

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY



3.0. Introduction

This chapter presents in detail the methodology adopted for the study. It is evident from chapter 2 that the present study was an attempt to look into the past to understand the context of spread and growth of literacy.

As the title of the present study reflects, "Case study method" has been adopted to realise the objectives of the study. A synoptic view of case study as a method has, therefore, been presented in the next sub-section.

3.1 Case Study Method

As a method of research in the field of social sciences, case studies could be traced back to the nineteenth century, since the prominent Frenchman Frederic Le Play made detailed case studies of the family and other important elements of the social structure to explain the phenomena of cyclical fluctuations in the economic and social prosperity of people, from 1829 to 1884.¹ "Case study method has been treated as one of the major aspects of perspective oriented research. It is characterised as the detailed, realistic, concrete description and explanation of something meaningfully interrelated by the unity of time and

space"² . Giddings points out that "the case under investigation may be one human individual only or only an episode in his life; or it might conceivably be a nation or an empire or an epoch of history"³ .

Shaw says,

Social research in a given problem begins with the accumulation of material in the form of concrete and detailed cases. The case may be an individual, an institution, a community, or any group considered as a unit for study. Case study method emphasizes the total situation or combination of factors, the description of the process or sequence of events in which behaviour occurs, the study of individual behaviour in its total setting and the analysis and comparison of cases leading to formulation of hypotheses⁴ .

On similar line of what constitutes a case, McKinney says, "the unit under investigation may be a person, an episode in person's life, a group of persons, a concrete set of relations, a specific process or a culture"⁵ .

The relevance of case studies as perceived by noted scientists in the field of social sciences, psychology and education can be recognised from the following statements of various authors. While highlighting the value of the case study method in social sciences McKinney (1967) says that "the study of cases is an essential aspect of inquiry and is preliminary to the formulation of types and generalisations. The case study is a way of ordering social data with the view toward preserving the unitary character of whatever is being studied"⁶ . Similarly the psychologist Allport (1942) presents that "the individual case stands at the gateway and terminus of generalised knowledge. What is more, generalised knowledge is being continually enriched by

its interpretation with what is special and concrete"⁷. Realising the role of educational research Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1976) represent,

case studies allow generalisations either about an instance or from an instance to a class. Their peculiar strength lies in their attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right. Case studies, considered as products, may form an archive or descriptive material sufficiently rich to admit subsequent reinterpretation. Given the variety and complexity of educational purposes and environments, there is an obvious value in having a data source for researchers and users whose purposes may be different from

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our own .

Case studies are basically intensive investigations of the factors that contributed to characteristics of the case under investigation. Case studies may involve looking at one person, group, project, institution or agency. In case study, the attempt is to study a multitude of factors by limiting the number of cases observed. The factors under study are usually not oversimplified. That is, they tend to be studies of phenomena as they exist in the natural setting . Van Dalen observes,

case study is rather a method of organizing data for the purpose of analysing the life of a social unit. One gathers pertinent data about the present status, past experiences, and environmental forces that contribute to the individuality and behaviour of the unit. After analyzing the sequences and inter-relationships of these factors, one constructs a comprehensive, integrated picture of the social unit as it functions in society . A case study is an intensive and exhaustive study of a limited number of representative cases .

However, an often cited and serious limitation of case studies is that generalization drawn from a single case cannot be applied to all cases.

With this guiding view of case study as a method, before further details of the case to study are delineated, a very brief outline of historical antecedents seems needed for the sake of clarity of presentation. This has been attempted in the next subsection.

3.2 Historical Antecedents

Ernakulam district of today was part of the erstwhile princely states of Cochin and Travancore and Malabar district of the old Madras state. By 19th century, Cochin state (other parts of Kerala too) was placed under the control of the British which lasted till the independence of India. The state did not take any significant step in the education of its people till the end of the second decade of 19th century. People had to find their own means to educate their children. It was mainly done through village schools. State participation in popular education began by the latter half of second decade of 19th century.

