

CHAPTER - III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the research methodology of the present study. Research is systematic collection and analysis of data pertaining to the problems of our concern. A scientific research is conducted in different stages. The present study is also conducted in different stages which are discussed in this chapter. At the very outset the design of the research is formulated by the researcher by defining the problem. The researcher systematically describes the selection of universe, sampling, selection of suitable tools and technique for collecting data and finally analysis of data is discussed in the chapter. The researcher also highlights her experience of field work in slum areas of Silchar town.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Urbanisation and industrialisation is one of the important features of modern civilisation. Towns and cities are increasing in number and size day by day throughout the globe. Migration of people towards towns and cities is also increasing as ample of employment opportunities are available for divergent group of population. Every town and city is having a specific capacity to

provide livelihood and shelter. Over populated towns and cities are characterised by number of problems and slum is one of the major problems of town and cities. Multiple studies are conducted on various issues on slums throughout the globe. R.D. McKenzie, Charles Stokes, John Seeley, Herbert Gans, Oscar Lewis and many other western social scientists highlight various issues pertaining to slum problems. In India too scholars like A.R. Desai, S.D. Pillai and many others put attention to study problem of slums in India.

Government of every nation is taking measures to eradicate problems of slums. In India too many policies and programmes are formulated and implemented to resolve the problem of slums. For proper implementation and utilisation of the policies and programmes introduced for slum improvement, government initiates community participation. So that community needs are understood and measures are taken to fulfil these needs. Participation of women is also a vital aspect of development in general and for slum development in particular. Women constitute almost half of the total population of the country. Therefore, their opinions and views are important for implementation and formulation of policies and programme. Therefore, the present study **‘Participation in Slum Improvement Programmes: A Study of Slum Women in Silchar Town** is selected to understand the level of participation of slum women of Silchar town towards formulation and implementation of slum improvement programmes.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the conceptual structure within which a scientific research is conducted. In fact research design constitutes the blue print for collection, measurement and analysis of data. The design of a particular research depends upon the nature of the problem under study¹.

The present study is based on Descriptive research design. The present research is designed to study the participation of slum women in selected slum pockets of Silchar town. Since slum is a very old and established concept in social science and at the same time participation of women in development process is also an emerging dimension of social research hence descriptive research design is the most appropriate design to study participation of slum women in slum development programmes initiated by government and NGOs.

Since the study is descriptive as well as qualitative in nature having few quantitative components hence the researcher has systematically developed the steps of research. First of all the research problem is elaborated in this chapter followed by of the research, universe, sampling tools and techniques of research. Data analysis has been done by using simple statistical tools. Mainly the researcher has used tabulation method to analyse the primary data collected from the field.

¹C.R. Kothari, Research Methodology Methods and Techniques, New Age International, New Delhi, 2004, pp 26-27

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Slums are mainly found in towns and cities. In Silchar town there are fourteen slum pockets as per record of (Town and Country planning office) where thousands of slums have migrated and settled in search of livelihood. Numerous studies are conducted on issues of slums. Studies are also conducted on implementation of slum development programmes initiated by government. But women's participation in slum improvement programme is a vital issue which is still untouched. Thus the present study is delimited to participation of slum women of three selected slum pockets of Silchar town towards participation of slum women in slum improvement programme initiated by government and NGOs.

THE STUDY AREA

Silchar is the headquarter of Cachar District in Assam . It is the second-largest city of the state in terms of population and area under municipality. The town is facilitated with an airport known as Kumbhigram airport which helps to communicate with other parts of the state of Assam and the whole country.

Geographically Silchar is located in the southern part of Assam. River Barak is the largest river of this region which has passed along the northern side of the town. This river has not only blessed the people of this region with fertile land but it has a huge contribution to make Silchar town a centre of trade and commerce. During British period the town was an important centre for trade of

tea and other necessary goods. Gradually the town becomes a centre for British administration.

