The role of pilot studies in ethnographic research: An assessment

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Abstract
Qualitative research[i] is also known as participatory research wherein researcher is supposed to act as a participant of that setting where he or she is carrying out the research. When the researcher participates and interacts with other people of that setting, he has to receive the responses of others carefully and give back the responses to same meticulously. Taking and giving responses as a participant cum researcher in the field causes numerous challenges and dilemma for an ethnographer while doing fieldwork. Therefore, he/she visits the study area before going for the whole data collections and makes rapport with informants. The first visit to the study area is known as 'pilot study'.

The paper deals with how the first visit the field make a great impression on an in-depth understanding of concerning subject. In addition, the article looks at various issues, challenges, and opportunities of a pilot study by the recent field visit and empirical study in few villages of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Keywords: caste prejudices; field experiences; key informants; rapport building; trust

Introduction

A pilot study is a "pre-study" of the fuller study when a researcher goes to the field with fewer subjects. It is also a tactic by which a research builds rapport with informants. A pilot study can encompass pre-testing a research instrument, like a new data collection method. '*Pre-testing*' and '*piloting' can* help a researcher to identify 'research questions' (Pidd and Woolley, 1980) [14]. A pilot study is a small scale preliminary study conducted to assess feasibility, cost, adverse events, time, and ethical issue, the effect size in an attempt to predict an appropriate sample size and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project. It can also be used to test an idea or hypothesis as well as 'for obtaining first-hand, "real world" experience (Kezar, 2000) [7]. Although the pilot study is done on a smaller scale but actual results of the study may vary from the results of pilot study. Therefore, it may not be appropriate for case studies. It is usually carried out on members of the relevant population, but not on those who will form part of the final sample. It is usually small in comparison with the main experiment and therefore, can provide only limited information on the sources and magnitude of variation of response measures.

For a researcher, a pilot study helps about the coming challenges in many ways. Moreover, "Necessary qualities of the best ethnographers (and logically linked to what it takes to be a participant observer) include visual acuity, keen listening skills, tolerance for detail, and capacity to integrate innumerable parts into shifting wholes (Heath and Street, 2008: 57)." Keeping in above characters of a researcher, the expected challenges and opportunities can be described as follows-

1. Rapport building: Pilot study help to establish a trustful, empathetic and friendly relation with the unfamiliar community member that is the foremost challenge for a researcher without which he/she cannot move a bit as far as research is concerned. To some extent, strong rapport with community members facilitates the researcher for in depth analysis and comprehensive understanding of the scenario and research issue. The process of rapport building requires a great deal of patience from researcher's end. The mutual relationship between native and ethnographer plays an important role in getting constructed reality. It seems that relationship can be built on trust, friendship, economic contract, teaching-learning, adopted as a family member, etc. (Seidman, 2006) [18]. An ethnographer is also considered as 'meaning maker' and 'symbol user'. It means that it is very significant to build a relationship (with informants) which gives 'power of disclosing a word'. The building relationship through empathy and gesture are also important for the validity of information.

2. Structuring the questions: A "pre-study" of the field gives certain new ideas about how to ask a question and whether the question is desired to ask or not because such issues entangle the researcher in the trap of dilemma (Heath and Street, 2008). For instance, inquiries about one's income and possessions, religious belief, political inclination, and relationship status, etc. are too delicate to ask directly in the form of a question. Question on sensitive issues gives the impression of 'attack on respondent's privacy' that restricts the respondent to respond. So, pilot study becomes essential for a researcher to which he/she may be aware of this dilemma.

3. Stereotypes and prejudices: Researcher is also a social

being, hence, not value free social element. Internalization of various values during our primary and secondary socialization process makes our behavior and thought stereotypical and prejudiced, somewhat, about something and somebody. This stereotypical prejudiced behavior and thought of the researcher restraint to participate in the life of subjects in the desired manner, consequently his findings are left incomplete, biased and assumption based (Figueiredo, 2015) [4]. Therefore, a pilot study explores certain hidden things which we could not get in literature. There is also need to avoid our cultural bagged during data collection.