3.3 The case to study

Ernakulam district of Kerala was the first district in the country to achieve total literacy. Ernakulam district was taken as a case for indepth study to understand the achievement of total literacy by looking into the past. Individuals, groups and organisations worked and involved with literacy related activities in the district and the state were also part of the case.

3.4 Methodology : Objective 1

Objective 1 was to study historically the attempts at spread of literacy in Ernakulam district in pre-and post-independence period.

Methodological details for objective 1 are presented below.

Sources of Data

Documents, records dealing with the socio-economic, cultural and political history and characteristics of Kerala in general and Cochin state/ Ernakulam district in particular were the major sources of data for objective 1. These were mainly available in the form of :

- Government records; State Manual, Census Records, Administration Reports, Gazetteers, Economic Reviews, Memoir, Directory etc.,
- Narratives/descriptions documented by individuals who lived and travelled in Kerala at various point in time.
- Books written on 'History of Kerala' by individuals who tried to interpret the past.
- Documents regarding the total literacy campaign in Ernakulam district.

These sources of data were mostly stored/retrieved and could be found in Regional Archives of Kerala, Legislative library of Kerala and various public/university libraries of Kerala. Some of

the materials were found in private collections too. Sources of data regarding total literacy campaign were available from KSSP office (Ernakulam) and District headquarters, Ernakulam.

Leaders of different socio-cultural and political groups, educationists and historians of the state of Kerala were other sources of data.

Tool

Unstructured interview.

In unstructured interviewing researcher provides minimal guidance and allows considerable latitude for interviewees¹¹. In the present study unstructured interviews were favoured to study and understand the respondents' perspective regarding the problem under study without being influenced by the investigator.

Collection of data ,

A comprehensive study was undertaken to collect data from the above mentioned sources. For the purpose, various records and documents were examined and scanned thoroughly to locate information regarding the social, economic, cultural and political developments in Cochin and Kerala from the pre-independence period through post-independence period. Relevant information were abstracted from various historical sources through elaborate note taking under appropriate heads. Photocopying was also done wherever possible, to collect data. Brief notes were made as index to the information present in detail in the source, available as photocopies.

Unstructured interviews were conducted to study the perceptions/views of people regarding the spread of literacy from 19th century to the present century. For the purpose, leaders belonging to various socio-cultural and political groups, historians and educationists were interviewed (see appendix-II). While some interviews were tape recorded, notes were taken down in other cases. Later notes were prepared even in the case of tape recorded interviews.

Nature of Data

Data collected were, by and large, narrative/descriptive in nature. There were numerical data, too, in the form of enrolment, number of schools, number of literate persons, budget allocation etc.

Analysis of Data

Data collected from various sources were thoroughly scrutinized to understand realities constructed by humans at various point in time. These data were arranged chronologically so that events and happenings could be understood in a time perspective. Data were further sorted out in terms of themes. Information rich data were then assembled and organised to examine intelligible relations, if any, existing between them.

Percentage analysis was attempted, wherever possible, in case of numerical data. Further, numerical data were presented in tabular form to understand the emerging trend or for the purpose of comparative analysis.

Data collected through interviews were coded according to themes and contents were analysed and grouped to study similarity of and differences in views regarding the spread and growth of literacy in Ernakulam.

3.5 Methodology : Objective 2

Objective 2 aimed at studying the achievement of total literacy in Ernakulam district in terms of the role played by :

- Voluntary organisations
- Different socio-cultural institutions/agencies
- Educationally interested groups/individuals
- Government officials etc.

Methodological details for objective 2 are given below:

Sources of Data

Sources of data mentioned earlier under objective 1 constituted some of the sources of data for objective 2 also. Other sources of data were :

- Documents of various socio-cultural agencies/institutions available in the form of Directory, Souvenir, Periodicals etc.
- Documents and publications of voluntary organisations.
- Books written on socio-cultural agencies/institutions and voluntary organisations by individuals.

These sources of data were largely available at the offices

of various organisations/institutions. Some sources of data could be located in different public and university libraries in Kerala. Sources of data could be found in private collections too.