Population composition of Silchar town is such that majority of the population are Bengalis who speak *sylethi*, a version of Bengali language. Rest of the population are Bishnupriya Manipuri , Dimasa, tea community people, Kachari (Barman), Manipuri (Meitei), Marwaris, Assamese and some tribal groups like Nagas. The Bengali speaking population of Silchar is not a homogeneous group. A bulk of Bengali speaking people of Silchar is having faith on Islam. But Hindu and Muslim always maintain a harmonious and cordial relation with each other. The sentiment, faith and culture of one religious community are highly respected and honoured by others. In fact linguistic identity is given equal importance with religious identity by both Hindus and Muslims. Major religious groups of Silchar town are Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Jain. There are also few Sikhs residing in the town.

Silchar town is industrially backward. But prospect of industrialisation of the town is increasing day by day. Government of India has taken initiatives to connect the town with other parts of the country by rail and road. The construction of broad gauge railway line and *Mahasadak* are two such initiatives taken by government of India. Several important government establishments are located within and outside the town. Some of the

establishments are Indian Oil Corporation, Industrial Training Institute and Cachar Paper Mill.

According to 2011 census report, Silchar has a population of 178,865 with males population 89,961 and females population 88,904. The sex ratio of Silchar Town is 988 females per 1000 males, which is above the national ratio of 940 females per 1000 males. Literacy rate of Silchar town is 91.74% which is higher than the national average of 59.5%, with male literacy of 93.97% and female literacy at 89.50%.

Silchar town including the entire region of Barak Valley is blessed with a central university which is located at Durgakona nearby Irongmara. This university facilitates education in both the general as well as professional courses. National Institute of Technology is another institution of higher education from where students of this region are getting benefited. There is a medical college and hospital located in the town which serves health needs of the entire region. Apart from these educational institutions there are numerous school and colleges which not only provides education to the students of this region but also increases the influxes of people from other regions.

Silchar is now at par with the other forward district of Assam. Numerous business establishments like Goldighi Mall , Big Bazar, Metro Bazar, Cinema Halls, Vishal Mega-Mart, Entertainment Plaza, Ellora Super Market , Nahata Mart etc. are located in the town to meet the needs of urban and rural people of

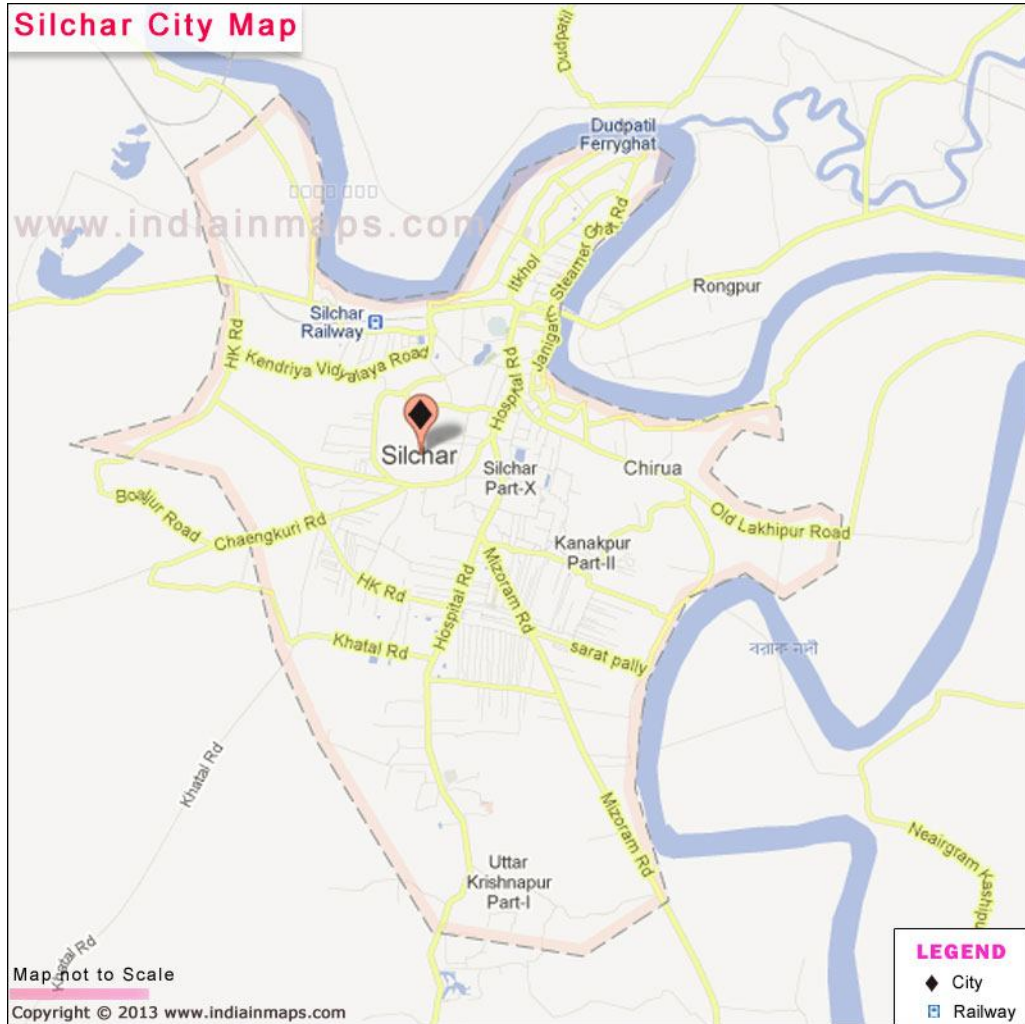
this region. In fact people of other states like Mizoram and Manipur also come to Silchar for marketing. There are private nursing homes which attract people of other states as well. Moreover, Silchar is having Regular bus services which connects Silchar with Guwahati, Shillong, Aizawl, Agartala and Imphal through NH 37 and NH 53. There is an Inter State Bus and an Inter State Truck Terminus situated in adjacent part of the town.

