CHAPTER : III

METHODOLOGY

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METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3. INTRODUCTION

This is a qualitative study that utilizes 'Case Study' as its primary approach. The methodological details in respect to identification of sample cases, tools, and techniques used in the study, procedure of conducting case study, and construction of case and analysis of data pertaining to different cases are presented in this chapter.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research is "a complex, interconnected family of terms and concepts, and assumptions" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). As a result, qualitative research can mean different things to different people. It can be defined as "multi method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). This means that qualitative researchers study things in natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1988). Qualitative Research includes the collection of data through case study, personal experience, introspect, life story, interview, observation, document analysis, interactional and visual texts, such as photos and journals (Bogden & Biklen, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). These methods usually employ data collection through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and written document analysis. These forms of data collection produce information that is rich in description and explanation. Case study is used here by the researcher as a research design as this will help in collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant. It is a form of qualitative descriptive research, wherein the case study looks intensely at the participant and helps in drawing conclusions only about that participant in the specific context only. Here the researcher does not focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor the researcher looks for cause-effect relationship; instead emphasis is placed on description.

Case studies were conducted on the sample of women administrators who were short listed by the procedure stated below. No outline or the procedure was standardized but a comprehensive account of the women administrator was studied in-depth from the childhood experiences till date. The data regarding the family background, childhood experiences, barriers faced in the family and work place, efforts made to overcome these barriers, support received, the school and college experiences, the career path, the efforts made to achieve the administrative positions, and the strategies adopted to sustain and maintain the position was collected and documented.

3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF SAMPLE CASES

The target population for this study was women administrators in higher education serving in the position of Vice-Chancellor of Universities in India. The sample consisted of eleven Women administrators who have served Vice-Chancellors. Obtaining the potential participants list was very difficult for the researcher as there is no database available on women administrators in higher education. The researcher took the help of Universities Handbooks, where the details of all universities along with its staff members is available. In Universities Handbook also identifying women administrators just by their name was very difficult. The researcher with the help of internet 'google search' confirmed whether the administrator was male or female. A list of all the women administrators in higher education in India, who were in the positions of Vice-Chancellor till now was prepared with the help of Universities Handbook published by AIU, New Delhi. The researcher was not bound by the time period but to make the task easy, used the Handbook from the year 1990 onwards. Apart from this, the researcher contacted the participants and asked them to recommend some name of the other women Vice-Chancellors which is commonly referred as Snowball Sampling. The Researcher also took the help of internet to identify some of the women Vice-Chancellors. Later the researcher tried to trace the contact details of these women Vice-Chancellors by contacting to their respective Universities where they held the administrative positions and even tried to search through internet. The women administrators whom the researcher could trace and who were in India were then contacted by researcher through telephone or email and

details of the study were sent electronically and their consent to be sample in this study was sought. The researcher did not take more women administrators from the Womens' Universities with the assumption that being a Vice-Chancellor in a women University is not difficult. Out of those women who gave consent, the researcher selected eleven women administrators looking into to the geographical feasibility of the researcher and even the profile of the women administrator.

Once potential participants were identified, the researcher mailed a letter to all the participants who had agreed to participate requesting to send the curriculum Vitae through E-mail. The curriculum vitae were utilized to obtain background information about the participants. Some of the participants did not send the resume and in their cases it was collected by the researcher during the visit for data collection. There were also some participants who had retired long back and did not maintained a proper resume and so in six cases the researcher did not get the resume.

3.3 DATA NEEDED FOR THE STUDY

The data which was needed for this study was divided into several compartments by the researcher for making the data collection procedure simple. The data which was needed was listed under several phases of life such as childhood days, school days, higher education days, professional life, married life and being a Vice-Chancellor. A comprehensive life story of the women administrator from childhood till date was needed. The researcher wanted the details such as the family background of cases, parents education, their socio economic background, the childhood days of the participants, the school days, in which school the case studied, the difficulties faced at these stages, her aspirations in life, the college life of the case, the type of college in which case studied, difficulties faced, her aspirations in life, the professional life of the cases, how they progressed in their career, the difficulties faced by them in professional life, the strategies they adopted to overcome them, their aspirations in profession, the marriage life of the case, the support form in-laws, husband and children, difficulties faced at home front and work place and strategies adopted to balance both.

