Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
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Research methodology is the way of searching or solving the research problem. In Methodology, researcher uses different criteria for solving/searching the given research problem. Different sources use different type of methods for solving the problem. Research Methodology is a way to find out the result of a given problem on a specific matter or problem that is also referred as research problem. (Industrial Research Institute, 2010).

Methodology is a road plan that a researcher makes, a map that he/she draws up to see how to get to the destination effectively, having explored all routes, and, conclusively.

Social science is the science of people or collections of people (sociology), economics (groups, firms, societies, or economies), and their individual or collective behaviors (psychology). This Social Science Research seeks to assess the social adjustment, self-image and emotional adjustment of Hearing Impaired students in Classes X, XI & XII, in schools for the Deaf, in Tamil Nadu.

Title of the Study

“Social Assessment of Hearing Impaired Students in Tamil Nadu”

Objectives of the Study

Specifically speaking, the objectives are as below, besides the main objective of the study being the social assessment of Hearing Impaired students.

1. To assess socio-economic background of Hearing Impaired students.
2. To assess social adjustment of Hearing Impaired students.
3. To assess self-image of Hearing Impaired students.
4. To assess emotional adjustment of Hearing Impaired students.
5. To find out factors associated with Social Adjustment, Self-Image and Emotional Adjustment of the respondents.
6. To find out inter correlation among the key variables of the study.
Need of the Study

In India, higher education facilities for the Hearing Impaired is lacking, when compared to the opportunities given in the field of education for Deaf persons in the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

It all started with the religious model of disability, which viewed disability as a consequence of misdemeanour committed by the disabled person or members of the family, or due to “karma” - actions committed in the previous birth, or the presence of “evil spirits”, as religious beliefs are projected onto the disability and the disabled. For centuries, the disabled person was ostracized, and sometimes along with the family members, resulting in social exclusion. Deaf persons were secluded as they did not have “speech” and “language”, and the common belief was that without speech and language, knowledge cannot be acquired, and hence they were considered “retarded”.

Efforts to educate the “Deaf & dumb/Deaf-mute” children started somewhere in the late 1800s and Educational Institutions were founded in various parts of India, with deaf children receiving education through oralism, as it was thought important for deaf children to integrate with the general population. For over a century, there were debates about oralism and manualism. Manualism is education of deaf children using sign language, which is a visual-gestural language and assists in cognitive development of deaf children.

Education of Deaf children itself is a monumental task for Special Educators as we do not follow a policy using sign language, the native language of the Deaf. With a stress on special schools, the PWD (Persons with Disabilities) Act 1995 brought about the opening of many schools for special children across the country. Instances of integrating children into mainstream school environment was seen as a result. Various approaches involving Oral Approach & Total Communication were used, focusing on the speech of the children rather than their intellectual ability. Schools that used ‘Total Communication Philosophy’, which is a mix of various methods, to educate children with hearing difficulties, did not produce much of success. On the contrary, it was half-baked, as teachers signed and used speech along
with lip movements and gestures and this resulted in children’s poor reading and writing skills (Paul, 1988).

With poor literacy levels, the Hearing Impaired persons are inclined towards vocational skills and thereby end up in mediocre jobs with minimal salaries and hence the point about lack of equal opportunity crops up. Deaf persons are compared with Non-Deaf persons when it comes to work place environment and equal access is questioned. It is difficult for people to understand that Deaf persons can do everything except “hear”. They are a linguistic minority with a native language and they are not “handicapped” by any means. With accessible education and training, they can be on par with others.

Looking at related studies on Hearing Impaired children, most focus has been on the assistive devices, education methods, parental & societal attitudes, inclusive education, etc., Very few researches have focused on their social and emotional perspectives, vocational aspirations, and academic achievements, and hence this study has been undertaken to give attention to social assessment of school-going Hearing Impaired children.

The researcher prepared a questionnaire in order to elicit information from the students directly. As up till now, if not all, most of the researches related to Hearing Impaired students in India, have been conducted by targeting the parents, siblings, teachers and/or educators of Deaf. The researcher felt that collecting data from the Hearing Impaired students directly would be of more importance to initiate policies for Deaf persons, be it their education, their career opportunities, or equal access avenues.

The uniqueness of this study is that the whole questionnaire was relayed in Indian Sign Language to the respondents by the researcher who is fluent in sign language, so that they could understand the content conveyed better, in their primary language.
Research Design

Surveys and fact-finding enquiries of various kinds are included in Descriptive Research as the particular design describes the state of affairs as it exists. Since the Researcher has no control over the variables, what has happened is all that can be reported.

The Research Design for the present study is descriptive in nature, as information of the current status of the Hearing Impaired individuals needed to be ascertained with respect to socio-demographic variables.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was initially conducted to see what the need of the hour is for the Hearing Impaired student population. Since the Researcher was in touch with Deaf persons for many years, in the capacity of the Head of NGO, as well as sign language professional, some gaps and lags were noticed in the adult community related to academic subject content, literacy levels, knowledge of current affairs, etc., which urged the Researcher to step a little back into their scholastics background and look deeper into the special education system. Visitations to Deaf schools and interaction with teachers and parents helped the Researcher to know that there were frustrations of various kinds brewing within. With this basic information and picture, the Researcher delved into the study with the help of her research guide. The pilot study indicated the possibility of assessing the social status of the Hearing Impaired on certain key variables with a questionnaire.

Sampling

By using the Non-Probability, purposive method of Sampling, data had been collected from 555 Hearing Impaired Students in Classes X, XI & XII, in special schools for the Deaf, in Tamil Nadu, for the final study. (Post pretest). The universe of this study consists of Hearing Impaired students in Higher Secondary Schools for the Hearing Impaired, in Tamil Nadu.

