Chapter 3
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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION:

This is an exploratory analytical study intended to research the issue of "Health and Social Status of An Ageing Population – A Comparative study of Urban and Rural Bangalore. The scope of this work is confined to Anekal village, Bangalore Rural and Banashankari of Bangalore Urban.

Social research involves the use of scientific method to analyze and understand social phenomena. It is a systematic study of the problem and issues relating to the society. Another aim of the social research is to add new facts and principles relating to social realities. Pauline. V. Young defines: “Social research is a systematic method of exploring, analyzing and conceptualizing social life in order to extend, correct, or verify knowledge”. He considers research to be analytical and fact finding and designed to test out new methods.
The researcher has to be objective and systematic in analyzing data. It is not easy to conduct research objectively, objectivity being an important feature of scientific research. To be objective is to do justice to the task of achieving total objectivity which may be difficult to obtain. This is due to the complexity of social phenomena and the bias that operates at the researcher's level. Adding to the difficulty is another contributory factor, that of subjectivity of the researcher who belongs to the society and is likely to be influenced by certain personal biases and prejudices.

The complexity of social phenomena is the most crucial factor associated with objectivity. It is true that a deep knowledge of the subject is essential but equally essential and imperative is the spirit of objectivity.

At the very outset, the researcher would like to emphasize the research methodology adopted in this research investigation. The nature of information required for the present study has determined the nature and operation of this methodology. The nature of data
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has affected the selection of specific methods of data collection, interpretation and analysis. True to the objectives of the present research work, the study has employed a methodology stressing both the qualitative and quantitative data. Details of the methodology are provided in the following pages.

The present research work proposes to collect and analyze the data systematically, in a vital area of "Health and Social Status of An Ageing Population - A Comparative study of Urban and Rural Bangalore. This study is also intended shed light on the nature of health problems, their socio economic status and educational standards. Such information would help in the process and evolving future development programmes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To systematically understand and analyze health, socio-economic and psychological status of the aged from among the Bangalore urban and rural populations is studied, comparing and
contrasting the two target groups in terms of important socio-economic, demographic, psychological and cultural variables with a view to developing a specific program of interventions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

As mentioned before, the present study intends to critically look into the health and social status of ageing population – a comparative study of Bangalore rural and urban areas. Keeping this broad objective in mind the following specific goals are examined and achieved:

1. The health profile of the study population with specific references to
   • Morbidity profile
   • Health care availability and utilization.

2. Investigation of the social profile of the study populations with specific reference to
   • Social participation
• Social support

• Participation of elders in decision making process at home

• Availability of geriatric services in the study area

• Attitudes of younger generations towards geriatric populations.

3. Identification of factors associated with adverse health and social status among the aged.

4. Study of the economic status of the aged persons, as determined by
A) The ability of the aged to do work and
B) Personal economic security of the aged.

5. Suggestions for a comprehensive programme of interventions for the welfare of the aged.
RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Keeping these broad objectives in mind following hypotheses are formed to test them in the field:

H1. The Problems of the aged in both rural and urban area of Karnataka are more severe than those of the other age cohorts.

H2. The economic conditions of the urban aged are worse than those of the rural aged.

H3. Government programmes for the welfare of the aged populations do not reach a large section of the needy aged populations.

H4. Family as a social institution has lost its functionality in providing proper care to its elders. This is more so in the case of urban families, as compared to rural families in the study area.
H5. With the magnitude and diversity of the problems of the aged in Karnataka, the aged homes in their present form are not highly functional.

H6. The aged individuals in their twilight hours of life suffer from a sense of insecurity exposed as they are to the psychological distress, financial vulnerability and physiological and health-related problems, all put together.

In Social research one does not know the possible answer before hand, but seeks to discover and proceed accordingly to reach the objectives. In scientific research a new discovery is to be made but one cannot proceed in complete ignorance; rather he must have some ideas as to the new aspects that are likely to be discovered. Then the next logical step would be to know and find out whether the ideas conceived are true. Here we may find that the results may be totally correct or only partially correct, but these results do help us to correct ourselves. The primary idea guiding us in our study is termed as hypotheses. George A. Lundberg defines: “A hypothesis
is a tentative generalization, the validity of which remains to be tested. In its most elementary stage the hypotheses may be any hunch, guess, imaginative idea, which becomes the basis for action or investigation."

The above definition underlines the fact the basic nature of research in human sciences is ‘probabilistic’ rather than ‘absolutistic’ in orientation. Hence many conclusions depend on the inferences.

However, it cannot be held as unusual in scientific research, especially in micro studies, to test the hypotheses statistically by means of finding the level of significance and by other suitable statistical techniques. This study has adopted the method of qualitative analysis of the data rather than employing statistical devices to test the study hypotheses. Hence ‘testing of hypotheses’ is carried out by way of analyzing and interpreting the coded and tabulated data on various objectives stated earlier in this chapter.
STUDY UNIVERSE AND STUDY SAMPLE

A. UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

Bangalore is the capital city of Karnataka State. One Hobli of Bangalore Rural and one Residential area of Bangalore urban is taken as the field area for collecting the data for this research. The reasons why Bangalore has been preferred are; Bangalore city is a mixed culture where in people from all walks of life reside and is one of the fast growing metropolitan cities.