LIST OF THE VICE CHANCELLORS SELECTED FOR CASE STUDY ARE:

Sr.no	Cases	University
1	Prof. Vidyavati	Kakatiya University, Warangal, Andhra Pradesh ***(1998-2001)***
2	Prof. Munniyamma	Gulbarga university, Gulbarga, Karnataka ***(1996-1999)***
3	Prof. Naseem Bhatia	Jai Narayan Vyas University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan **(2003-2006)**
4	Prof. K. Sudharao	Karnataka Open University, Mysore, Karnataka ***(2003-2007)***
5	Prof. Sarojamma	Padmavati Mahila University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh ***(2008-contd)***
6	Prof. Indrajeet Kaur	Panjabi University, Patiala, Punjab ***(1975-1977)***
7	Prof. Saraswati Rao,	Sri Krishna Devariya University, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. ***(1999-2002)***
8	Prof. Kusuma Kumari	Sri Krishnadevariya University, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh ***(2008- contd)***
9	Prof. Nirupa Rani	Adikavi Nanaiya University, Rajamundry, Andhra Pradesh. ***(2006-2009)***
10	Prof. Kanta Ahuja	Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University, Ajmer, Rajasthan ***(1991-1995)***
11	Prof. Snehlata Deshmukh	Mumbai University, Mumbai, Maharashtra. **(1995-2000)**

3.4 SOURCES OF DATA

For the present study, multiple sources of data collection considered for data collection. Different personnel were involved to congregate data. They are the case herself, parents, relatives, neighbors, friends\peer, teachers, colleagues, students, non-academic staff, peon, and many more who all the researcher could find related to them and had an impact on their life. Apart from this the data was also collected from documents, newspapers and the observation of the researcher during the field visit and interaction with different sources and cases.

3.5 TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The tools used to collect data from different sources are as follows:
Once the participants agreed to the study, the researcher contacted them for interview. Interviews were the primary source of data collection. For the purpose of this study the researcher utilized unstructured interviews.

a) UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

To get an in-depth, holistic and comprehensive description about the cases, unstructured interview was used as it helped in knowing different aspects of the women administrators. The researcher had no presuppositions about the case she was going to meet. Therefore she wanted to maintain maximum flexibility to be able to pursue information in whatever direction it appears to be appropriate depending on information that will emerge from conversing with the case and with one or more individuals.

The researcher had identified the broad categories related to which the data was to be collected and she did not prepare any set of questions to be asked. Most of the questions flowed from the immediate context. The researcher used to first tell the purpose of the study to the case and asked them to start narrating their journey from childhood with the family background and academic life. The researcher did not interrupt the case and allowed her to speak as she did not want to break the flow. The researcher noted down the interaction verbatim. After the case has finished, the researcher then asked pertinent questions on the aspects which the researcher thinks has not been covered by the case. After first meeting, the researcher used to go through the notes and if finds something to be further probed or some details was missing then the researcher in the next meeting used to go with certain questions which would help to get the needed information.

Various other personnel were also interviewed to collect the data. They are: parents of the case if available, other family members, close relatives, neighbors, friends, school teachers & principal, non academic staff, tuition teacher, etc. The researcher

here asked the open ended questions depending on the relationship of the sample with the case. If it is family member the questions will be related to her family life, her likes and dislikes, her different habits, how she behaved with others, her aspirations in life and so on. If the source is a colleague or the employer, the questions will be based on the work life like her sincerity towards work, her relationship with colleagues, her punctuality, and so on. It is moreover as they know her and what they want to share.

b) GROUP INTERVIEW

Only in one case, the researcher found a scope for group interview. In this case the University was newly established and had a limited staff. The researcher got an opportunity to conduct a group interview with all the staff members together.

c) OBSERVATION

The researcher while visiting the various Universities to collect information from the varied sources got an opportunity to observe the climate at the university and noted environmental/institutional and physical attributes, such as office configurations (location, size décor), personal attire, demeanor, etc. This information was recorded manually. The researcher also minutely observed the expressions of the cases during the interaction. Her gestures, actions and even while she was interacting with other people the researcher used to observe her behavior and way of talking to others.

d) REPORTS

The mass-media viz., local and daily newspaper was used as a tool of data collection in many of the cases. The position of Vice-Chancellor is the top most position in the University and is very much political in nature. Due to its political nature the Vice-Chancellor is always under scanner. Whenever any new developments takes place in the University it is being reported in the local newspapers. News paper was one of the most important sources of information wherein the Vice-Chancellor or the University was in some controversy. In some of the cases, the participants themselves gave the newspaper cuttings which they had preserved whereas in most of the cases the

researcher relied on the newspaper archives and referred to e-papers available on the website of the newspapers.