Individuals/groups involved with the total literacy campaign in the district of Ernakulam were yet other sources of data. They included individuals in their personal capacity, individuals who belonged to any particular group/organisation, government officials and people's representatives (see appendix II). These individuals were involved with the total literacy campaign at various levels of functioning; grassroot level instructors who taught the illiterate, master trainers who trained the instructors, resource persons, planning body members, organisers and implementing bodies at local level.

Tool

Unstructured interview.

Collection of data

For collection of data, the above mentioned sources were extensively studied and examined to tap information regarding the role played by various agencies in the spread and growth of literacy since 19th century at various point in time, leading to the total literacy status in Ernakulam district towards the end of the 9th decade of the present century. As mentioned earlier under objective (1), note taking and photocopying were done to collect data. Brief notes were further made to provide a guideline to the data present in photocopied materials. Notes

were made under relevant heads and subheads to separate out information from various sources.

Unstructured interviews of people involved with the total literacy campaign in Ernakulam district were conducted to study their perception, vision, initiation etc. For the purpose, people were initiated into expressing and describing their experience/involvement with the campaign from the time they got involved with it. These interviews were at times tape recorded and otherwise notes were made to collect data.

Nature of Data

Data collected were by and large narrative/descriptive in nature. There were numerical data too, showing relevant statistics.

Analysis of Data

Data gathered from various sources under different heads were arranged in chronological order to understand the contributions of various agencies to the spread and growth of literacy over a period of time. Information recorded under particular heads were scrutinized to study the characteristic role played by each agency towards the achievement of total literacy. For the purpose, data entered under different heads were further sorted out, broken down and then reassembled to make logical connections.

Numerical data were organised in tables and percentage analysis was done wherever possible. Comparative analysis were

also done in certain cases.

Data collected through unstructured interviews were coded thematically and content analysed to understand the involvement of people in the literacy campaign at various levels of functioning.

3.6 Methodology : Objective 3

Objective 3 was to identify the factors responsible for total literacy in Ernakulam district on the basis of the data regarding objectives 1 & 2.

Since the factors responsible for total literacy were to be identified on the basis of the data regarding objectives 1 & 2, details of sources of data, nature of data and the mode of collection of data are not presented under this section to avoid repetition. Analysis of data is presented below.

Analysis of Data

Data collected under objectives 1 & 2 were further analysed qualitatively to identify the factors responsible for total literacy in Ernakulam district. For the purpose data collected were organised to understand the manner in which various forces operating in the society at various point in time affecting the spread and growth of literacy.

The next chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data.

Notes

1. Wilson Gee, Social Science Research Methods, 1950, pp.230-31.
2. John Galtung, Theory and Methods of Social Research, 1970, pp.21-22.
3. Franklin H. Giddings, The Scientific Study of Human Society, 1924, p.95, quoted by Gee, in op.cit., p.230.
4. Clifford R. Shaw, "Case Study Method," American Sociological Society, XXI, 1927, p.149, quoted by Gee, in op.cit., p.230.
5. John C. McKinney, "Constructive Typology : Structure and Function", in An Introduction to Social Research, ed. by John T. Doby, 1967, p.238.
6. ibid.
7. Gordon W. Allport, "The use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science", Social Science Research Council, 1942, quoted by M.B. Menon and P.K. Sahoo, "Case Study Method in Research on Instructional Process", in Educational Research : Methodological Perspectives, ed. by M.S. Yadav and S.K. Mitra, 1989, p.268-269.
8. C. Adelman, D. Jenkins and S. Kemmis, "Rethinking Case Study : Notes from the Second Cambridge Conference", Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol. 6, No.3, 1976, quoted by M.B. Menon and P.K. Sahoo, loc. cit.
9. E.J. Mason and W.J. Bramble, Understanding and Conducting Research, 1978, pp.34-35.
10. D.B. Van Dalen, Understading Educational Research, 1979, pp.294-95.
11. Alan Bryman, Quantity and Quality in Social Research, 1992, pp.46-47 and Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, "Interviewing : The Art of Science", in Handbook of Qulitative Research, ed.by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 1994, pp.361-374.