There are some historical places and tourist spots such as Khaspur which is 20 km away from Silchar town which stands the ruin of a great Dimasa kingdom and capital of Dimas kings of historical time. The main attractions are the Lion Gate, the Sun Gate and age-old king's temple. Bhuban Temple is another spot of tourism which is the most celebrated temple of Lord Shiva in the entire South Assam. Every year thousands of people visit the temple during *sibaratri*. Iskcon Temple, Ramkrishna Mission and many other temples are there to meet religious needs of Hindus. Several mosques are also established in the town for people who are having faith on Islam.

Because of all the features mentioned above, Silchar town has become a centre of attraction for the rural people of the region as well as people of other parts of North-East India particularly Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram. There is a continuous flow of migrants from rural to urban area in search of employment and livelihood. These migrants are mostly residing in slum areas of Silchar town and hence the problem of slum population in Silchar town is increasing

day by day like other over populated towns and cities of India. The town and country planning department as well as Silchar Municipal Board are also not able to solve properly the ever increasing problems of slum areas.

Silchar City Map

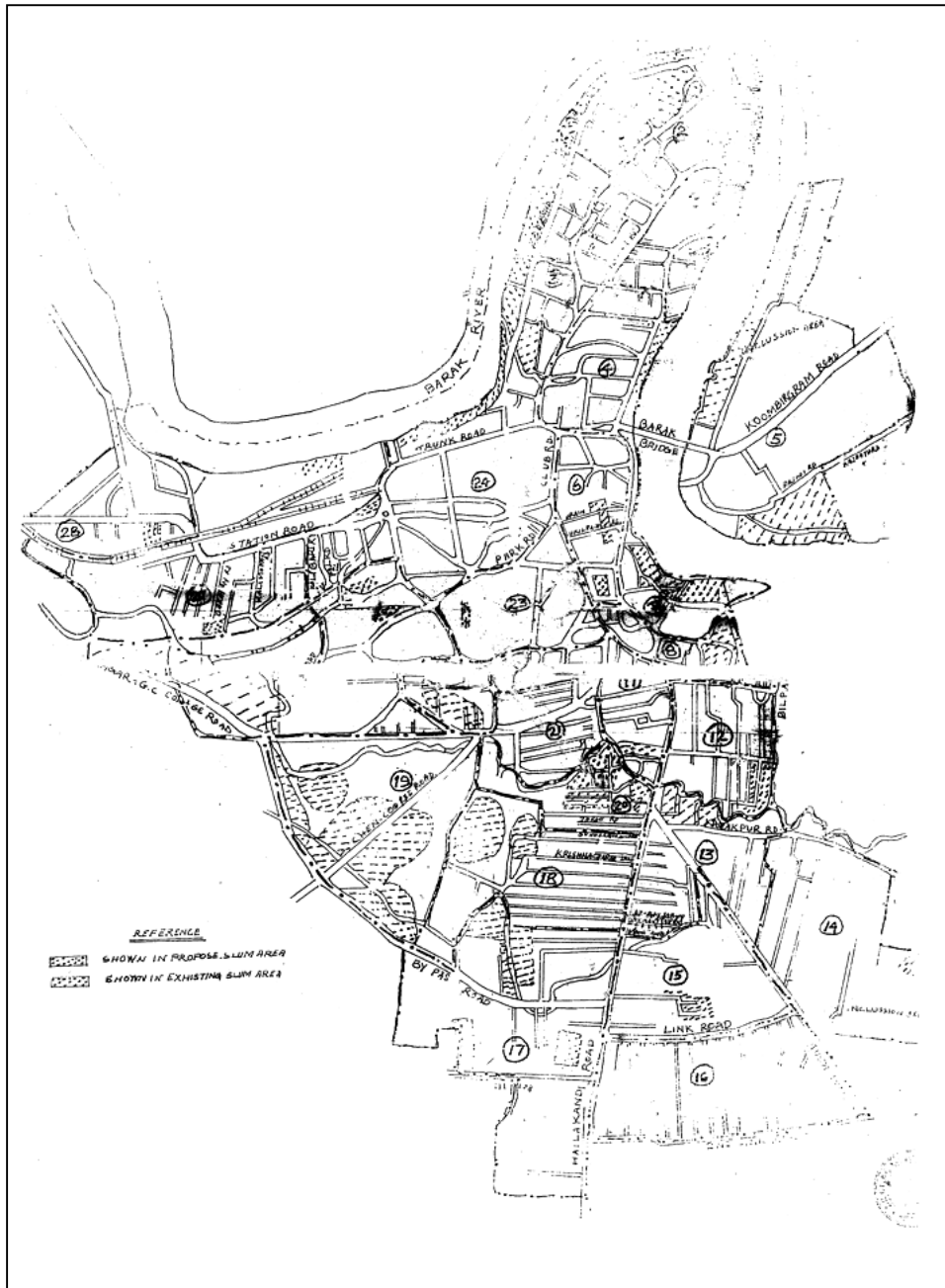


Source: www.indianmaps.com