4. **Ethical Values:** In an ethnographic study, a researcher usually goes for case studies or interview to gather the information. This information is related to both the personal and social life experiences of a respondent. After establishing a good and trustworthy relation through a pilot study with respondent, researcher is able to get the personal and sensitive accounts of respondent's life. Sometimes such information should not be discussed publically. It becomes the necessity of the research findings in order to make it rich, substantial and valid. Therefore, protecting respondent's confidentiality while using the personal life accounts in research is one of the greatest challenge and dilemma of a researcher (Ellingson, 1998) [3].

5. **Taking consent:** In case of minor respondents, taking consent from their guardian is another challenge that a research perceives in qualitative studies. Therefore, a pilot study may help to a researcher to make strong rapport with guardians of the minor respondents.

After analyzing the above concerns, we can say that a pilot study gives a wide scope to understand undiscovered multiple realities through building mutual 'trust'. It seems important to point here a pilot study is also used to develop a methodology to conduct a nationwide evaluation of survey practices and the quality of survey data. The basic aims of pilot study can be understood with certain questions, for instance, (a) what kinds of information are needed for the evaluation of surveys, (b) how should the information be collected, and by whom, (c) what kinds of surveys should be studied, and how can one develop a frame from which to select a sample of surveys, (d) would survey sponsors and survey organizations cooperate in supplying information about survey (Bailar and Lanphier, 1978) [2]. Although the hermeneutic circle, as described by Hidegger, provides a helpful framework for understanding the importance of pilot studies within the research process. This framework assumes that these studies provide contributions to research projects that cannot be obtained through mostly, or only, contemplation (Kezar, 2000; Heidegger, 1962) [7, 6]. Moreover, the idea of pilot study becomes very important in qualitative research when a researcher wants to write the culture and social practices of 'others' (Sarukkai, 1997) [17]. Therefore, he/she needs to be familiar with unfamiliar things through a pilot study, especially for upcoming challenges.

Fieldwork Experiences through Pilot Studies
During March and April (2017), researcher did a pilot study in few villages namely Natauli, Tandawa, and Lautan Ka Purwa. These villages are located in Sultanpur district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. For making social interaction, first, scholar visited Lautan Ka Purwa villages as a stranger where he met few people who were working in the field. One villager asked in Awadhi dialects, "*Bhaiya, aap kaha se aawa aha, aur kese milai chahat aha*?" (Brother, from where you came and did you want to meet someone [in suspected way]). "My name is '...' and I am research scholar in...so on so forth, and I came here for understanding the problem of the people and cultural practices", scholar replied them with a smile. The conversation was going on at least more than 30 minutes. It appeared that informants were feeling uneasy during this conversation because they were hesitating to share their emotion and perception. The reason behind that was 'caste' because the researcher wanted to hide his caste identity for a particular purpose. The matter of fact the field investigator intentionally introduced only his main name while, indirectly, many times informants wanted to know his surname (caste). Therefore, it was asked, "*Aage kya lagate hain*?" (What surname [you] wear). It means after his name what surname he puts. The surprising thing is that the informants wanted to know the caste of the researcher because caste is a living reality which also creates a dilemma sometimes for a field investigator. "What to do now?" The question comes in the mind of each field investigator and a decision is required to take timely. Moreover, after talking around half-an-hour, the researcher decided to reveal his caste identity because for getting close interaction with research participants 'revealing caste identity' had become inevitable. The curiosity of informants also indicated that they wanted to talk many things about their socio-political and religious life but the condition was 'caste title'. Meanwhile, the first field visit became little interesting, and the enthusiasm to know the caste identity gave a glimpse of mutual 'trust' for 'own' community as well as suspicion of breach of trust for 'other' caste. Their skepticism and the expression "*aage-lagana*" (wish to know the surname of caste) show a social distance between two castes.

