CHAPTER V

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Having analyzed the problems of widows and the objectives and the hypotheses of the study in the first chapter, the present chapter is devoted to the research design adopted for the study.

5.1. Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data were used for the analysis of the problems faced by widows. The main sources of secondary data were published materials, particularly Population Census Report, District Gazetteer, District Statistical Reports etc. The primary data was collected from all the widow's households by means of Census method.

5.2. Selection of Naidu Community

The Naidu Community (Kamma and Baliya) listed 'forward' socially and economically by the Government of Tamilnadu were found predominantly in the study area. They follow certain norms in their treatment of widows. With a view to find out the changes that have occurred to the status of widows, the widows belonging to Naidu community was purposely chosen for this study. So it is a case study of widows belonging to Naidu Community.
5.3. Three Generations of Widows

To find out the change in the social and economical status of widows, three generations of widows were chosen. The younger generation of widows belong to the age group of 15 to 35 years, middle-aged generation of widows to the age group of 36-50 years and older generation of widows to the age group of 51 years and above. Initially, the researcher planned to choose households which had all the three generations of widows. However, it was found difficult to locate such households. Therefore, three generations of widows were chosen from different age groups and from different households from the study area.

5.4. Location of the Study Area

Walajapet Taluk, belonging to Vellore District, of Tamil Nadu, India, forms the area of the study. Walajapet Taluk has 105 villages, which are divided into 6 Firkhas. Out of 105 villages, only 38 villages have Naidu Community dwellers. Therefore, all the 38 villages were chosen.

As the Naidu Community people are agriculturists, they live in the rural areas. Hence, the study is restricted to the Naidu widows from rural areas.

Firkhas – Revenue Villages.
5.5. Selection of Widows

For selecting three generations of Naidu widows, the following criteria was adopted to identify the widow's households.

1. The respondents should be a Hindu.
2. The respondents should belong to Naidu Community.
3. The respondents should be a widow belonging to one of the three generations.

A preliminary survey was conducted to locate the households with widows. Altogether 340 Naidu widows' households were identified from 38 villages, and all the 340 were included in the study. Since all the Naidu widows were chosen for the study, the method used is the Census method.

The distribution of 340 widows' households among 38 Naidu community inhabited villages is given in table No. 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Firkhas</th>
<th>No. of Villages where Naidus found</th>
<th>No. of Widows Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walajapet</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sholinghur</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Velam</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Visharam</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Melpadi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ranipet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>340</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data Collected from the Respondents of Walajapet Taluk
5.6. Census Method

The selected Naidu widows were post-stratified into three generations viz. Young, Middle and Old. The number of widows included in each generation is given in table 5.2.

Table No. 5.2

Distribution of Selected Widows among Various Generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Young generation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>29.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Middle-aged generation</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>33.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Older generation</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>37.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from the Respondents

5.7. Collection of Data

Naidu widow's households forms the ultimate unit of study. Pre-tested, structured interview schedule was used to collect the required information from the widows. The following details were collected from them. Personal identification, family details, details about their husband and his family background, details about social status of widows, details about economic status of widows, attitude of widows and others towards widows, problems faced by the widows, awareness of Government schemes, expectation from
relatives, society and Government. The non-verbal communications made by the respondents, while interviewing, were observed and recorded.

A specimen copy of the Interview Schedule for collection of details is attached in the Annexure.

5.8. Framework of Analysis

The major variables used in the study are as follows:

1. Independent variable-age, occupation.

2. Infrastructure variable-house property left by the husband.

3. Background variable-husband's occupation and his income.


5. Economic variable-occupation, income, family pension, family income, dependency, decision-making.

6. Attitudinal variable-attitude towards the status of Naidu widows in the Hindu society, remarriage of Hindu widows.

5.9. Life History of Selected Widows

In order to have a deeper insight into the status of widows, a study of the life history of a few widows, chosen from three generations, was made.

5.10. Tools of Analyzis

The collected data was analyzed and interpreted with the help of the following statistical tools - Descriptive Analysis (percentages), Averages and
Standard Deviation, Correlation Analysis, Chi-Square Test, and Scaling Technique.

Graphs and diagrams were used wherever necessary to make the points clear.

5.11. Period of Study

The study period relates to the year 1998 - 99.

The analysis and interpretation of the data are presented in Chapter-VI.