CHAPTER – III METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

- Universe and Samples of the Study
- Research Design
- Sources of Data
- Types of Data
- Description of Tools
  - Interview Schedule
  - Women Empowerment Scale (WES)
  - Panchayat Activities Index (PAI)
  - Case Study
- Reliability
- Validity
- Data Analysis
CHAPTER -III

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The present study has been designed to examine the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) and Empowerment of Dalit Women in Dindigul district. The research design and procedure of the study have been described. This is done in order to develop a well-planned research strategy necessary to guide the investigator in the research process. The field study was conducted in selected villages of Dindigul district. The procedures followed in sample selection, description of tools and techniques, the data collection logistics and the mode of analysis have been explained in this chapter.

Universe and Samples of the Study

Among the 14 blocks in Dindigul District, three blocks with highest number of Dalits namely Athoor (30752), Dindigul (50552) and Reddiyarchatram (25490) were chosen for the study. In the next stage, the Panchayats in the three blocks of the reserved constituencies with Dalit women as presidents for two subsequent periods were selected namely Thoppampatti and Pithalaipatti from Athoor block, Dharmathupatti and T.Puthupatti from Rettiyarchatram block and Pallapatti from Dindigul block. In these selected Village Panchayats, the researcher has taken 172 Self Help Group (SHG) members from each block by using systematic random sampling technique. The lists of the respondents were chosen from the respective SHGs of these village Panchayats. Thus total number of respondents was 516.
Table 3.1
Blocks and SHGs wise Distribution of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the Block</th>
<th>Name of the Reserved Panchayat</th>
<th>Number of SHGs</th>
<th>Number of SHG Groups</th>
<th>Selected Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Athoor</td>
<td>Thoppampatti Pithalaipatti</td>
<td>5496</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Reddiyarchatram</td>
<td>Dharmathupatti T. Puthupatti</td>
<td>7150</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Dindigul</td>
<td>Pallapatti</td>
<td>4190</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16838</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mahalir Thittam office, Dindigul (2010 – 2011)

Research Design

The Descriptive research design has been employed for the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used for the empirical analysis of the role of Panchayat in empowering Dalit women. For the purpose of collecting data on various dimensions of empowerment of rural Dalit women a standardized scale has been constructed and used. As a part of descriptive design, the study probed the factors relating to the dimensions of social, economic, political and psychological empowerment of Dalit women and Panchayat Activities Index of Panchayat Raj Institutions. It also explored the reasons to be focused more in the future for the integral growth and development of rural Dalit women.

Sources of Data

The main source of the data for the study were culled out from Dalit women who were the members of self help groups in the study area with help of interview schedule, Women Empowerment Scale (WES), Panchayat Activities Index (PAI) and case study. The primary data included socio, economic background of the Dalit women, different dimensions of empowerment of Dalit women and Panchayat activities index of Panchayat Raj Institutions for empowerment of Dalit women in the rural area. The primary data was of great help and significance in the analysis of the issues pertaining to the study. With this the research objectives had been fulfilled.
The secondary source of data was also of immense help as the information with regard to social, economic, political and psychological background of the Dalit women. The data was necessary to analyze the situation of the respondents in which they lived. These sources mainly included monographs, reports of state government and other organizations, census reports, articles from journals, information on websites, and Human Development Reports.

**Types of Data**

The study has used both the qualitative and quantitative data. Most of the research objectives and hypotheses have been addressed with the help of quantitative data. Qualitative data have also been used in the interpretation of the aspects of the study.

**Description of Tools**

The following tools have been used for the purpose of data collection,

- Interview Schedule
- Women Empowerment Scale
- Panchayat Activities Index
- Case study

Collecting information at the grassroots required personal rapport with respondents. Personally administered tools have brought the researcher directly in contact with the respondents. This created an ambience of mutual trust and removed all fear and prejudices between the researcher and the respondents. So the respondents were at ease, free and frank. The researcher being woman, the rural women were more spontaneous to reveal themselves. Tools construction was done with care so that even the illiterate respondents would be able to grasp the meaning and answer it.
Interview Schedule

A well structured interview schedule was prepared consisting of questions on all aspects touching the objectives of the study by consulting experts in the subject. This interview schedule was pre-tested and this pre-test helped in re-structuring the same. After necessary modifications, the interview schedule was finalized and data were collected by administering the interview schedule to the respondents. A copy of the interview schedule is given in appendix – A.