After revealing the surname by field investigator, informants expressed many things [ii] about relationship with other castes in daily routine. After one week of the pilot study, once again, researchers reached Lautan Ka Purva village, and they met with the people who are considered lower in caste hierarchies. They expressed about their social life and social relation with other communities. With the help of them, researchers developed a positive rapport with a local village *pradhan* (elected leader of village *panchayat*) who gave few secondary data and some insightful information. Apart from this, researchers also got an offer to participate in few social occasions like '*barhi* (celebration on the 12th days of the new born baby), *terahi* (a rite for a deceased person) and *birha* folklore. After a long conversation on various themes with villagers, field investigator could know about the role of factions and inter-caste relations in the village *panchayat* and how it helps during the election of village *panchayat*.

It is very interesting to point here for a field-investigator who supposes to go for a pilot study because when a researcher enters in a village, his/her attention should go to the inter-caste as well as intra-caste relations. First, with whom a research should meet/interact is a paramount concern. Otherwise, a section of people (faction) will stop giving relevant information. Therefore, we need to study the major factions of

a village and their nexus with other factions. The work of Oscar Lewis (1958) [10] of Rampur on 'faction' attracts our attention. To understand socio-political life in a north Indian village called 'Rampur,' Oscar Lewis (1958) [10] also did a pilot research project. The main aims of the research project were threefold: (1) To develop relatively simple but reliable methods for the study of social organization, leadership, and value systems, (2) to understand village life and organization, and (3) to measure the impact of community development programme upon the culture and economy of the village. The study of Rampur gives a glance about village politics. He found that 'faction' plays very crucial role in rural politics. He defined a faction as a primarily 'kinship unit' that is consisted with one or more extended families. Lewis noticed that there (in Rampur) were no village-wide leaders but only leaders of small-groups known as 'dhars,' to which he called 'faction'. Once he learned of the '*dhars*' pattern, he elaborated symmetrically about their reciprocal relation through size, membership, kinship, history, functions, and cohesiveness, etc. Rampur is multiple castes village in which Jat is a majority caste while Chamars, Bhangis, and Kumhar are second majority castes. Apart from this, Nai (barbers), Dhobis (washermen), Lohar (blacksmith), etc. represent the very minimal population in Rampur village.

The rudimentary arguments behind pointing these instances are to indicate the importance of a pilot study for getting in-depth knowledge about caste composition and mutual inter-caste relation in rural society in which a faction takes place. Although the concept of faction is losing its virtue after 73rd amendment[iii], of Indian constitution (1993) because new changes have been taken place after the implementation of the suggestions of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee for Panchayati Raj (Ananth, 2014) [1]. The discussion with the people of Tandawa and Rajanpur, it is found there are multiple factions among same strata's castes. These factions can be differentiated on basis of ideological structure, interest group, and caste but there is no such unified structure for making a faction.

In sum, the interaction with the respondents was always begun with a description of the family, occupation (agriculture or milk selling), and the recent changing scenario in the educational system, participation in a marriage ceremony, mutual reciprocity, etc. However, surprisingly, respondents expressed at the end of the conversation that this was the first time when they expressed a lot of their thoughts and feelings regarding their everyday activities. Meanwhile, few villagers of Gaderiya Ka Purwa were looking afraid because they did not want to disclose about the financial aid which they have been getting from the Indian government.

Some Observations from Tandawa Village

After facing few challenges in 'Lautan Ka Purwa' village and examine the nature of the field, the researcher decided to visit the Tandawa village. Tandawa is a multi-castes village in the northern part of the Sultanpur district in Uttar Pradesh. This village has semi-pacca road, irrigation facilities, electricity (more than eighty percent) and more than ninety percent families have own hand-pump. The total population of Tandawa village is 322 who are occupying the cultivated area of more than one thousand acres. After series of conversation,

we could get to know that more than sixty members of this village are engaged in agrarian activities with their families' members. Some of the families of this village have smaller land holding especially Pasi and Kahar caste, but they are involved in agricultural works like *adhiya* (share cropper) and *rehan* (leasing land) system. Tandawa village can be recognized as a multi-castes village (the village in which few caste live together) and selected for depth study. Other sources of income of the villagers are milk-productions and petty businesses, for instance, eight families have their shop including restaurant, furniture store, merchant, and cosmetics shop. Apart from this, other families are involved in private jobs in many cities like Sultanpur, Gurugram, Noida, New Delhi, Mumbai, and Gujarat, etc. Few families are involved in caste based traditional job like sheep and goat farming, making leaf plates, mud pots, etc. within village mainly who belong to Kumhar, Gaderiya and Banmanus castes (Prasad, 2016: 191).