Having obtained a list of Schools for children with hearing impairment in Tamil Nadu, from the official website of Aliyavar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped, (AYJNIHH), (presently changed to Aliyavar Jung National
Institute for the Speech & Hearing Disabilities (Divyangjan)) and out of 40 schools, the Researcher selected schools with secondary and higher secondary grades, and initiated correspondence with 28 Matriculation & Higher Secondary Schools for Deaf in Tamil Nadu, requesting permission to administer a questionnaire to the students of Class X, XI, & XII (See Appendix). Some schools had only a handful of students in Class X, and some schools tutored Class X/XII students privately, and hence did not participate in the study. After receiving consent letters from 9 Heads of Institutions, the Researcher fixed up appointments in each school, and paid a visit to meet the students and administer the questionnaire personally, along with Deaf adult role models & native signers, over a period of three months. Data was collected from nine Schools for Deaf, totally, in Tamil Nadu, and the questionnaire was administered to all the students that were present on the day when the Researcher visited the particular school.

**Tools of the Study**

A Questionnaire was used to collect the data needed for the Research work. Student’s personal data sheet consisted of 42 items. Meadow-Kendall Social-emotional Assessment Inventory for Deaf & Hearing Impaired students, Gallaudet University, was modified and used as a questionnaire for the students, as originally, it was meant for the teachers of Hearing Impaired students. The Head of the Institutions were also required to fill the Organization Profile (Details in Appendix). The questionnaire was signed to the Hearing Impaired students by the researcher and a team of two Deaf Role Models, for better and clearer understanding. A batch of 15-20 students were administered the questionnaire at a time. The whole process for the students to fill their personal data form and the questionnaire took about 2 ½ - 3 hours.

Meadow-Kendall Social Emotional Assessment Inventory for Hearing Impaired Students, Gallaudet University, with three dimensions namely Social adjustment, Self-Image & Emotional Adjustment, was chosen and modified for the present study. It was originally a teacher-rater questionnaire and the Researcher modified it to a student-rating-questionnaire. The 59-item questionnaire was then translated into Tamil as well, and validated by two experts in each of the languages-English, Tamil & Indian Sign language.
Pre Test

Data from two Schools in the district of Coimbatore, was first collected for Pretest, from 40 students. (These schools are not in the list from the official website of AYJNIHH). The questionnaire was condensed to provide clarity and shorten the time taken to record the responses. After ensuring the validity and feasibility of the tool, the Researcher proceeded to collect data from nine schools in other parts of Tamil Nadu. The questionnaire was relayed to the Hearing Impaired students in sign language for better understanding. The reliability value for the modified questionnaire is 0.7 (Details in the Appendix).

Data Analysis

Simple percentage, ANOVA (Analysis Of Variance), Karl Pearson’s Chi-Square Test, Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis, were the Statistical tools used for analysis of data.

Analysis Presentation:
PART A – Personal Profile of Hearing Impaired Students
PART B – Rating of Key Variables
    Social Adjustment
    Self-Image
    Emotional Adjustment
PART C – Factors associated with Social Adjustment of Hearing Impaired Students
PART D - Factors associated with Self Image of Hearing Impaired Students
PART E - Factors associated with Emotional Adjustment of Hearing Impaired Students
PART F – Inter Correlation Matrix among Variables

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Hearing Impaired / Deaf / deaf - refers to a person with any degree of hearing loss who is unable to speak or hear in order to communicate, understand, or be understood.
(Deaf with a capital D denotes a person who is culturally deaf, meaning whose native (first) language is sign language, while deaf with a small d indicates the audiological/medical perspective of deafness, one who focuses on speech)

Special School / School for Deaf is a school which caters to the individual differences of children with special needs. In this particular context, a school which uses specialized training such as speech therapy, lip reading, gestures, signs, sign language, etc., to teach only children with hearing disability.

‘Social adjustment’ in this thesis refers to one’s adjustment with peers, in the family, and in the society; how one behaves, feels around other social beings, handles responsibilities and shows accountability in one’s situations.

‘Self-image’ in this research implies the way one sees oneself, one understands oneself, and believes oneself to be.

‘Emotional adjustment’ in this research work, refers to the expression of one’s emotions in an appropriate manner and how one reacts to circumstances causing emotional expressions.

**Limitations of the Study**

1. The study was limited to those schools which permitted the Researcher to visit the schools and take the time to meet the students and administer the questionnaire directly.

2. Some of the schools failed to see the importance of the study targeting the students, and thus did not permit the researcher for data collection.

3. The study was confined to the schools in Tamil Nadu, and focused on Classes X, XI, XII, only.

4. Even though the sample number is high, it has to be a non-probability sample due to such reasons stated above.

**Difficulties faced by the Researcher**

- Some of the Heads of schools were reluctant to co-operate in the study.
• Though some of the Heads of Institutions permitted the Researcher, there was reluctance from the teachers as, according to them, crucial time was taken away in between the students’ classes, and they were under immense pressure to complete the syllabus, especially for Class X and Class XII students and ready them to write Board exams.

• On some occasions, the Researcher was hurried by the teachers to finish the questionnaire even before the time slot given was up.

• The interest and co-operation shown by the Heads of Institutions, was not shared by the teachers in the same manner.

• Attitude / misconceptions of teachers that Hearing Impaired students will not be able to understand the questionnaire and rate themselves accordingly, due to their poor literacy level was a hurdle in getting teachers’ cooperation.