Chapter- IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the multiple contexts of violence in the lives of married women who have been exposed to domestic violence, and specifically those women who had complained with formal organization regarding domestic violence inflicted on them by their family members. By reviewing current literature in an Indian context, it became evident that there is a shortage of research or no research conducted on victims of domestic violence in Himachal Pradesh. In considering this factor researcher decided that this research would be a unique and necessary area to examine.

This study also explores how these women reflect on and make sense of their exposure to violence. This process will bring females who have been exposed to domestic abuse into the discussion, into the construction of meaning in their lives, and the research agenda. While studying and understanding different experiences and, common experiences, and including these voices within the research agenda, provided an opportunity to fully understand the multiple contexts of violence. It would help to understand the factors responsible for it in the lives of female who have been exposed to domestic violence and their coping mechanism and reasons continuing/not continuing in such relationship.

In 2010-11 out of total cases registered 276 cases were reported by the women of Kangra district and ranked first among the district of Himachal Pradesh. Moreover, domestic violence rarely arouses the social concern it deserves. Aggressive behaviour on the part of husband and in-laws towards women is largely overlooked owing to
traditional notion arising from the patriarchal family structure. Domestic violence against women has shown an increasing trend over the years in this state. As per report, Himachal Pradesh ranks 10th in cognizable crimes and 18th in the total incidence and rates of crimes against women in national level. The existence of domestic violence has been viewed by the Nobel Laureate, Amrtya Sen as a fundamental barrier to development.

In view of the stated rationale, the researcher has made an attempt to analyze the social problem with following objectives:

4.2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

1. To study the nature and extent of domestic violence against women.
2. To study the various factors responsible for domestic violence
3. To trace the reasons for which abused women continue to stay in an abusive relationship and reasons for not staying in such relationships.
4. To understand the coping patterns and abilities.
   - Strategies adopted to counter abuse.
   - Help seeking behaviour of victims.
5. To suggest measures to control, minimize and if possible elimination of domestic violence against women.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.3.1 Area, Universe and Units of the Study

The study was conducted in Himachal Pradesh and it covered cases of domestic violence that have been registered by women with -

a) Protection Officers of four blocks, i.e. Rait, Nurpur, Kangra and Dharamshala blocks of Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh.
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b) Police Stations within four blocks, i.e. Rait, Nurpur, Kangra and Dharamshala blocks of Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh.

c) Service Provider/NGOs that are working on gender issues and domestic violence or those who are providing services to the victims of violence.

The cases of domestic violence were collected from Protection Officers because Women and child welfare department is a nodal agency and all the cases registered with the police department under domestic violence were also forwarded to Protection Officers. Three NGOs are working as a service provider out of which two are working in the researcher’s research area out of which one NGO refused to share the names of victims with whom they have worked and simply said that they have forwarded the names to Protection Officers but the other NGO cooperated with the researcher and the names of the victims were collected from them.

4.3.2 Units of the Study

The study focused on woman victims who had registered cases of domestic violence with the Protection Officer. The cases registered with police station under domestic violence are available with the Protection Officer as the Women and Child Welfare Department is a nodal department in Himachal Pradesh and those who are being helped by the NGOs/Service provider were covered by the study.

4.3.3 Sampling Frame and Sampling Method

An exhaustive list of victims who have registered their cases with Protection Officers/NGOs over the past 5 years, i.e. 2007-08 to 2011-12 formed the sampling framework for the study from which the sample units were selected. A total of 200 respondents was selected from the universe, amounting 50 each from each block.
The researcher has selected the four blocks purposively because these blocks are nearer to the Central University of Himachal Pradesh. After that lottery system (random sampling) was adopted to select and interview victims of domestic violence.

4.3.4 Sample Size

A sample of 200 women who experienced domestic violence was selected from the four blocks (Rait, Nurpur, Kangra, Dharamshala) of Kangra district. About 50 respondents were selected from each block on the basis of cases registered under Domestic Violence Act in Police Station, NGOs, and with the Protection Officers of Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh. Out of 200 domestic violence cases only 183 victims were interviewed because at the time of interview researcher found that 4 of the women gave the impression of mental disturbance and their parents told that they can’t reply, and their cases were registered under Domestic Violence Act at the time of conflict between families. Out of total cases, 13 cases were related to property dispute where the aggrieved and respondent were not staying under the shared household. Therefore, only 183 women were included.

Ten Case studies were included who suffered severe act of violence by their family members.

4.4 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

The selection of data refers to the purposive gathering of information relevant to the subject matter of the study from the units under investigation. The method of data collection depends mainly upon the nature, purpose and scope of inquiry on one hand and availability of resources and time on the other. Data is classified into primary and secondary data.
Secondary data is one which is collected by some earlier agency, but is used and analyzed by any other for its own use. Secondary data are mostly published in newspaper, periodicals, journals, review of literature, census and non-official records.