Key Informants

The pilot study also helps to find out some important key informants who help throughout our field work. Key informants are 'organic intellectuals'[iv] in their respected field. They are those whose social positions in a research setting give them specialist knowledge about native inhabitants, social processes or happenings that is more extensive, detailed or privileged than ordinary people, and who are therefore particularly valuable sources of information to a researcher, not least in the early stages of a project (Payne, 2004) [13]. It means a key informant is someone in an organization who can offer specific, specialized knowledge on a particular issue or subject. Although a 'key informant' can frequently offer a particular perspective or communicate specific needs or challenges that a particular group in an organization may face. Above pointed issues are major challenges for a researcher, and timely need to deal with it.

Few Cases from Tandawa Village

During the pilot study, field investigator met a few key informants and made a good rapport with them who are actively facing the social challenges and try to find out a salutation in local settings. For getting appropriate understanding about 'field,' few examples with details about 'key informants' have been given below-

Ram Asare Yadav

Ram Asare Yadav is 60 years of age and educated till the fifth standard. He lives in the village with his wife and five children. He is a very active member of *biradari bhoj*, and attended more than fifty *biradari bhojs*. His father was a poor peasant and cattle herder. A few years back his father passed away. Therefore, Ram Asare has been working as a peasant because there was no other source of income in the village, and his educational background and chronic illness are not allowing him to go for livelihood in urban areas. Due to close relation with *pradhan*, he got about eighty thousand rupees for making a home under the scheme of 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna'.

If we see his social background, a decade back, a family from Thakur (a dominant caste) caste occupied his one-acre land by

claiming that 'this land belonged to his ancestor'. However, the matter was brought in a civil court of headquarter of Sultanpur district. After a lengthy hearing, the civil court gave a decision in favour of R.A. Yadav. Thus, more than ten years have gone, but he could not still get *'malikana-haq'* (right) over the disputed land which was given by legal procedures. The main aim here to point out this incident is to make visible the local social milieu, which motivates to a person for consolidating their caste network. This kind of incident and caste based faction are a distinct reality among rural inhabitants in Tandawa village.

Ram Asare Yadav talks about *biradari bhoj* (a community feast) very happily with pride sense. He has also been observing few changes in the traditional pattern of *biradari bhoj*. He claims about the superiority of Brahmins and their influence in *biradari bhoj*. He narrates few important points about old socio-cultural practices among Yadav community. He said, "Brahmins did not accept *kheer* (a dessert made of milk and rice) if other castes including Yadavs made the *kheer*." The notion of impurity was the main reason behind it. He also spoke about the importance of symbol concerning *biradari bhoj*. He responded, "Just a decade back, *biradari bhoj* was known as '*brahm bhoj*' in which more than two hundred people from Brahmin caste were invited by an organizer (performer of *biradari bhoj*). Inviting to the Brahmins was also matter of symbol because the ritual status of an organizer was considered higher in the village. Thus, due to formal education and socio-political activities, new nuances have appeared among new generation... the present generation is not giving much importance to the ritual activities, but it seems that new generation is enthusiastic about commonality." His wife never attends *biradari bhoj* because an organizer invites to the head of the family especially a male member. Meanwhile, Ram Asare Yadav never convinced to his wife for participating in community feast, but both (husband and wife) keep interest to organize a big community feast once in their life.

