METHODOLOGY

The present study has been designed to examine the role of Life Long Learning of livelihood promotion of rural women in Theni District. This analysis was mainly based on how the Life Long Learning promotes livelihood among rural women. The research design and the procedure of the study have been described in detail. This well-planned research strategy guided the investigator in the research process. The study was conducted in select villages of Theni District. The procedure followed sample selection, description of tools and techniques, the data collection logistics and the mode of analysis which have been explained in this chapter.

3.1 Universe and Sampling

The area of the study is confined to 3 blocks (Bodinayakanur, Chinnamanur and Uthamapalayam) of Theni districts where the L3 programme was in operation for a period of three years from 2009 to 2012. SHGs were the outcome of the initial efforts of organizing the rural women; and the L3 has been the advanced form of enhancing the status of these women. Hence the focal theme of the research is to identify the impact of livelihood promotion of the L3 programme on the members in terms of asset creation and promotion status. Therefore, it was decided to have a comparative analysis of both L3 and SHG members. Accordingly, the women beneficiaries of L3 belonging to the above mentioned three blocks of Theni district and women SHG members belonging to the same area formed the target of the study.
A stratified random sampling method has been adopted to select the respondents from the study area. The women have grouped into two strata (groups) such as Self Help Group (SHGs) members and Life Long Learning (L3) members and respondents have been selected from each stratum.

Under L3 program, 2842 women were enrolled, of which there were about 232 members from Bodinayakanur, 124 from Chinnamanur and 184 from Uthamapalayam blocks, thus totaling 540 women beneficiaries have L3 and SHG programmes have been targeted for the study. Among these beneficiaries 50 percent of them were selected as sample, i.e. Bodinayakanur (116), Chinnamanur (62), and Uthamapalayam (92). Likewise from another stratum of SHG programmes from the same blocks, an equal number of the respondents (270) were selected randomly. Thus the total number of respondents consisted of 540 women, including 270 L3 members and 270 SHG members of the three blocks in Theni District.

Table 3.1 Sample selected for the L3 Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Enrolled Members of L3 programme</th>
<th>L3 Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Sample (50%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bodinayakanur</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Chinnamanur</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Uthamapalayam</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2842</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Research Design

The participatory exploratory research design has been explained in reference to various phases of the study. In phase one, the field observation was undertaken. In the second phase, information was gathered through interview schedules. The socio-economic profile as well as various components of Life Long Learning was collected. Livelihood Promotion Scale (LPS) was then administered and the promotion of rural women was assessed based on the scores obtained by them. Third phase showed the collection of further data through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Different phases were carried out to elicit qualitative information at the level of rural women and to study their livelihood promotion in a natural setting.

3.3 Participatory Explorative Research

Participatory research is a process of bringing together the knowledge and research capacities of the local farming communities with that of the commercial and scientific institutions in an interactive way. The focus of this research is to attain their livelihood promotion through learning and increase productivity. Hence the approach centers on the identification, adaptation, and use of ICT, specifically tailored to meet the needs of small, poor women farmers. This research, which was flexible and innovative, was used to involve the respondents in gathering qualitative and quantitative data from the study area.
Being an explorative design, the study analyzed the different modes of Life Long Learning that were prevalent in these blocks and the extent of their uses. The study also probed into the factors relating to the livelihood capitals of rural women. It further explored the factors that facilitated the livelihood promotion of rural women.

3.4 Description of Tools

The investigator was in the field to obtain primary data from August 2011 to September 2012. The necessary tools and techniques scientifically developed and administered in the field are cited below:

- Interview Schedule
- Livelihood Promotion Scale (LPS)
- Focus Group Discussion Format

Collecting information at the grassroots require personal rapport with the respondents. Personally administered tools have brought the researcher directly into contact with the respondents. This created an ambience of mutual trust and removed all fears and prejudices between the researcher and the respondents. So the respondents were at ease, free and frank. The rural women were more spontaneous to reveal themselves to the researcher, being a woman. Tool construction was done with care so that even the illiterate respondents would be able to grasp the meaning and respond to them.

3.4.1 Interview Schedule

Interview schedule was prepared by the researcher based on the objectives of the study. The interview schedule courses the socio-economic status of the rural women, different components of L3 program,
the essential features of L3 livelihood promotion of rural women and its interrelations between L3 and livelihood promotion programme and the enhancement of rural women in L3 programs. It also comprised of different indexes namely self help groups, solidarity and collective action, information and communication, mobile phone and landline, learning and training in entrepreneurship. A copy of the Interview Schedule is provided in the Appendix-A.

3.4.2 Livelihood Promotion Scale (LPS)

A Likert type five point scale was designed and used to obtain the data on the Life Long Learning for livelihood promotion of the rural women selected for the study. This scale was developed by the researcher, which consisted of sub-scales such as social capital, political capital, psychological capital and economical capital of rural women. The items were constructed in a self exploratory way. Each of this sub-scale contained 4 to 12 items and was translated into Tamil. The items were constructed with specificity and clarity. All that was required from the respondents was to listen to the simple statements and give their response. The English version of Livelihood Promotion Scale (LPS) is provided in Appendix-B.