Women Empowerment Scale (WES)

A Likert five point scale was prepared and used to obtain the data on level of empowerment among the women respondents selected for the study. This scale, which was developed by the researcher, consisted of four sub scales such as social, economic, political and psychological empowerment. Each of this sub scale contained 10 items prepared. The items were constructed in such a way that even the least literate member can grasp the meaning immediately. All that was required of the respondents is to listen to the short and simple statements and give their response. The English version of Women Empowerment Scale appears in appendix – B.

Panchayat Activities Index (PAI)

The researcher apart from constructing an empowerment scale also prepared Panchayat Activities Index to have more details about the respondent’s political involvement at the grass root level. It consisted of three areas, such as, awareness of Panchayat activities, attempts of Panchayat for improving the status of women and achievement of Panchayat. Each of this index contained 10 statements prepared. The English version of Panchayat Activities Index was appeared in appendix – C.
Case Study

Case studies in research focus on and gather in depth information about a specific person, group, community or event. It can provide detailed information about a particular subject. In the present study, case study was conducted among the Dalit Women Panchayat Presidents in the selected three blocks of Dindigul district. The researcher has collected in depth information of Panchayat presidents, and their problems faced during their work and achievements of the Panchayat especially for women in their villages and reason for subsequently selected for the second time.

Reliability

The reliability of Women Empowerment Scale (WES) and Panchayat Activities Index (PAI) were determined by test- retest methods. The test was administered to 50 Dalit women. The test scores of the women for the first and second administration were correlated and a coefficient of .965 was obtained which was significant at 0.1 levels. In the split-half method, the Dalit women scores (N=50) on the odd and even item were correlated, the obtained value of $r = .843$ for Women Empowerment Scale and $r = .903$ for Panchayat Activities Index. Substantially high coefficients of correlation by both methods proved the reliability of the Dalit Women Empowerment Scale (WES) and Panchayat Activities Index (PAI). The correlation matrixes are provided in the table 3.2 and 3.3.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empowerment Scale</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>155**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>.093**</td>
<td>.374**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>.204**</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.604**</td>
<td>.620**</td>
<td>.615**</td>
<td>.543**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Validity

The scale was subjected to content validity before it was used for data collection. Content validity was verified with the plausibility of a 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 Women Empowerment Scale (WES) and Panchayat Activities Index (PAI). There was more than 60 per cent of agreement among the way the jury had responded. Therefore, it is considered valid and used for the purpose for which it was constructed.

Table 3.3
Correlation Sub – Scales with Panchayat Activities Index (PAI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panchayat Activities Index</th>
<th>Awareness of Panchayat Activities</th>
<th>Attempt of Panchayat for improving the status of women</th>
<th>Achievements of Panchayat</th>
<th>Total empowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Panchayat Activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempt of Panchayat for improving the status of women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements of Panchayat</td>
<td>.894**</td>
<td>.595**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total empowerment</td>
<td>.934**</td>
<td>.846**</td>
<td>.916**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Data Analysis

The data obtained for the study were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Qualitative data was done through ethnographic analysis. Quantitative analysis of data was done through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) by the researcher.

The following statistical techniques were used for the analysis
1. Descriptive statistics

Measures of central tendency, dispersion, skewness and kurtosis were employed to know the nature of score distribution.

2. Test of significance for mean difference

The difference of the mean scores in the sub scales of social, economic, political, and psychological empowerment based on their background characteristics such as, age, education, caste, religion, occupation and their awareness level of Panchayat and their participation in gram sabha meeting were tested for using ‘t’ test.

To know the difference of the mean scores in the Panchayat Activities Index such as, awareness of Panchayat activities, attempt of Panchayat and achievement of Panchayats based on the sub scales of social, economic, political and psychological empowerment were tested by using ‘t’ test.

3. Pearson coefficient correlation

It was applied to test scores of different variables. The co-efficient of correlation were tested for significance by comparing the value with the table values for corresponding degrees of freedom and were interpreted.