Durga Prasad Yadav

Durga Prasad Yadav is 45 years of age and is educated till ninth standard. His illiterate father Ram Lal Yadav migrated four decades back from Nimasaray village to Tandwa village because there was not enough land for surviving a joint family. Years back, his father passed away due to a heart attack. In the last rite of his father (*terhavi*), around fifteen hundred people participated, and most of them were from the same caste (Ahir/Yadav). Moreover, he lives in a joint family with his mother, brothers and five children. He keeps interest in politics and firmly believes in family welfare through attaining higher education. Therefore, the new generation of his family is getting a quality education. He has about ten acres land and a restaurant (which is popularly known as 'Yadav restaurant' in Sudnapur market [four km far from Tandawa village). The Yadav restaurant is also a spot place for local Chaudharis of Yadav community where they discuss current political scenarios and their personal affair. 'Yadav Restaurant' is handled by his younger brother, Mata Prasad Yadav.

In Tandwa village, there are fifty-five families and divided into three factions. Durga Prasad Yadav leads one progressive

largest faction. The term 'progressive' means here the way of working for the welfare of entire village without caste or personal interest. At the age of thirty, he joined 'Communist Party of India (CPI) in headquarters of Sultanpur district, but after working several years, he felt that the main objective (development of Tandwa village) of his political career cannot be fulfilled. Therefore, he worked independently with '*gram-pradhan*' (elected representatives of village *panchayat*) namely, Ram Surat Vishkarma and Ram Kirat Vishkarma. In brief, it is essential to point out here that Tandawa was a very remote village where lacks of accessibility of road, electricity, school, proper drinking water, etc., people were living in a pathetic situation. In the rainy season, inhabitants had to pass through the shallow lake, if they wanted to go for livelihood.

With the support of Ram Surat Vishkarma and few volunteers, under the leadership of Durga Prasad Yadav, first a bridge and a link-road (*kachcha*: made by soil) were built. Later on, he got some funds from a local M.L.A. namely Ram Ratan Yadav for building semi-*pacca* road. At present, there are availabilities of school (till the eighth standard), well-connected *pacca*-road, electricity, water facility, and a latrine-room in each household because of his efforts.

In term of community concern, he also keeps little interest for the welfare of his community. Therefore, he often expresses, "*Biradari bhoj* is very expensive feast which leads to the people of Yadav community into poor and backwardness." He is also much concerned about local ritual based hierarchal situation, and pointed out, "Due to the notion of purity/impurity, peasant castes (Ahir, Kurmi, Gaderiya, etc.) were not participating in the commensal practices of Rajput/Thakur caste." He is a very respectable member of Yadav community. Most of the Yadav *chaudharis* keep close relation with him because of his polite nature. Therefore, if someone from Yadav community needs to find a suitable bride/groom for his daughter/son, Durga Prasad Yadav is always ready to help them, and he also keeps updated about these issues.

Raj Bahadur Yadav

Raj Bahadur Yadav is 45 years of the age and educated till higher secondary level education. He lives in the same village with his family members: wife, daughter, and a son. He has about five acres fertile land. His eldest son is a government's employ and working in Indian force. Other two sons are attaining higher education, and they are living in headquarter of Sultanpur district. His daughter has done B.Ed. (bachelor of education) and Master in History. Raj Bahadur Yadav is highly motivated in politics at present, but if we look at his political background, it was not so smooth. At the age of 35, he became an ascetic. Therefore, he is also known as 'sadhu' in Tandawa village. Later on, he joined 'Communist Party of India (CPI) in the headquarters of Sultanpur district. He is a dedicated member of CPI. People of the neighboring village called him 'Neta-Ji' (a respected term) and salute him by saying, '*Lal Salam*' (red salute). Reading revolutionary books on Bhagat Singh, Lenil, Marx, Mao, etc. become an inevitable part of his family culture. Due to engaging in such activities, his elder son Jitendra Kumar Yadav also joined SFI (Student Federation of India: a student body of CPI) during his schooling.

Raj Bahadur Yadav is an active member of *biradari bhoj*. The active participant means here the average of participation in a community feast. His father was a *chaudhari* of Tandawa village, but a few years back he passed away. Therefore, now the responsibility of his father is carried by Raj Bahadur Yadav. He also contested for the post of village *pradhan* but could not win.

