

Chapter 3

DATA COLLECTION

Research design, method and tools

This study in the field of Sociology of Art focuses on contemporary Indian artists (painters) who are based in Baroda. These artists have undergone formal training in art education. The sample consisted of seventy practicing fine artists residing in Baroda during 2005. Out of the total artists only a minority section is popular and renowned, and therefore to consider only this group as basis to gauge and locate the artist community as a whole will not give a complete picture of the art world in Indian context. Locating the majority of the artists for inclusion in this study was a challenging task; hence for this study snowball sampling method was used. In addition, data was also gathered from three hundred viewers visiting three art galleries located in Baroda to give a perspective of the art audience that forms the group, which receives the art and further interacts with it. To supplement data that could not be captured through interviews, observations and informal discussions with art gallery owners and managers, art dealers, art collectors and art critics were also conducted. Moreover newspaper articles on art in popular national and local English dailies and catalogues of the respondent artists art exhibitions have supplemented the information. A semi

structured interview schedule was created to enable collection of quantitative and qualitative data from the artists (appendix 1); and a questionnaire was constructed to gather information from the viewers of art (appendix 2).

Sampling method for the artists

As mentioned earlier the snowball sampling technique was used to obtain the sample. In the absence of any baseline data or a directory of artists of Baroda, the initial information was supplied by a few artists (informants and referrals), who were known to the researcher. The next link was the collection of catalogues from different art galleries to get additional information about the artists exhibiting their works in art galleries. This was followed by the further use of snowball sampling method and a sample frame of seventy artists was obtained. The major purpose for using this sampling technique was to enable the location of the sample that has the desired characteristics. The desired sample included artists who practiced and exhibited their work in art galleries and were residing in Baroda during the data collection phase. This excludes those fine artists who chose to get into advertising and other lucrative jobs and stated that 'they have neglected their profession of fine art'. It is possible that a handful of artists who were

not in Baroda during the period of data collection might not have got included in the sample.

Each of the artists was contacted and a prior appointment was taken for the interview. A few artists could not be interviewed, as they were busy. Nevertheless majority of the contacted artists willingly gave time and their consent for an interview.

Sampling Method For Art Audience

In Baroda there are five popular galleries, Faculty of Fine Arts Gallery, Lanxess ABS Gallery (Red earth gallery pvt. ltd), Sarjan Art Gallery, Kaliedoscope and Aakruti. Out of these, three art galleries Lanxess ABS, Sarjan and Kaliedoscope, which were exclusive¹² were selected for data collection from art audience. Faculty of Fine Arts gallery and Aakruti were excluded as they are art galleries cum display centers; in addition to this Fine Arts gallery usually has larger number of fine arts students as visitors which if included would have represented only a section of the art audience and may have been misleading.

¹² These galleries were 'exclusive' as they cater to only display of fine arts and are not commercial display centers.

The sample of three hundred viewers was randomly chosen from three different art galleries. In each of the galleries, a day after the opening of an exhibition (Group or solo) was chosen to interview the audience. This was done to avoid conversing with the same set of people i.e. the artists and the art students who were generally, likely to be the ones attending the opening of an exhibition. For each of the three galleries a target sample of hundred was fixed. A weekend day was also picked up for each of the three galleries so as to capture the views of the art audience who may be working and prefer the weekend day for visiting the art galleries. Subsequent visits over a span of time were made to each of the galleries to complete the sample of hundred viewers. Besides that further information especially the role of art galleries and activities of the current art market was gathered through informal interviews with art gallery owners or managers.

Pilot study

Prior to the data collection a pilot study was conducted to test the interview schedule and the questionnaire. The interview schedule was administered to five artists, and the questionnaire was administered to ten art gallery visitors. This pilot study helped to reframe some of the questions in the interview schedule that seemed difficult for the respondent to

understand; it also facilitated reorganization of the sequence of the questions. Secondly, open-ended questions were increased as they enabled to acquire additional information. Thirdly, questions that seemed to be overlapping were modified or deleted.

Method for data collection

The data collection took place over a period of eight months from May 2005 to December 2005 in Baroda. A semi-structured interview schedule was used for the artists and each interview lasted between 2 to 4 hours; and the data was collected in one or two sittings. As for the art audience, a questionnaire was administered to the art public visiting three art galleries in the months of September and October 2005. Simultaneously information was gathered from art gallery owners, collectors, dealers and art critics.

Figure 4 : Procedure for data collection

Initial sample was obtained from informants



Snowball technique

Artists were contacted over the Phone/Personally



Interview time was fixed



**Interviews were held in artists' home or their studio or Faculty of Fine
Arts campus**



**Each interview on an average took 2 to 4 hours & were completed in 1
or 2 sittings**

Steps towards data analysis

The nature of the study was inclined more towards qualitative analysis. To support the qualitative analysis certain quantitative statistical analysis is also required. This was done so as to not miss any obvious sociological insights. The interviews with the artists were segregated on the basis of age group categories and gender. The first step was data reduction, which began with coding and creating data reduction charts. Summaries were prepared and similar patterns in the responses were highlighted. The next step in the analysis activity was data display, in this data was organized and compressed in data sheets. Finally for certain data, matrices were created which enable quantitative analysis and final conclusions were drawn (Miles and Huberman 1994). The data collected through the questionnaire administered on the art audience was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

The following sections are divided into three segments.

Artist and Society, this section describes the socio - demographic profile of the respondents. It includes the social factors that influenced the respondents such as the role of the parents, teachers, and friends along with the influence of the educational institution. It also tries to examine the social image, status and gender in the art world.

Art and Artist, this section tries to examine the social image and the status of the artist. It explores the respondents' dreams, aspirations, struggles and their sustainability in the profession of fine arts. Effort has also been made to take a peek into their art works. This section also focuses on women and their art.

Art, Artist and Society, in this section effort is made to comprehend the role of art critic, art galleries, and the media. It tries to understand the role of buyers and the patrons. It also explores the consumers' world by focusing on art audiences' background and their relation with the art world.