Chapter : 2

METHODS ADOPTED IN THE RESEARCH

Research is an art of scientific investigation. It is an academic activity and as such the term, research should be used in a technical sense. The Advanced Learner's Dictionary narrates research as: "A careful investigation or inquiry specially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge".¹

Research Methodology is a way to solve the research problem systematically. Methodology denotes the methods or techniques used in the study undertaken by a researcher. Without such methodology the results are likely to be undependable and defective. Research method comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solution; collecting, organizing and evaluation of data; making deduction
and reaching conclusions and carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. In fact, research is a voyage of discovery, it is a movement from unknown to the known; hence research is an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement.

A researcher has to know not only research methods but also research methodology. It is necessary for the researcher to know the assumptions underlying various methods, the criteria by which certain methods and procedures are applicable to certain problems while others will not. In otherwords, a researcher should have wisdom to design his methodology for his research problem, as the same method may differ from problem to problem. As such research methodology is multidimensional and it works like torchlight for the
researcher to reach his goal. Hence, while discussing research methodology we also discuss about the research methods coupled with logic behind those methods. In this process, both expositions of the theoretical assumptions and conceptual framework are go hand in hand. The basic methods followed in my thesis are philosophical as my primary source material depends on the writings of Sri Narayana Guru. For the purpose of this proposed study, Historical Analytical, Descriptive and Comparative methods are adopted.

i. Historical Method

Historical method is an integral part of any research in social sciences more so in philosophy. It is because one has to observe the past developments of a concept or a system for the proper conclusion to be arrived at. The study of historical facts through books,
records or movements is an inevitable duty of a researcher.

In my thesis, I have dealt with historical material in many contexts. I have followed historical method in chapter 4 & 5 wherein I have depicted the picture of social background of Kerala, its Aryanization, its caste structure, the condition of low caste people etc.

ii. Analytical Method

The Analytical method consists of an indepth and detailed exposition and analysis of a concept explained by different thinkers. It is all through study or analysis of a concept with multidimensional approaches. Different thinkers have interpreted social philosophy as a unique branch of philosophy which aims at harmony, peace and tranquility in humankind. Such ideas are collected and analyzed in this study. In fact, in this
method the researcher has to use facts or information already available and analyse these, to make a critical evaluation of the material. One of the difficulties with this method is that the social issues like caste, occupation, religion and race etc., may create not only confusion but also lead to chaos in the society, since they lack logic in making such artificial divisions. However, I have twisted this method and given orientation to analyse the social structure, the principles of social change and reconstruction of human society along the line of spiritual globalization as envisaged by Sri Narayana Guru.

iii. Descriptive Method:

Descriptive method is a tool or technique of describing the state of affairs of facts or concepts or a system. The researcher has no control over the variables and can only report what has happened or what is
happening. This also helps in identifying the factors that may explore fresh opportunities of the research. I have used this method in describing the role of SNDP in social change, Sri Narayana Guru's conception of 'One caste, One Religion and One God', Narayana Guru's notion of universal Religion, Industrialization and social justice, the conditions of low caste people before Narayana Guru, their social, political, economic and religious inequalities etc.

iv. Comparative Method:

Comparative method has occupied an important position in research methodology recently. Comparative philosophy, comparative religion and the like studies have played important role in contemporary to mould our thinking as well as social pattern.
This method is an attempt to compare the growth, working as well as problems of similar institutions functioning in the same as well as different societies. No social problem is permanent since society keeps on changing as and when the people of that society changes. Keeping in view of social turmoil during Narayana Guru's period, a comparative account of the sociatal realities is given in order to pave way for the establishment of just and equal society so that peace and harmony can be established on this planet. While doing this process, a recent ideology has emerged which is befitting to the spiritio-social philosophy of Sri Narayana Guru which is nearer to 'Vasudaiva kutumba' concept i.e., spiritual globalization. The concept of one caste, one Religion and one God of Narayana Guru is virtually what exactly we mean by spiritual globalization. Thus comparative method has yielded fruit to arrive at a holistic conclusion in my present study.
Foot notes:


Birth Place of Sri. Narayana Guru