SOS POLITICAL SCIENCE &PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MBA HRD 203

SUBJECT NAME: - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 203

TOPIC: MEANING,OBJECTIVES & TYPES OF RESEARCH

MEANING OF RESEARCH

Research in simple terms refers to search for knowledge. It is a scientific and systematic search for information on a particular topic or issue. It is also known as the art of scientific investigation. Several social scientists have defined research in different ways.

In the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, D. Slesinger and M. Stephension (1930) defined research as "the manipulation of things, concepts or symbols for the purpose of generalizing to extend, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in the construction of theory or in the practice of an art".

According to Redman and Mory (1923), research is a "systematized effort to gain new knowledge". It is an academic activity and therefore the term should be used in a technical sense.

According to Clifford Woody (kothari, 1988), research comprises "defining and redefining problems, formulating hypotheses or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and finally, carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulated hypotheses".

Thus, research is an original addition to the available knowledge, which contributes to its further advancement. It is an attempt to pursue truth through the methods of study, observation, comparison and experiment. In sum, research is the search for knowledge, using objective and systematic methods to find solution to a problem.

DEFINITION OF RESEARCH

According to **Black and Champion**, "scientific research consist of obtaining information through empirical observation that can be used for systematic development of logically related propositions attempting to establish casual relations among variable".

Emory defines research as "any organized inquiry designed and carried out to provide information for solving a problem".

Kerlinger defines research as a" systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical relations among natural phenomena". **L.V. Redman and A.V.H. Morry** has defined "systematic effort to gain new knowledge we call research".

According to **C. A. Moser :** "Social research is a systematized investigation to gain new knowledge about social phenomenon and problems."

According to **P.V. Young:** "Social research is a scientific undertaking which by means of logical methods, aim to discover new facts or old facts and to analyze their sequences, interrelationships, casual explanations and natural laws which govern them."

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The objective of research is to find answers to the questions by applying scientific procedures. In other words, the main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and has not yet been discovered. Although every research study has its own specific objectives, the research objectives may be broadly grouped as follows:

1. To gain familiarity with new insights into a phenomenon (i.e., formulative research studies);

2. To accurately portray the characteristics of a particular individual, group, or a situation (i.e., descriptive research studies);

3. To analyze the frequency with which something occurs (i.e., diagnostic research studies); and

4. To examine the hypothesis of a causal relationship between two variables (i.e., hypothesis-testing research studies).

RESEARCH METHODS VERSUS METHODOLOGY

Research methods include all those techniques/methods that are adopted for conducting research. Thus, research techniques or methods are the methods that the researchers adopt for conducting the research studies.

On the other hand, research methodology is the way in which research problems are solved systematically. It is a science of studying how research is conducted scientifically. Under it, the researcher acquaints himself/herself with the various steps generally adopted to study a research problem, along with the underlying

logic behind them. Hence, it is not only important for the researcher to know the research techniques/ methods, but also the scientific approach called methodology.

RESEARCH APPROACHES

There are two main approaches to research, namely quantitative approach and qualitative approach. The quantitative approach involves the collection of quantitative data, which are put to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal and rigid manner. This approach further includes experimental, inferential, and simulation approaches to research. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach uses the method of subjective assessment of opinions, behavior and attitudes. Research in such a situation is a function of the researcher's impressions and insights. The results generated by this type of research are either in non-quantitative form or in the form which cannot be put to rigorous quantitative analysis. Usually, this approach uses techniques like in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, and projective techniques.

TYPES OF RESEARCH

There are different types of research. The basic ones are as follows.

1. **Descriptive Versus Analytical:**

   Descriptive research consists of surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different types. The main objective of descriptive research is describing the state of affairs as it prevails at the time of study. The term 'ex post facto research' is quite often used for descriptive research studies in social sciences and business research. The most distinguishing feature of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables here. He/she has to only report what is happening or what has happened. Majority of the

ex post facto research projects are used for descriptive studies in which the researcher attempts to examine phenomena, such as the consumers' preferences, frequency of purchases, shopping, etc. Despite the inability of the researchers to control the variables, ex post facto studies may also comprise attempts by them to discover the causes of the selected problem. The methods of research adopted in conducting descriptive research are survey methods of all kinds, including correlational and comparative methods. Meanwhile in the Analytical research, the researcher has to use the already available facts or information, and analyse them to make a critical evaluation of the subject.

