CHAPTER - III

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Research is the application of scientific method to either establish new theory, laws and principles or to verify the existing theories, laws and principles with the help of different branches of knowledge or to solve human problems. Educational research is mainly applied type in nature, and the necessity. First, it follows an interdisciplinary approach. Second, solving educational problems in the context of teaching, learning, examination, evaluation and such other domain draws the attention of researchers to accomplish excellence as envisaged by the NPE (1986) and its revision in 1992.

In the words of Travers (1985), “Educational Research is that activity which is directed towards the development of a science of behaviour in educational situation which is to provide knowledge that will permit educator to achieve his goals by the most effective methods”.

Research begins with a selection of research problem. After the selection of a problem, it is defined and delimited looking at its importance and different constraints. Therefore, scientific approach is followed to formulate objective, hypothesis, data collection, data analysis and drawing conclusions.

In the words of Kaul (1999), “Research methods are of utmost importance in search process. They describe the various steps of the plan of
attack to be adopted in solving a research problem, such as the manner in which the problems are formulated, the definition of terms, the choice of subjects of investigation, the validation of data gathering tools, the addiction, analysis and inter prediction of data and the processes of inferences and generalization.”

Thus, methodology means the set of method used for a study or action in a particular subject. Research methodology means the set of research methods used for a particular study. It refers to the plan of action for the examination of a particular research problem from different dimensions for the accomplishment of the set objectives. Methodology of a research problem is the science of studying the pros and cons of the research problem depending or logically the huge stock of knowledge and experiences.

Briefly, research problem includes the research design, i.e. preparing the blueprint for doing research. The logic behind every design used by the researcher must be relevant to the study. In the present study description survey method was applied to accomplish the objectives formulated for the same.

3.1 DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY METHOD:

The descriptive survey method of educational research is very common. It is that method of investigation which attempts to describe and interpret what exists at present in the form of conditions, practices, processes, trends, effects, attitudes, beliefs etc. It is concerned with the phenomena that are typical of the normal conditions. It is investigates into
the conditions or relationship that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs, points of view or attitudes that are held, processes that are going on, influences that are being felt and trends that are developing. It deals with a crease section of the present, of duration sufficient for examination—that is present time, not the present moment.

The descriptive research method has undoubtedly been the most popular and most widely used research method in education. A researcher can gather information in terms of an individual’s opinion about some issue, by a simple questionnaire. At times, descriptive survey is the only means through which opinions, attitudes, suggestions for improvement of educational practices and instruction, and other data can be obtained. It also provides the background ideas and data from which many more refined or controlled studies of casual relations are made. However, looking at the nature and characteristics, the present study demands descriptive survey method.

3.2 DESIGN OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

The present investigation falls under descriptive survey research due to its nature and characteristics. The very purpose of the investigation was not to develop a body of organized knowledge but to focus on problems and issues of child labour reflected in Kamrup District, Assam. Both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of data as per objectives constituted the prime effort of the researcher. For this purpose purposive random sampling technique was applied to obtain information. The present study intended to
study the situation of street child labourers from their different dimension and to locate the main functions of such problems. The ultimate intention of present study is to design paradigm of action to solve such problems in Kamrup District. Hence, it would be helpful to the Govt. of Assam in its decision making process to bring reforms and take necessary steps for rehabilitation of child labourers.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE:

Population of the present study constituted all the child labourers of Kamrup District of Assam. Since there is no official information on the exact number of child labourers available, purposive sampling has been preferred and contact has been established with the child labourers by meeting them. All the vulnerable places like hotels, garages, bus stands, factories, houses etc. have been visited by the investigator to select the sample. 300 child labourers have been taken as sample for the present study comprising child labourers of the age group 5-14 years (both boys and girls).

3.4 SELECTION OF SAMPLE:

Purposive sampling method was used to undertake the present study. For the study 300 child labourers of the age group of 5-14 years were randomly selected to obtain the required information. Out of these 300 child labourers the researcher has classified them into six categories – Working as bus handymen, domestic helpers, garage workers, factory workers, working in hotels and working in shops.
3.5 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION:

The instrument employed for collecting data are known as tools. The selection of suitable instruments or tools is of vital importance for carrying out successful research. A researcher requires many data gathering tools or techniques which may vary in their complexity, design, administration and interpretation. Each tool is appropriate for the collection of certain type of evidence or information. The researcher has to select from the available tools which provides data he requires for the testing of the hypotheses. The major data gathering tools of research may be broadly classified into questionnaires, observation, Interview Schedule, psychological tests, sociometric techniques etc.

However, the following tools were used for the purpose of gathering the relevant data for the present study:

1. Interview Schedule for the child labourers
2. Interview Schedule for the parents/guardians of the child labourers
3. Interview Schedule for the employers of the child labourers
4. Informal discussion with the social workers and NGO's involved in the welfare and rehabilitation of child labourers.
5. Observation sheet
6. Specific Case Study Performa to supplement the primary data.
3.5.1 Interview Schedule for the child labourers:

The interview is a process of communication or interaction in which the subject or the interviewee gives the needed information verbally in a face to face situation. Although the interview is generally associated with counseling or psychotherapy, it can be used effectively to collect useful information about individuals in many research situations. It is the backbone of any successful research investigation. It is generally adopted as a method to offset the limitations of the questionnaire.

