involving poor women from urban areas as equal partners and participants in the process of their empowerment is the need of the day.

While much has been written about the experiences of NGOs, particularly with respect to poverty alleviation and women's access to credit, training and other resources, this has been largely of a descriptive nature and
has tended to put forward the voice of the people running the NGO, rather than the voice of women who are intended beneficiaries of their programmes. Hence, there is a vast scope for exploring into a model developed by Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, a quasi Government organisation with expertise in handling such Community Development Programmes for replication in other marginalised communities. The success of the programme in terms of its sustainability through formation of Community Development Society and women's empowerment served as a great impetus to take up this study.

3.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

i. To study the socio economic profile of women Self Help Groups

ii. To assess the influence of CDD WATSAN programme on the awareness levels of women.

iii. To evaluate the influence of Self Help Groups on the decision-making among women.

iv. To appraise the impact of Self Help Groups on self empowerment, group empowerment and overall empowerment of women.

3.5 HYPOTHESIS

From the perusal of the available literature and the observations from the study, the following hypothesis were framed.

i. There is no significant difference among the various dimensions of awareness on CDD WATSAN programme in relation to areas in which the respondents live.

ii. There is no significant difference among the various dimensions of awareness on CDD WATSAN programme in relation to educational qualification of the respondents.
There is no significant difference among the dimensions of decision making in relation to socio economic status of the respondents.

There is no significant difference among the dimensions of selected variables of decision-making in relation to occupational status of the respondents.

There is no significant difference among the various dimensions of self empowerment in relation to caste of the respondents.

There is no significant difference among the various dimensions of self empowerment in relation to loan received by the respondents.

There is no significant difference among the various dimensions of group empowerment in relation to religion of the respondents.

There is no significant difference among the various dimensions of group empowerment in relation to the age group of the respondents.

There is no significant difference among the various dimensions of group empowerment in relation to educational qualification of the respondents.

There is no significant relationship among the various dimensions of overall empowerment in relation to earning members, monthly and family income of the respondents.

There is no significant difference among the various dimensions of overall empowerment in relation to saving habits of the respondents.
3.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

i. Empowerment

Empowerment in the present study refers to means by which individuals, groups and/or communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximise the quality of their lives.

ii. Self Help Group

Self Help Group in the present study refers to a group of 12 to 20 women of the same poor economic class who come forward voluntarily to work together for their own upliftment.

iii. Awareness creation

Awareness creation refers to the objective of information, education and communication activity directed at the intended beneficiaries.

iv. Decision-making

Decision-making in the study means identification and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the respondents.

v. Self empowerment

Self-empowerment refers to awareness of their own "SELF" as "powerful" and "capable".
vi. **Group empowerment**

Group empowerment in the present study is the means by which groups become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals.

vii. **Overall empowerment**

Overall empowerment in the present study refers to awareness levels related to health, water and sanitation, increase in decision-making power, self and group empowerment of women gained after intervention of the CDD WATSAN programme.

viii. **Group solidarity**

Group solidarity in this study means general agreement or consensus on functioning of the Self Help Group. It is a strategy that involves everyone playing a role in the decision-making of the group.

ix. **Group coherence**

Group coherence denote the binding effect in action or connected naturally by a common principle, consistent, congruent, logically integrated and clearly articulated by the group members.

x. **Group savings**

Weekly savings accrued by a group of 12-20 women.
xi. **Group integrity**

Group integrity in this study means adherence to moral, ethical principles and honesty.

xii. **Self-Development**

Self-development means development of one's capabilities or potentialities.

xiii. **Self reliance**

Self-reliance means depending on one's own capabilities, judgement, or resources and independence.

3.7 **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The aim of the study is to describe the various characteristics of programme components like awareness on CDD WATSAN programme, decision-making, self empowerment, group empowerment and overall empowerment of the respondents. Hence, descriptive design was adopted. It also attempts to test the relationship and association of variables upon which hypothesis were formulated.