2. **Applied Versus Fundamental:**

   Research can also be applied or fundamental in nature. An attempt to find a solution to an immediate problem encountered by a firm, an industry, a business organization, or the society is known as applied research. Researchers engaged in such researches aim at drawing certain conclusions confronting a concrete social or business problem. On the other hand, fundamental research mainly concerns generalizations and formulation of a theory. In other words, "Gathering knowledge for knowledge's sake is termed 'pure' or 'basic' research" (Young in Kothari, 1988). Researches relating to pure mathematics or concerning some natural phenomenon are instances of Fundamental Research. Likewise, studies focusing on human behavior also fall under the category of fundamental research. Thus, while the principal objective of applied research is to find a solution to some pressing practical problem, the objective of basic research is to find information with a broad base of application and add to the already existing organized body of scientific knowledge.

3. **Quantitative Versus Qualitative:**

   Quantitative research relates to aspects that can be quantified or can be expressed in terms of quantity. It involves the measurement of quantity or amount. Various available statistical and econometric methods are adopted for analysis in such research. Which includes correlation, regressions and time series analysis etc,. On the other hand, Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomena, or more specifically, the aspects related to or involving quality or kind. For example, an important type of qualitative research is 'Motivation Research', which investigates into the reasons for certain human behavior. The main aim of this type of research is discovering the underlying motives and desires of human beings by using in-depth interviews. The other techniques employed in such research are story completion tests, sentence completion tests, word association tests, and other similar projective methods. Qualitative research is particularly significant in the context of behavioural sciences, which aim at discovering the underlying motives of human behavior. Such research helps to analyze the various factors that motivate human beings to behave in a certain manner, besides contributing to an understanding of what makes individuals like or dislike a particular thing. However, it is worth noting that conducting qualitative research in practice is considerably a difficult task. Hence, while undertaking such research, seeking guidance from experienced expert researchers is important.

4. **Conceptual Versus Empirical:**

   The research related to some abstract idea or theory is known as Conceptual Research. Generally, philosophers and thinkers use it for developing new

concepts or for reinterpreting the existing ones. Empirical Research, on the other hand, exclusively relies on the observation or experience with hardly any regard for theory and system. Such research is data based, which often comes up with conclusions that can be verified through experiments or observation. Empirical research is also known as experimental type of research, in which it is important to first collect the facts and their sources, and actively take steps to stimulate the production of desired information. In this type of research, the researcher first formulates a working hypothesis, and then gathers sufficient facts to prove or disprove the stated hypothesis. He/she formulates the experimental design, which according to him/her would manipulate the variables, so as to obtain the desired information. This type of research is thus characterized by the researcher's control over the variables under study. In simple term, empirical research is most appropriate when an attempt is made to prove that certain variables influence the other variables in some way. Therefore, the results obtained by using the experimental or empirical studies are considered to be the most powerful evidences for a given hypothesis.

5. **Other Types of Research:**

The remaining types of research are variations of one or more of the afore-mentioned type of research. They vary in terms of the purpose of research, or the time required to complete it, or may be based on some other similar factors. On the basis of time, research may either be in the nature of one-time or longitudinal time series research. While the research is restricted to a single time-period in the former case, it is conducted over several time-periods in the latter case. Depending upon the environment in which the research is to be conducted, it can also be laboratory research or field-setting

research, or simulation research, besides being diagnostic or clinical in nature. Under such research, in-depth approaches or case study method may be employed to analyze the basic causal relations. These studies usually undertake a detailed in-depth analysis of the causes of certain events of interest, and use very small samples and sharp data collection methods. The research may also be explanatory in nature. Formalized research studies consist of substantial structure and specific hypotheses to be verified. As regards to historical research, sources like historical documents, remains, etc. Are utilized to study past events or ideas. It also includes philosophy of persons and groups of the past or any remote point of time.

Research has also been classified into decision-oriented and conclusion-oriented categories. The decision-oriented research is always carried out as per the need of a decision maker and hence, the researcher has no freedom to conduct the research according to his/her own desires. On the other hand, in the case of Conclusion-oriented research, the researcher is free to choose the problem, redesign the enquiry as it progresses and even change conceptualization as he/she wishes to. An operation research is a kind of decision-oriented research, where in scientific method is used in providing the departments, a quantitative basis for decision-making with respect to the activities under their purview.