With a skillful interviewer, the interview is often superior to other data gathering devices, as a research technique. The interview is a conversation carried out with the definite purpose of obtaining certain information by means for the spoken word. The investigator explains the purpose of investigation and can explain more clearly about what information he wants. In case of misinterpretation of question by the subject the interviewer may follow it with a clarifying question. At the same time, he may reevaluate the sincerity and insight of the interviewee. Interview requires the actual physical proximity of two or more persons and generally requires that all the normal channels of communication be open to them.

However, for the present study, Interview Schedule was used as the main tool to obtain the required information for the perception of child labour. Interview schedule for the child labourers was constructed by the researcher to undertake the present investigation. The fundamental components of the questionnaire were sorted out on the basis of research
studies, literature analysis, discussion with experts and observation of the researcher himself. However, it dealt with the child’s family background, educational status, work life, basic needs as well as important facts about their hopes, life planning, ambition and the like. The interview schedule for the child labourers consists of 2 sections namely, A. Pre-Work Life of the Child and B. Work Life of the Child. There are total 44 items included in this interview schedule.

3.5.2 Interview Schedule for the parents/guardians of the child labourers:

Interview Schedule for the parents/guardians of the child labourers was constructed by the researcher to collect information relating to the parents family condition, economic status, education, their future planning for the child etc. There are 28 items in the interview schedule for the parents.

3.5.3 Interview Schedule for the employers of the child labourers:

Interview Schedule for the employers of the child labourers was constructed by the researcher to gather information regarding wages paid to the child, work timing, facilities provided to the child and reason of preferring child labourers. This schedule is consisted of 21 items.

3.6 BASE FOR SELECTING ITEMS:

On the basis of analysis of literature, previous research studies, opinion of subject experts in the concerned field and personal observation of the researcher, the researcher selected the necessary items for preparing the tools. Items were classified and categorized under 3 major aspects i.e., social, economic and educational. The statements were arranged logically in terms of each aspect. Hence, the preliminary drafts of interview schedules for child
labourers, parents of the child labourers and employers of the child labourers were made ready with 55 items. The drafts were presented to 5 subject experts of the concerned field. Personal meeting of the investigator with the subject expert was arranged for discussion about each item incorporated in the Interview Schedule. On the basis of the reaction, opinions and suggestions of the subject experts, the items covered under three major aspects and necessary modifications were made as per requirement. Hence, at the end of initial number of 55 items got reduced to 43 items in the final draft of the interview schedule for child labourers, 26 items in the interview schedule for parents of the child labourers and 17 items for the interview schedule for the employers of the child labourers.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULES:

The interview schedules possess both the face validity and content validity. Looking at the interview schedule tools one can say without any hesitation that it is meant for assessing social, economic and educational aspects of child labourers. Moreover, different research studies, literature, opinion and suggestions obtained from the subject experts as well as own experience of the investigator advocate the very content of the interview schedule. Reliability of the interview schedule was determined by test re-test method.

The interview schedule was locally standardized to realize the specific purpose. However, for the other researchers and especially in the context of outside Kamrup District such interview schedule may not serve the purpose. Hence, its use is prohibited without modification and standardization.
3.8 CASE STUDY:

The case study is potentially the most valuable method known for obtaining a true and comprehensive picture of individuality. It makes an intensive investigation on the complex factors that contribute to the individuality of a social unit. The unit may be a person, family, group, social institution or community. It is a form of qualitative analysis involving the very careful and complete observation of a person, situation or an institution.

Case study is an analysis of complex causation. It probes deeply and analyzes interaction between the factors that explain present status or that influence change or growth. Undoubtedly, case studies used for guidance purposes can lead to the derivation of relationships that have a bearing on research and vice versa. It is obviously an important source of educational ideas. Here, the investigator employed observation by himself or his informants regarding physical characteristics, social qualities or behaviour of the case being studied.

3.8.1 Case Study Performa:

Presentation of the case study is very important to know about the social reality. In this study the investigator presented few case studies to present the real situation of the child labourers. The investigator prepared questions in the performa. Variables such as social behaviour, situation, economic conditions and background of child labourers were included in the case study performa. The performa contained questions relating to personal details of the respondents. The questions were asked in such a way that would help in achieving the objectives of the study.
3.9 DATA COLLECTION:

Primary as well as secondary data were collected to study and analyze the situation of child labourers. Data were collected mainly from three angles i.e. social, economic and educational to meet the objectives of the study.

At first the researcher identified those children who are working in various forms by visiting the vulnerable places like hotels, houses, shops, garages, bus stands and factories. After identification of the child labourers, the researcher tried to make a warm relationship with the child labourers. Then the researcher explained the very purpose of the investigation to the child labourers. It was told that the information supplied by them will be kept confidential and used only for research purpose.

In the same way the information schedules which were prepared for the parents/guardians of the child labourers and the employers of the child labourers were distributed. Before collecting their responses, the investigator explained the very purpose of the study. During the period of explanation and elaboration of the tools the researcher made a very informal relationship with the respondents so that they will not feel any hesitation to give their responses. Moreover, secondary data were obtained from the office record of the selected NGO’s. All official formalities were maintained during the time of data collection. Specific observations were noted down in the observation sheet whatever it was required. The data collection process was continued till the month of October, 2011.