UNIVERSE AND UNIT OF THE STUDY

Slum pockets of Silchar town constitute the universe of the study and slum women constitute the unit of study. There are 14 Slum pockets in silchar town according to Town and Country Planning Office namely, Madhura Ghat or Gandhighat Colony, Radharaman Colony, Adharnath Colony, Mokam Road or Manipuri Basti Road, Itkholaghat Colony, Idgah Ghat Colony or Swamiji Road, Kalibari Char, Mahut Para Lane 1 & 2, Sib Colony, Joydurga Colony – Biswanath Colony, Sweeper’s Colony, Fishermans’ Colony, Gossaipara, and New Colony. All this Slum pockets are having population with more or less same religious groups i.e., Hindu. There is a tendency in the slum pocket having small population area to disappear from the map of Slum due to the developmental efforts. For example, Biswanath Colony, Joydurga Colony which have developed and there are no signs of slum. The three slum pockets are chosen on the basis of size of population. Kalibari Char is the oldest and largest slum in Silchar Town and has the highest population among all the slums pockets. Its total population is 11900. Itkhola ghat has a medium size population (2600) and Madhura Ghat has the small population (1430). Besides, these three slum areas, there are also other approved slum pockets of Silchar Municipal Board. Both Town and Country Planning office and Silchar Municipal Board have approved the three pockets which are selected for study.