In some of the case even the television media was also utilized for data collection. In the case of present Vice-Chancellors the news item in the local television which were available on the 'You tube' was utilized. A documentary on one of the Vice-Chancellor was also available on the 'You tube' which was presented on Doordarshan few years back was referred by the researcher for data collection.

3.6 PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION

Once a participant agreed to the study, the researcher contacted them to set up the initial interview. Interviews were the primary method of data collection. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used unstructured interviews. The first meeting was an introductory meeting. This meeting was done primarily over the telephone and the ice was broken. The researcher explained the nature and purpose of the study on telephone so that when the researcher personally meets, the participant is aware of the kind of data needed. The second meeting was more focused and face to face with each case. The researcher asked the case the place where they would prefer to be interviewed. The researcher interviewed seven of the women Vice-Chancellors at their residence whereas four in their offices. Two of the Vice-Chancellors have completed the tenure of their Vice-Chancellorship but are part of some other institutions and they decided to be interviewed in the office. Two of the Vice-Chancellors who were holding the position of Vice-Chancellor invited the researcher to their University office for interview. It was primarily through this interview that the participants' constructions of their realities were expressed. The interviews lasted for minimum three hours and maximum five hours. During this time, information or documents offered by the participants like the newspaper cuttings were reviewed to verify credentials, clarify or explain a challenge encountered as an administrator. The field notes were taken by the researcher. Before the process of individual interviews was initiated, the researcher collected as much background information as possible about each individual and her institution through Internet searches and through reviewing the resume provided by each informant. Before each personal interview

took place, the researcher reviewed all available, relevant data to gain more familiarity with each informant, as well as her institution, and to be able to add a more personal touch to the inquiry. To encourage participants to share more insights and details during the interviews, the researcher listened attentively with respect, compassion, flexibility, and good will. The researcher understood that she should enter the field with an open mind and try to see things through the participants' eyes. During the course of the interviews, the researcher actively observed both the informants and the sites. Both descriptive and reflective field notes were taken to help the researcher more effectively grasp what was observed, sensed, experienced, perceived, and reflected during and after each interview in the field. The researcher met them twice or thrice depending upon the need.

The data was also collected from other sources. While interviewing with the case the researcher came to know about the people who affected their life the most and who knew them well. This helped the researcher to select the other sources of data. Even the participants gave some references whom the researcher can meet. The researcher also visited different places for the data collection. The place where the case lived, to meet the other sources like for family members the researcher visited their residence where they were located, Institution where the case worked and also the institution where the case is or was Vice-Chancellor. The researcher interviewed the people whom the participants had referred and whom the researcher thought could be important source of information. The researcher took the prior appointment of these people telephonically or through email. If some of the important source of information were not available in the field during the researchers visit then they were interviewed telephonically. Some of the sources of data were selected randomly out of those who were available in the institution during the visit of the researcher. The researcher also met the family members like siblings, parents, children, husband, etc with the prior appointment personally and interviewed them individually or in group. In some case where the children were settled abroad, the researcher took the help of telephone or email for collecting the relevant data form the sources who were settled abroad.

The researcher prepared the field notes of what she saw, heard, experienced and thought on the field. It contained descriptions. These field notes were the data that was further analyzed to get the understanding of the case. These transcripts were written while conversing with the participants and all notes were taken down. As soon as the researcher left the field the remaining information was recalled, reflected and noted down. If the researcher while preparing the case felt later on that some information is missing or needed further clarification, she used to note down and contacted the concerned person telephonically or through email. Follow-up interviews were conducted in an effort to verify responses/questions if necessary or if some information was found missing. This was mainly telephonic conversation in most of the cases. Also, this was an opportunity for the administrators to provide additional information that was not provided in the previous two meeting. Several of the follow-up interviews lasted over an hour.