Primary data are original observations collected by the researcher for the first time for some investigation. Primary sources consist of interview schedule, observation, questionnaire, etc. Keeping in mind the nature of the study the Interview Schedule and Case Study method were used.

First of all interview schedule was prepared by the researcher. After that, it was pretested on twenty respondents in the study area. After pretesting some of the questions were deleted and some new questions were added.

After pretesting and modification of the interview schedule the final version of interview schedule was used to collect the information from the respondent at their respective household, worksite wherever needed with the consent of the respondents.

4.4.1 Interview Schedule for Victims of Domestic Violence

An Interview Schedule (Appendix-1) was developed to bring forth information from victims of domestic violence which contained questions relating to the demographic profile of victims, nature and extent of violence inflicted by the abuser and faced by victims and the impact domestic violence had on them and their children, reasons for which abused women continue to stay/not stay in such an abusive relationship, factors responsible for domestic violence, coping mechanism and help seeking behaviour of the victim and the type of help received and satisfaction from that assistance. Information is collected from the victim regarding control, minimization and if possible elimination of domestic violence against women in their eyes.
4.4.2 Case Study Method

Case study method is a qualitative method that was used to investigate a single person, group, event or community through in-depth interviews during private, individual meetings. In case study method researcher selects a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true spirit, explore, investigate and describe up to date real-life phenomenon through detailed related analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. In order to describe their experiences of domestic violence in this study researcher conducted ten case studies against whom severe act of violence was done by a husband and in-laws.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

After the collection of data by using the interview schedule, the data was then edited to remove vagueness in the responses. Editing of the interview schedules was done on a daily basis for the purpose. Both quantitative and qualitative data with all possible answers was then converted into codes resulting in the development of a code book that was essential for entering the data in the computer. The data entry tabulation of data was initiated using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Cross-tabulation was done extensively in order to draw conclusions as to the possibility of a variable being related to another variable.

Ten case studies of the victims are also presented here.

4.6 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE RESEARCHER DURING DATA COLLECTION

Data collection process is full of challenges and difficulties. During data collection Police Station, Women and Child Welfare Department and NGO were visited for collecting the name of the victims who had registered a complaint for
domestic violence. The responses of police personnel were not supportive. They said
the cases were simply registered by them under Domestic Violence Act and then
forwarded to the Women and Child Welfare Department for further actions. They
criticized the Domestic Violence Act and Government for giving so many laws to
women. Further, the argument provided by them stated that “ek achi aurat ghar ki
bat ghar par hi rakhti hai use logo mai tamasha nahi banati”. Then the researcher
came to know that all the names of victims are with Protection officer and there was
no need to visit Police Stations. Moreover, when the NGOs who are working as a
Service Provider in research area were approached, the behaviour of the NGO
workers was not cooperative. One of the NGO amongst them refused to provide the
names of the victims. They straight forward denied by saying that the cases has been
sent to Protection Officer after filing the domestic incident report (DIR). So the list of
victims was collected from the protection officers and the other NGO.

The process of data collection took seven months. During the period, tracing
the victim women was further a challenge. The residence was difficult to make out
because the names of victims were available from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012 and the
data was collected during 2013-14. The addresses provided by them were not the
same where they were residing. The women who had registered their cases in 2007-10
were residing in some different places either because of compromise, divorce or re-
marriage. Even their phone numbers were not the same. The researcher had to visit
two or more than two places to meet with a single respondent in few cases. In certain
cases where the women were staying with their husbands after compromise,
interviewing them in such place was difficult because after compromise researcher’s
entry might create problems in their life. So those women were contacted through the
help of anganwadi workers. Then they were interviewed according to their wish to maintain secrecy while remaining ethically correct.

The researcher sometimes could cover only one respondent in a day because geographically the area was difficult to cover and transport facility was not available for reaching many places.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researcher feels that one of the most important ethical considerations is around the whole area of confidentiality.

Researcher was aware of how to carry out interviews and what kind of questions should be asked. Researcher did not try to influence the answers by asking leading questions and therefore influencing the responses. Findings need to be obtained in as unobtrusive, nondirective manner as possible. In relation to holding interviews Researcher felt the most important ethical considerations were to make interviewees aware of the following:

1. That their participation in the interview is entirely voluntary.
2. They are free to refuse to answer any question at any time.
3. They are free to withdraw from the interview at any time.
4. The interview will be kept strictly confidential and their name will not be recorded anywhere in this research piece.
5. They are free to choose the place for the interview where the respondents feel comfortable.

Finally, the researcher was aware that the manner in which interview was conducted could possibly influence the answers furnished by the interviewees and thus influence the findings of the research piece as a whole.