Map of slum Pockets of Silchar



Source: Silchar Municipal Board

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

There are fourteen slum pockets in Silchar town according to Town and Country Planning office. From a thorough understanding of the slums of Silchar town through official records and literature and by conducting survey in slum pockets before commencement of the field work, it is observed that Slum pockets of Silchar town are all most homogeneous except few elements of heterogeneity like difference of location and size of population. The socio-economic variables obtained from census data and voters lists also suggest slum population of Silchar town is not much differentiated by language, caste, religion, region and other socio-economic variables. Therefore, the universe is all most homogeneous. Hence simple random sampling method is appropriate for selection of slum pockets from the entire universe for the purpose of the study. Out of fourteen slum pockets of Silchar town three slum pockets have been randomly selected. The slum pockets selected for the purpose of field work are *Kalibari Char* slum, *Itkhola Ghat* and *Madhura Ghat*. The following table reveals the distribution of sample in three slum pockets.

Table No. III.1
Distribution of sample

Slum pockets	Estimated households	Sample
Kalibari Char	2380	476
Itkhola Ghat	520	104
Madhura Ghat	286	58
Total	3186	638

As per voters list and information provided by ward commissioners of respective wards under the study area, it is estimated that the total household in *Kalibari Char* is about 2380, in *Itkhola Ghat* there are around 520 households and in *Madhura Ghat* around 286 households are there. Total households in these three selected slum pockets are 3186, 20% of the total households from each slum pocket has been selected randomly for the study. Since the unit of the study is slum women therefore one woman from one household has been taken as respondent. From Kalibari Char slum pocket total household selected for the study are 476, from Itkhola Ghat and Madhura Ghat 104 and 58 respondents have been selected respectively. Thus the total sample size is 638.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

This study comprises of both primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from three selected slum pockets of Silchar town. Considering the feasibility of the study, quality and quantity of respondents vis-a-vis to make the study more intensive and qualitative, observation and interview schedule are selected as appropriate tools for collection of primary data from the field. The interview schedule has covered various aspects pertaining to the awareness level of women, implementation of various programmes, level of participation, the constraints faced by women in participation and the impact of various programmes on women. Moreover, the schedule also incorporates socio-economic profile of the respondents under study. The primary data is also

collected from the key informants and resource persons who are having depth of knowledge about the slums of Silchar town in general and participation of slum women in development programmes in particular. Interview of political representatives of these localities, government officials concerned about slum problems as well as NGO officials are also conducted for gathering more authentic primary data.

The interview schedule is constructed with semi-structured form and dealt with both close and open ended questions. Maximum numbers of questions have been formed with multiple choice type questions and others have been kept open with a view to collect adequate data on the basis of answers given by the respondents. Although the interview schedule is prepared in English but the questions have been asked in local *sylethi* (a version of Bengali) language so that respondents easily understand the questions and response comfortably.

Observation is done in every step of field work. To document the data collected through observation method various devices like camera, mobile phone and tape recorders are used with due permission from the respondents and their guardians.

Secondary data is collected from books, journals, Government Records, Magazines, published and unpublished research studies and internet. Records are also collected from office of the Silchar municipality corporation and

district settlement office. Voter's lists of slum dwelling localities are also collected from office of the district election officer, *Cachar* district.

SELECTION OF VARIABLES

Both dependent and independent variables are selected for the study. The independent variables taken for the study are age, education, marriage, caste, religion, family size income and Occupation are taken. The dependent variables like participation in development activities, respondents position in the family and decision making capacity, awareness of the implementation programme, awareness on NGOs, familiarity with political leaders and government officials etc. are selected for the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The large volume of data collected in course of field work through interview Schedule and observation method have been fully processed and analysed scientifically. Simple statistical techniques have been used for analyzing the data. Considering the large volume of primary data collected from the field only tabulation method is used for data analysis. Simple numerical calculations like addition, subtraction and percentage are done to analyse the tabulated data. Since the study is more qualitative in nature therefore SPSS and other statistical tools are not used to analyse the tabulated data. All the findings of the study are described in a systematic and sequential manner rather than explaining or establishing any cause and effect relationship among variables.