3.8 **SAMPLING**

Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board has implemented a programme on 'Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases through Water and Sanitation' (CDD WATSAN) during 1996-1999 by covering 4,000 slum households in 4 areas of Pulianthope in Chennai Metropolitan City. Formation of Self Help Group is
the initial step for implementation of all the proposed programme activities viz. awareness creation, capacity building, social mobilisation, health camps and campaigns, provision of infrastructural facilities and so on. Out of the total number of 4,000 households, 1200 number of women have joined Self Help Groups (SHGs) through weekly savings. Hence the researcher treated the 1200 women in the SHGs as the universe.

To make the sample more representative, stratified (Proportionate) random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample cases. Twenty five per cent of the universe i.e. 300 women out of 1200 numbers were selected as sample cases for the present study.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Households and Self Help Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>No. of Self Help Groups</th>
<th>No. of women</th>
<th>Selection of sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dr. Ambedkar Nagar</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sastri Nagar</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thiruvika Nagar</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>VOC Nagar</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3836</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>1200</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.9 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

i. Interview Schedule

For the purpose of the study, the Researcher used structured interview schedule in the areas of demography, awareness on issues related to water
supply, sanitation, health, decision-making levels and indicators for measuring self, group and overall empowerment. In order to frame the interview schedule, the following steps were followed. A list of areas and issues has been identified for the purpose of the study. These were carefully scrutinised from the point of view of operational feasibility. All possible questions were formulated on these areas and issues.

In one of the faculty forums conducted by Dr. Maitreyi Krishnaraj (NIRD, 1991), a set of different concepts were discussed and came out with the following six statements on empowerment that clarify the concept of empowerment. This discussion was based on the 'Delphi panel of questionnaire' sent by Dr. Santa Rajagopal of the Avinashalingam Institute of Home Science, Coimbatore. The six statements given below, more or less, clarify the concept of empowerment discussed in the present study.

i. Empowerment means giving power to people. This means develop a sense of autonomy and self-confidence in managing their lives.

ii. Empowerment to women means freedom to use their physical and mental capabilities to the fullest for their own well being as well as those of society.

iii. Empowerment to women would mean providing adequate powers and status and also self-confidence to women so that they can fight against deprivations of all kinds of social discrimination and abuse.

iv. Empowerment to women means the process by which women as a group become more independent, particularly in economic matters and their authority in decision-making in the family is increased.
Empowerment to women means making them conscious of their rights, enabling them to take decisions by themselves, developing confidence in themselves as individuals and as members in the society.

Empowerment to women means the removal of feeling of helplessness in themselves, the investing of power to act on their own behalf, to resist exploitation that degraded them.

The scale employed in the study is similar to that of Likert Scale (Nacmias and Nacmias, 1981). A set of statements was pooled and final set of items were chosen. The basis for pooling the indicators consisted of five areas.

i. Awareness about the objectives and activities of the CDD WATSAN programme.

ii. Decision-making levels of husband, wife or both

iii. Self empowerment levels

iv. Group empowerment levels

v. Overall women's empowerment in the fields of education, economic, environmental and health aspects.

The first part in the scale had 33 dichotomous questions with 'Yes' or 'No' answers by giving values 1 and 0 related to awareness about the objectives and activities of the CDD WATSAN programme, Self Help Groups formed and knowledge related to diarrhoea control and management, nutrition, environmental sanitation, departments concerned, community structure formed and their role.

The second section related to decision-making had 31 items with three options that express a wide range of responses related to four dimensions
grouped as

i. Aspects related to children's education
ii. Physical aspects
iii. Economic aspects
iv. Socio-cultural aspects

Three-point continuum, weights of 0, 1 and 2 were assigned to determine the decisions taken by the husband, wife or both.

The third section related to self-empowerment had 16 items that express a wide range of responses. Each item calls for checking one of three fixed alternative expressions such as 'Great extent', 'less extent' and 'Not at all'. In this three-point continuum, weights of 3, 2, 1 were assigned. The five dimensions of self-empowerment component were grouped as

i. Improvement in health and environmental condition
ii. Self-development
iii. Self-reliance
iv. Increase in socio-economic status
v. Overall self empowerment.