Natauli Village: Some Observations
After spending few days in Tandawa village, field investigator decided to visit Natauli village. Numerically, Natauli village is dominated by Yadavs therefore, in order to know intra-caste relation, this village is very important. To understand mutual reciprocities, foremost, some comprehensive detail can be understood in following way. It is located in northern parts of Sultanpur district in Uttar Pradesh. It has good irrigation facilities, electricity, intermediate school, and it has been linked by pucca-road to main market namely Sudanapur. Sudanapura represents Kurmi and Chamar castes while its neighboring village Kithawa represents to Brahamin community. Natauli has also good financial prosperity (in terms of suitable business, land position, personal tractor, and two-wheelers) than other villages. In sense of numerical strength, Yadav community is enjoying here with the dominant social position. Yadavs can also be identified as 'dominant caste' in Natauli villages.

Now, most of the Yadav families are also keeping interest in Samajwadi Party (a ruling political party in Utter Pradesh). A few villagers of Natauli migrated for seeking a job as well as business purpose in many states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra. Few families are also engaged in tilling the land for economic surplus. Slowly and gradually, people of Natauli are purchasing the land nearby *chauraha* (market) and urban areas.

In terms of caste compositions, the inhabitants of Natauli can be divided socially into few caste segments namely Yadavs, Kurmi, Nat, Banmanus, and Chamars.

In term of cultural practices, most of the villagers genuinely believe in purity and impurity. The tendency of active participation in ritual activities is higher than other villages. Most of the villagers believe in purification, domination and superiority feelings. Few social events like *deeh puja* (the worship of village deity)*, hoond* system (mutual sharing group of laborer activities for agricultural) and participation in *biradari bhoj,* etc. create mutual relation among inhabitants of Tandawa village.

Concluding Remarks
A good research strategy requires careful planning, and a pilot study will often be a part of this strategy because it is a small experiment designed to test logistically. Therefore, the above discussions make our attention on the major opportunities and challenges through particular examples because a pilot study improves the actual stud's quality and efficiency and also helps to gather information prior to a large study. It reveals deficiencies in the design of a proposed experiment or procedure and these can be addressed before time. As it was noticed during the pilot study, the main economic activities of Yadav community are the production and selling the milk. It is found that a '*dudhiya'* (a milk-man) needs to go to *dalit-basti/purawa* (locality of dalit) to collect milk. During the collecting of the milk, he often uses the milk-pots of all castes or communities without any feeling of impurity, because in business money matter to both. According to a respondent namely Santosh Yadav, "*Dhandhe me jati aur achhotpan nahi chalata*" (In business matter, there is no untouchability and caste feeling). Although in case of a milk-seller of dalit community[v] who visits the home of Yadav-*dudhiya*; it is noticed that Yadav-milk-man maintain social distance, and offers water in a separate glass. It shows the different attitude of the people for a marginal-dalits. On the other hand, if a teacher, leader or officer from dalit community visits Yadav-*dudhiya's* (milk-man of Yadav community) home, he usually serves in his utensil. It means in such situation there is the positive attitude for a non-marginalized dalits. Here, the 'social position' of a person matters for getting equal respect. These phenomena show there is no unified system of caste practices, and it depends on time and situation in which this kind of coincident takes place.

However, the pilot study was fascinating because researcher could get familiar with the range of issues. Similarly, after getting 'trust' of a respondent of Yadav community, he shared his experience, "In case, if I go to urban areas with a *dalit* person, I live, coke and eat together, and during that time there is no separation on the basis of caste but after coming back to home both usually maintain 'distance' because of 'social pressure'." Further field investigator clarified, "What do you mean by 'social pressure' and from where does it come?" He replied, "It comes from our '*samaj'* (community). Therefore, it becomes necessary for me to follow these steps."