B. STUDY SAMPLE

The study was conducted in Sarjapura Hobli, which is situated in Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Rural and Banashankari area of Bangalore Urban. The study sample consisted of two groups of the aged, namely, aged population sub-samples of both rural and urban elders. Stratified random sampling method has been used for geriatric populations based on Gender, Education Status, Place of
residence, Socio-economic status in relation to respondents’ dependence/independence within the family environment.

**STRUCTURE OF THE SAMPLE**

![Diagram of sample structure]

**RESEARCH TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION:**

Without data there can be no ground for investigation. Data are the core of the science of statistics. In order to apply statistical method to any type, it is necessary that statistical data be collected.
because no statistical analysis is possible in the absence of any quantifying data. Therefore, it becomes essential at first to collect facts and figures.

A research work of this nature requires the support of both qualitative and quantitative data from the field for its in-depth analysis and for drawing meaningful conclusions. In other words, to test the hypotheses stated earlier, intense, field-based and generalisable needed data are collected. The techniques of data collection in the present study are of two types

1. Primary Data and

2. Secondary Data

**Primary Data: -**

The data have been collected from the primary sources, i.e., the data collected by the researcher with the help of personal interviews of the study sample and pre-tested, open-ended interview schedule. Additional qualitative data came from observation made by the researcher during fieldwork and selected case reports.
Secondary Data:

Documentary sources comprise material that are already collected and include sources like books, and reports of surveys relating to the present research work.

Secondary data are obtained through the information available in the libraries in the form of literature survey through books, journal articles, district and state gazetteers, earlier research works, some related reports and records and other studies made in this area.

The field sources or primary data collected in the present study employed two distinct tools, which are as follows:

1. Individual Interview with the help of partially open ended, structural schedule with questions.

2. Observation by the researcher of the respondents in terms of their health, socio-economic, cultural and educational background.
The present study has used interview as the main technique to gather data in a systematic way. Interview technique was considered most suitable for the present research study as, it helped the researcher gain insight and test the stated hypotheses; secondly, in the present research context, it assisted the researcher to see the world from the interviewees' point of view; thirdly, it also helped the researcher get additional data whenever required. This partial structural open-ended interview schedule of the present study helped the investigator to cover the research area in a systematic way. The structured question in the interview schedule was also helpful in collecting quantitative data in a coded form and presenting it in the tabular form in a systematic manner.

**TABULAR PRESENTATION OF DATA**

Facts expressed in quantitative form inevitably result in a great many numbers, and unless these numbers are presented in some organized manner, their significance is easily lost. Tabular form is therefore, a universal method of presenting statistical data.
The present study involved the method of tabular presentation of quantitative data. The data in the present form was classified and examined for homogeneity and heterogeneity. Statistical data filled with so many mixed elements helped in solving the problem. Classification is the process of arranging data into groups or classes, according to resemblances and similarities. It lends the value of certainty to the data. The advantages of the tabular form may be readily understood by comparing the data with the data in the paragraphs, for both the table and the paragraphs contain the same information. In the table, the same result is accomplished with much less repetition, since the caption at the head of each column applies to all the figures in that column.

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

The required data to meet the study objectives was obtained from the heads of the families especially from elders with an interview schedule, which contains both the recorded and open-ended questions. A standard social science technique of analyzing
research data, on the basis of available sociological theories and studies was made use of in the analysis of the study data.

Data collected through interview and supported by observations made by the researcher, have been systematically presented for analysis in the following chapters. The quantitative data collected are codified and presented in the tabular form. The tables, according to standard social science research practice, are further developed into comparative tables to carry out analysis and interpretation of results.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Planning services for the aged would require information and an analysis of the existing situation. There is therefore, a need to study the health and social problems faced by the aged populations in rural India with the ultimate aim of providing some form of adequate service to cater to the needs of this special group. Such a study of the aged should focus on a specific area to include a health profile assessment, economic evaluation, cultural and social
assessment since the care of the aged is a critical area representing an increasingly important social responsibility of this heterogeneous society. The study is all the more important because it is comparative in nature matching two distinct groups – the aged population in a metropolis contrasted with the aged population in a rural area.

**WORKING DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS COMMONLY USED IN THE STUDY:**

Certain concepts and terms need to be defined before the study data are examined, analyzed and interpreted to arrive at appropriate conclusions.

*Age:*

Following the vast literature available in demography, age for the present purpose, is defined as the number of completed years, elapsed since the birth of the individual. It is well known that the age structure represents one of the fundamental characteristics of population composition.
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Ageing:

Ageing is an ongoing process and can be defined in chronological terms or in terms of biological, psychological and social factors. Chronological age as a marker of growth and development is imprecise. Ageing is the process of becoming older that is genetically determined and environmentally modulated. It is also a process of growing old or maturing.

Ageism:

Ageism is defined here as "any attitude, action, or institutional structure, which subordinates a person or group because of age or any assignment of roles in society purely on the basis of age".