3.7 VALIDITY OF THE DATA

To ensure the validity of data, the researcher collected the data from multiple sources viz., family members (parents, spouse, children, in-laws), colleagues, friends, neighbours, administrators etc. that cut across the same theme. In order to minimize the threat to trustworthiness of the data, the research utilized the triangulation methods to ensure that multiple perspectives were reflected in the findings. The triangulation of data was done on the three basic themes which emerged at different phases of life viz., career path, barriers and strategies.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

For data analysis the raw data gathered in large amount were read critically for a number of times. The data was closely examined in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain case. The major themes which emerged are career Pathways, Barriers and Strategies. Each Case as a Unit was analyzed under these major themes. Later two major steps were followed for content analysis which are Data reduction and data display.

3.8.1 DATA REDUCTION

Given the fact that qualitative inquiries produce volumes of data, the issues of organizing and reducing transcriptions must be tackled first before successful analysis or interpretation is done. To gain a holistic view of the width and depth of raw data, the researcher first read through all pages of transcriptions. To reduce the amount of raw data, the researcher then read the transcripts for a second time with the objectives of the study in mind. The researcher during the second review, identified the emerging themes and categorized the collected data under these themes, while irrelevant data were put aside temporarily. Consequently, the researcher began the data-sorting and analysis process with the individual interviews and profiles by reviewing the individual woman leader's background information and interview transcript to identify repetitious ideas as well as important points made. For each interview, a long list of relevant, recurring phrases or important points made by each informant was developed. Through constant reading, comparing, connecting, grouping, and regrouping, the long list of relevant and important repeating ideas was then clustered and integrated into different categories such as Family background and childhood days, school days, college/higher education days, professional life, married life, being a Vice-Chancellor.

3.8.2 DATA DISPLAY

The next logical step is data display. Here display means an organized assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing. The details regarding the different phases of life of each case is with the researcher. The researcher prepared a case history of each case separately by triangulating the information collected from each source. This case history was presented under different themes such as family background, their school life, higher education life, married life and professional life.

3.8.3 DERIVATION

After making presentation of each case come commonalities can be derived. The researcher has tried to derive some commonalities among the cases based on the objectives of the study. The researcher analyzed the cases on the areas such as career paths being followed, barriers encountered by cases at different phases, how the cases

overcome the barriers. The data is displayed in terms of cases in the next chapter (chapter iv).

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to information contained in the stories of eleven women Vice-Chancellors from the Higher Education system in India. The focus was on these women's lived experiences, their career path to being administrator and how they sustained it. Since only a small sample of senior women administrators in Higher education was included, the findings and outcomes cannot be generalized to all women serving in higher education administration. Moreover, the richness of the results relied on the researcher's interview skills as well as the participants' openness and willingness to disclose, reflect, and analyze different aspects of both their positive and negative experiences in the profession. Another caveat of this study is that the data are based on the opinion of the participants. Like all qualitative research based on the perceptions of participants at a given point of time, there is no way to guarantee that the participants' recollections of their experiences at different stages of their life are accurate. This study does not speak for all women administrators in higher education; however, it is representative of challenges that women administrators have encountered. The conclusions from the study may have implications for better understanding women administrators in higher education in other regions of the country as well. It is assumed that the participants will offer honest answers and display genuine actions throughout this research study. While the findings of this study cannot be generalized to a population, the rich description that results should enable women in similar positions in educational administration to recognize something of themselves in the accounts that follow.

The findings must be evaluated in light of limitations stemming from the indicative design and the use of self repots data. First, the outcomes of qualitative studies are not meant to be broadly generalized. Qualitative studies are often conducted on small non representative samples such as this study given that analytical depth rather than generalizability is what is sought. The analysis of intensely personal experiences means these accounts could have been biased by a range of factors including

selectivity with past recollections, trust in the interviewer. The data acquired might be susceptible to potential issues such as memory distortion, self serving bias and social desirability bias. There are couples of important methodological limitations in this study. Firstly, the sample size is limited. These case histories are self reported and by other sources, it may be the case that some developmental indicators in subjective careers might be forgotten or inaccurately recalled.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the people while sharing their views had requested for anonymity. The researcher has not revealed the names of those people who had asked for confidentiality to be maintained. The other respondents who had not objected, their names are mentioned.