Another respondent namely Ram Narayan, a postgraduate student who belongs to Kori caste (a dalit community), points, "In case of blood donation, an untouchable caste may give blood to a ritually higher caste fellow, but patient (blood-taker) is never considered as an untouchable by our society. It shows double-standard of society because in such case blood is also not measurable variable for mapping untouchability." We asked him, "Who is responsible for this (untouchability), and do you have some ideas how to come out from untouchability practice in local settings?" After a lengthy discussion, he expressed, "…the idea of social distance (by caste prejudice) is a mental construction and to come out of this situation 'education' and 'economic stability' become very important." However, through the conversations, the interviewer could know how such caste practices prevail there with social acceptance. These instances also indicate towards the attitudes of 'mute-witness'[vi] in rural scenarios. It seems that the current socio-economic 'position' of a person become more important for getting equal social status in the study area.

In these villages, the interaction system can also be mapped out through some occasions like birthday parties, *barhi* ceremony of newly born child, *deeh* or *kali-mata puja* (goddess worship), as well as few festivals like *holi*[vii] (festival of colour), *deepawali*[viii] (festival of light) etc. but this type of interaction occasionally happens. Although apart from this, *jajmani* system and *hood* (mutual participation in agricultural activities) system are some other practices which show the pattern of inter-caste relation.

Jajmani system is working as a part of rural culture. Jajmani

System is a tradition based mutual cooperation in which few castes are identified for 'services'. These castes are named as '*kamin*' or '*praja*'. In addition, Jajmani system is also a symbol of economic reciprocity in which *kamin* (from Kumhar, Gaderiya, Chamar, Badhayi etc. castes) perform occasional services with dignity and self-respect (Wiser, 1958). *Purohit* (Brahamins priest) is considered ritually higher among *praja* (working castes). Nayee (Barber caste) works with multiple roles: as a hair-cutter, as a helper of a priest, as a messenger, etc. Few other *prajas* like Kahar (provides water and wash utensils), Kumhar (main work to provide mud pots), Banmanus (main work to provide leaf plates), Badhyee (main work to provide carpentry related labour), Dhobi and Chamar (cleaning related works) etc. castes were playing very important role for continuation of this systems. However, now the affection for *jajmani* system is becoming unpopular. The researcher observed that the popularity of giving grain to '*kamin*' is losing its virtue while the monetary system has been introduced for sustainability of Jajmani system.

In sum, the idea of pilot study seems to be very relevant especially in qualitative research. Thus, there are also a number of other methods of data collection which have been used in qualitative research frequently but the pilot study still is very relevant. Therefore, research must visit in the study area before starting his/her entire data collection process.

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i   It is an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and sometimes counter-disciplinary field. It crosses the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multi-paradigmatic in focus, and its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multi-method approach. Researchers are devoted to the naturalistic perspective and the interpretative understanding of human experience through certain approach (Nelson *et al*. 1992) Qualitative researchers also study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret, phenomena regarding the meanings people bring to them. In other words, qualitative research helps to understand the deeper meaning of significant topic that the subject ascribed. Qualitative research encompasses a range of specific techniques including in-depth qualitative interviews, participant and non-participant observation, etc.

ii   It is quite interesting to point here the caste of field investigator and the caste of the group of people is same. Therefore, there was no space of skepticism and 'misbeliefs'.

iii   The 73rd amendment act has added part IX to the Constitution of India entitled as 'Panchayats'. A new schedule called as 'eleventh schedule' lists 29 functional items that Panchayats are supposed to deal with under Article 243-G. The core provisions of the Act are divisible into compulsory provisions and voluntary arrangements.

iv   The term was coined by an Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci. He is best known for his theory of 'cultural hegemony'.

v   Such caste practices are usual in the study areas.

vi   Active participant word can be used as a contrary to 'mute-witness', but it is very similar to 'passive recipients'. Neither dalit community nor milk-sellers from Yadav community raise their voices against such evil practice like untouchability.

vii   Holi is a popular festival in northern part of India which is celebrated with color in the month of 'Falgun' (March). It is noticed in Tandawa village that backward castes avoid celebrating these festivals with the people of higher castes.

viii   It is a Hindu festival for goddess Luxami in which people worship with *deepak* (light).