The fourth section on group empowerment had also three options for answers with 'Agree', 'No comment' and 'Disagree' with assigning weights of 3, 2 and 1. The five dimensions grouped under this component were

i. Group solidarity
ii. Group coherence
iii. Group savings
iv. Group integrity
v. Overall group empowerment.

The fifth section related to overall empowerment were grouped into five dimensions related to

i. Education
ii. Economic
iii. Health
iv. Environmental sanitation
v. Overall women's empowerment, with 'Strongly agree', 'Agree', 'No comment', 'Disagree', 'Strongly disagree' and assigned with weights of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1.

The scales were developed using the above mentioned indicators visualised by Reddy G.N. and Ramana Rao (1995)^4 and also based on the researcher's experience in the implementation of the programme as the Programme Coordinator. Discussions and consultations were held with the CD staff of TNSCB, experts, and the NGOs who were involved in the process of empowerment.

ii. Reliability

The reliability tool for measuring the attitude of women towards the programme after applying Spearman Brown formula is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness creation</td>
<td>0.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>0.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self empowerment</td>
<td>0.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group empowerment</td>
<td>0.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall empowerment</td>
<td>0.828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iii. Sources of Data

The data from primary source like interview schedule and participant observation were used in the study.

Care was taken to avoid complex items, ambiguous statements and vague items. In order to extract valid data and to provide a congenial atmosphere for women to answer all the items, the researcher personally collected the data. The schedules were also translated into local language (Tamil) to facilitate clear understanding of each statement by the respondents.

iv. Pre-testing

The interview schedule was pre-tested in the field and necessary changes have been made in terminology and deleted questions, which were irrelevant.

3.10 COLLECTION OF DATA

The researcher administered the interview schedule during face to face interaction with the respondents. The respondents were interviewed during their leisure time. The average number of schedules completed in a day was six and the time taken for each schedule was approximately forty-five minutes. The researcher also used participant observation method as a Programme Coordinator in the process of achieving the objectives of the programme.

3.11 STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

The data collected at primary levels were computerised and programmed to get logically consistent inferences. The computerised data
with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was analysed and tables generated. The data were tabulated keeping in view of the objectives of the study. Simple cross tables were prepared, analysed and interpreted accordingly. The statistical techniques, namely, 'Z', Chi-square, correlation and One Way Analysis of Variance (F) tests were applied in addition to mean, median and standard deviation in the present study.

3.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is area specific and the use of sampling has a limitation as the data may not be representative of the universe. This micro study, however, can be considered as a model which can be replicated in other areas by adopting similar strategies and approaches. The study does not aim at an evaluation of the programme. Evaluation is a much wider task which needs to be collected and analysed on the types of data against baseline. Though it is a micro study, it is useful and futuristic as it deals with various aspects of empowerment of women and intervention strategies adopted by Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board and Non Governmental Organisations. It is also useful for the practitioners, planners and academicians to learn the techniques to be adopted while proposing any developmental programmes.

3.13 CHAPTERISATION

The entire thesis is divided into five chapters.

Chapter I deals with the introduction. In this chapter, an attempt is made to explain the women's situation in socio-historical context in the Third World countries. Besides, various intervention strategies adopted to improve the status of women in India are also discussed.
Chapter II deals with the review of literature. The reviewed literature is grouped under conceptual framework, theoretical framework and related studies on women's empowerment through Self Help Groups.

Chapter III deals with the background of the problem, significance and scope of the study, objectives, hypothesis, operational definitions, research design, tools of data collection and tools of data analysis.

Chapter IV deals with the analysis of field data. In this chapter, an attempt is made to interpret the statistical data on measuring women's empowerment in relation to five components viz., awareness on CDD WATSAN programme, decision-making, self empowerment, group empowerment and overall empowerment of the respondents.

Chapter V deals with summary of findings of the study and conclusions drawn were presented. In this chapter, an attempt is made to identify the potentiality of the issues for recommendation for further research. On the basis of this empirical study, a strategy for the urban model for women's empowerment through formation of Self Help Groups has been evolved.
REFERENCES