FIELD WORK

After the completion of pilot study to check the feasibility of conducting field work with the interview schedule constructed with a view to fulfil the objectives of study, the researcher started field work in the month of December, 2012. Field work plan is elaborated in the following table.

Table No. 1.2
Field Work Plan

Sl. No	Name of Slum Pocket	Duration of Visit	Number of Days
1	Itkhola Ghat	Dec 2012-Apr 2013	99
2	Madhura Ghat	May 2013- Aug 2013	60
3	Kalibari Char	Sep 2013-July 2014	230
4	Total	19 months	389 Days

Field work was carried out in the three approved slum pockets of Silchar town Itkhola Ghat, Madhura Ghat and Kalibari Char. Firstly, the researcher collected data from Itkhola Ghat slum pocket. In this slum pocket the researcher started field work in the month of December 2012. Total number of days taken to complete the field work in Itkhola Ghat was 99 days and number of respondents interviewed in Itkhola Ghat was 104. The researcher finished field work in Itkhola Ghat in the month of April 2013. In Madhura Ghat slum pocket the researcher started data collection in the month of may 2013. It took 60 days to cover 58 respondents. This slum pocket took more number of days as compared to number of respondents due to frequent unavailability of the respondents in their house. The researcher finished data collection in this slum

pocket in the month of Aug 2013. The researcher collected data from the Kalibari Char slum pocket from the month of September 2013 and finished it by July 2014. Out of the three slum pockets highest number of respondents are in Kalibari Char. The researcher started field work in the month of Sept 2013 and collected data from 476 respondents in this slum pocket. The number of days required to complete the field work in this slum pocket was 230 days. Total number of days taken to complete the field work was 389 days. It was not possible to visit the field every day due to bad weather condition and other unavoidable circumstances. Therefore, the researcher took one year and eight months to complete my field work.

FIELD EXPERIENCES

By conducting field work in slum pockets of Silchar town the researcher have gathered some experiences. She feels the necessity of documenting these experiences in her present work. Field visit has helped her to understand the different situations in the slum pocket, and the difficulties that the people are confronted with in their daily life. The people face the problem of improper electricity, unavailability of drinking water, lack of all weather roads, improper sanitation and many more problems which seeks people's participation along with the proper attention of the government and NGOs.

During the time of data collection some difficulties were experienced. Firstly, as the respondents were needy people who strive for basic requirement

of their life so whenever they are approached by researcher they feel that government officials or NGO workers have come to give some benefits to them. Secondly, another obstacle that stood in the path of data collection was male interference. Whenever the respondents were asked questions, male members of their family use to poke their nose as they feel that women are ignorant about the answers of the questions asked to them. However such problems did not appear with all the respondents. Some of the male members were politely listening questions and allowed the respondents to answer comfortably. Thirdly, whenever respondents come to know that interaction with them was not for giving any benefit to them but only to gather data about their problem, the respondents lost their interest to interact and co-operate with the researcher. Some of them directly asked what benefits they would get by replying the questions put forward to them and some of the respondents make some unnecessary excuses just to avoid the interaction. But all the respondents were not of the same kind some of them were polite and very co-operative who managed others to co-operate with the researcher. Fourthly, many of the respondents go out mainly for domestic and other works in town. It is very difficult to meet them at their convenient time. Though it was difficult but the researcher managed time to meet them at their house. Fifthly, roads in the slum pocket were worst in all weathers, particularly during summer it was very difficult to meet respondents at their house. But the researcher took all troubles to complete her work on time.

Conclusion

The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. Each and every step of research is scientifically developed to make the study more accurate. Methodology of the study is formulated in such a way that theory methods and data correlates and corroborates each other. Research ethics is a vital part of research and hence ethical issues pertaining to the present study are also considered in every step of research.

The next chapter deals with slum profile of Silchar town.