The scale contains positive and negative statements. For each of the positive items on the scale is assigned a weightage ranging from five (fully agree) to one (definitely disagree). In case of negative items, the scoring scheme ranged from one (fully agree) to five (definitely disagree).
The scoring key with the positive and negative items on the scale is given in table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Fully agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No answer</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
<th>Definitely disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Items</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Items</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

It was carried out with the framed guidelines. Focus group discussion brought to light the difficulties experienced by the rural women farmers, the views of Self-Help Group representatives were also obtained through this method. Details were gathered regarding the availability and accessibility of mobile learning types of information. The focus group discussion also brought out the experiences of the members of L3. They also came up with innovative suggestions for the effective functioning of the mobile learning. It was helpful to draw an overall picture of the livelihood promotion on the lives of the rural women. The personal experience of the rural women and their sharing with others were an enriching experience for the researcher. The format of the focus group discussion is given in Appendix-C.

3.5 Pre-Test

For developing the Livelihood Promotion Scale (LPS) a pre-test was carried out in three villages for 60 women of three blocks. The pre-test had 15 statements in each subscale for LPS. As the researcher started asking questions, it became clear that the scale was too long. It took about 75
minutes to collect data from each respondent. The pretest data was processed and 20 best statements of LPS were selected on the basis of item analysis and recommendations by an expert jury. The jury consisted of three field experts, two academicians and a research specialist. Their valuable comments contributed to the shaping of the final tool. In fact pre-testing ascertained the clarity and validity of the tools for data collection.

### 3.6 Reliability

The reliability of Livelihood Promotion Scale (LPS) was determined by test-retest methods. The test was administered to sixty women. The test scores of the women in the first and second administration were correlated and a coefficient of 0.783 was obtained which were significant at 0.01 levels. In the split-half method, the women’s scores (N=60) on the odd and even items were correlated, the obtained value of $r = .65$ were significant at .01 level. Substantially high coefficients of correlation by both the methods proved the reliability of the Livelihood Promotion Scale. The correlation matrixes of Livelihood Promotion Scale are provided in table 3.3.

#### Table 3.3 Correlations of the sub scales with Livelihood Promotion Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Social Capital</th>
<th>Political Capital</th>
<th>Psychological Capital</th>
<th>Economic Capital</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Capital</td>
<td>.255**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Capital</td>
<td>.252**</td>
<td>.299**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Capital</td>
<td>.239**</td>
<td>.253**</td>
<td>.523**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>.566**</td>
<td>.711**</td>
<td>.693**</td>
<td>.714**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
3.7 Validity

The scale was constructed systematically following all the steps and subjected to content validity before it was used for data collection. Content validity was verified with the plausibility of measuring in the eyes of the researcher and of the expert jury. Suggestions and remarks given by the expert jury were taken into consideration positively and the needed changes were carried out in the Livelihood Promotion Scale (LPS) and interview schedule. There was more than 75 percent of agreement on the way the jury had responded. Therefore, it is considered valid and used for the purpose for which it was constructed.

3.8 Collection of Data

The researcher personally visited the villages selected for the study and collected the required data. The exploration began with a search for secondary sources of data. The researcher visited the nationally reputed institutions such as M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF); Dindigul, TATA Institute Social Science (TISS); Mumbai, International College of Political Science (IMPS); Mumbai, Madras School of Social Work (MSSW); Chennai, Arul Anandar College (AAC); Madurai, Non Government Organizations such as VIDIYAL, Makkal Munnetra Sangam (MMS), Green, Valam Kunnra Graama Makkal Munnetra Sangam (VKGMS), Ambelal Heinrich Memorial Trust (AHMT) and the nationalized banks such as National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Theni, etc and her discussions with experts familiarized her with the issues of rural women in India.
The purposive visits of the researcher to MSSRF collaborative units at Kannivadi, and Sempatti; and Village Knowledge Centres in Theni and Madurai sharpened and deepened the scope of the research study. The different documents and reports collected from these institutions and centres facilitated the holistic approach to the rural women; and data in the websites were systematically collected and analyzed. Monthly reports, websites, field studies, books, annual reports and group records relating to livelihood promotion of rural women have been used as secondary sources of data. In each of these efforts, the researcher made sure that the documentary sources were reliable, valid and pertinent. The livelihood promotion of rural women involved both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Administration of the interview schedule and livelihood promotion scale enabled the collection of quantitative data while focus group discussion obtained qualitative information.

3.9 Analysis of Data

The data obtained for the study were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. They were put together for the analysis attempted to bring out the need and implication of L3 components, Livelihood promotion and its related factors. The data, obtained through observation and semi-structured interviews, were analyzed qualitatively combining the methods of precision and authenticity. For processing of data, the responses were examined carefully. After screening the answer sheets, 540 scripts were available for final analysis. The measures of central tendency, dispersion, skewness and kurtosis were employed to know the nature of score distribution of the Livelihood Promotion Scale (LPS). Ranges by means of
promotion for the sub scales were analyzed on the basis of L3 and SHG membership. The association between the total promotion and a few of the key livelihood resources was analyzed using ‘chi-square’ test. The data were processed and analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. In the case of Livelihood Promotion the scoring was done following a scoring scheme prepared for the scale. The differences in the mean scores on subscales of social, economic, political and psychological capital based on their age, education, religion, caste, total years of membership and participation in training programme were tested by using ‘t’ test.