**1: What is research?**

The unique characteristic of human mind is the curiosity to know about the universe. Innumerable questions arise in our mind about our environment, planet and the universe. Most of these questions starting with what, why, how and soon. For example, what are stars? , why day and night alternate? How is rain formed and why the mode of life and activities of human beings vary from place to place? Whenever such questions arise we seek answer to them or we try to find out solutions to them. Seeking answers to questions and finding solutions to the problems have been the basis of human progress. A systematic search for an answer to a question or a solution to a problem is calledresearch.

Actually research is simply the process of arriving as dependable solution to a problem through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of a data. Research is the most important process for advancing knowledge for promoting progress and to enable man to relate more effectively to his environment to accomplish his purpose and to solve his conflicts. Although it is not the only way, it is one of the most effective ways of solvingproblems.

The term research consist of two words,’ Re’+’Search’. “Re” means again and again and “Search” means to find out something. The following is the process ;

Observes collection ofdata

Person phenomena conclusions

Againandagain Analysis ofdata

Therefore, the research is a process of which a person observes the phenomena again and again and collects the data and on the basis of data he draws some conclusions.

***Definition of Research:***

“A systematic search for an answer to a question or a solution to a problem is calledresearch”

According to the American sociologist Earl Robert Babbie,

“Research is a systematic inquiry to describe, explain, predict, and control the observed phenomenon. Research involves inductive and deductive methods.”

* 1. 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 amongvariable”.
  2. **Emory** defines research as “any organized inquiry designed and carried out toprovide

information for solving a problem”.

* 1. **Kerlinger**defines research as a” systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical relations among naturalphenomena”.
  2. **L.V. Redman and A.V.H. Morry**have defined “systematic effort to gain new knowledge we callresearch”.

##### Characteristic of Research

The above definitions reveal the following characteristics of research.

* + 1. Research is a systematic and critical investigation to aphenomenon.
    2. It aims at interpreting and explaining aphenomenon.
    3. It adopts scientificmethod.
    4. It is based on empirical evidences and observable experience.
    5. It develops generalizations, principles ortheories.
    6. It directed towards finding answer to the questions and solutions to theproblems.

1. **2: Purpose ofResearch**

The purposes or objectives of research are varied. They are,

* + Research extends knowledge of human beings social life and environment.
  + Research reveals the mysteries of nature.
  + Research establishes generalizations and general laws and contributes to theory building in various fields
  + Research helps us to improve our knowledge and ability to handle situation.
  + General laws developed through research may enable us to make reliable predictions of events.
  + Research aims to analyze inter-relationship between variables and to derive causal explanations, which help us to better understanding of the world in which we live.
  + Research aims to finding solutions to the problem, e.g.:- socio-economic problems, health

problems, organizational and human relational problems and so on…

* + Research also aims at developing new tools, concepts and theories for better understanding to unknown phenomena.
  + Research helps national planning board to focus our national development. It enables the planners to evaluate alternative strategies, on-going programs and evaluation etc.,
  + Research provides functional data for rational decision making and formulation of strategies and policies.

### SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH: MEANING AND SCOPE

#### : Social Science Research

##### Meaning and Scope:

Sciences are broadly divided in to natural (physical) sciences and social sciences. Social sciences include various disciplines dealing with human life, human behavior and institutions.

E.g. Anthropology, History, Economics, Education, Commerce, Demography etc,.

Social sciences are not exact science like physical sciences. It deals with human beings. Human nature and mans environment are so complex, that it is more difficult to comprehend and predict human behavior than the physical phenomena. It is difficult see the underlying uniformities in the diversity of complex human behavior.

##### Social science research

Social science research is a systematic method of exploring, analyzing and conceptualizing human life in order to extend, correct or verify knowledge of human behavior and social life. Social research seeks to find explanations to unexplained phenomena, to clarify the doubtful and correct the misconceived fact of social life.

It involves the application of scientific method for understanding and analyzing of social life in order to correct and verify the existing knowledge as a system. The main idea behind social research is to discover new inter relations, new knowledge, new facts and also to verify old ones.

Human behavior may be involved by certain values and laws. The main purpose of social research is to discover those laws which can be proper guidelines for studying human contact and behavior.

According to P.V. Young, we may define social research as “the systematic method of discovering new facts and verifying old facts. Their sequences inter relationship, causal explanations and the natural laws govern them”. From the above definition we can identify the following,

##### Characteristics of Social Research

* + Social research deals with social phenomena. It studies human behavior and their feelings.
  + Social research is carried on both for discovering new facts and verification of the old ones.
  + Social research tries to establish casual connection between various human activities.

##### Nature of Social Science Research

In contrast to the physical science the social science lack the power of exact prediction; this is attributed to the “erratic”, idiosynoration and irregular nature of human behavior. Social scientist point out that the low predictable potential in social science is due to our limited knowledge of relevant variables operative in the group like customs, traditions etc,. The cause and effect are difficult to be segregated clearly. The present state of development of social science is far behind physical science. Merton advises to social scientist against their despair; it is possible to develop border applicability.

##### Objectives of Social Research

The major objectives of social research are listed as follows:-

1. The aim of social research is to discover new facts and verifying or testing old facts.
2. It tries to understand the human behavior and its interaction with the environment.
3. It tries to find out the casual connection between human activities and natural laws governing them.

##### Functions of Social Science Research

The important functions of social science research are discussed below;

###### Discovery of facts and their interpretation.

Social research provides answer to questions of what, when, how and why of man, social life and institutions. Discover of facts and their inter relationship help us to discard distortions and contribute to our understanding of social reality.

###### Diagnosis of problems and their analysis.

Our society has innumerable problems such as poverty, unemployment, economic inequality, social tension etc,. The nature and dimensions of such problems have to be diagnosed and analyzed. An analysis of problems leads to an identification of appropriate remedial actions.

###### Systematization of knowledge.

The facts discovered through research are systematized and the body of knowledge is developed. It contributes to the growth of theory building.

###### Control over social phenomena.

Research in social science provides first hand information about the nature of social institutions. This knowledge helps us to control over the social phenomena.

###### Prediction.

Social research aims at finding an order among social fact and their casual relations. This affords a sound basis for prediction in several cases.

###### Development planning.

Systematic research can give us the required data base for planning and designing developmental schemes and programmes.

###### Social welfare.

Social research can identify the causes of social evils and problems. It can thus help in taking appropriate remedial actions. It also provides guideline for social welfare.

##### Scope of Social Science Research

The fields of social science research unlimited and the materials of research are endless. Every group of social phenomena, every phase of human life and every stages of past and present development are materials for the social scientist. The area of research in various social sciences provides vast scope for research in social sciences.

The main scope of social research are :

* Social research provides new insight in to the organized society and its social structure.
* Social research also provide new horizon in scientific explanation; advanced and tested principles of procedure and suggested new concepts.
* Another scope of social research is that exemplified by studies and attempt to test or challenge existing theories and revise them the light of new evidence.
* Social research helpful to establish new theory and established techniques of exploration.
* Social research also provides contributions to existing stone of fruitful ideas, methodology and basis understanding of social life and control of its problems.

#### Objectivity in social research.

The question of objectivity has been central to the methodological debates of the social sciences from the beginning. It means the willingness and ability to examine evidence dispassionately. It is the first condition of research. Objectivity means basing conclusion on facts without any bias and value judgement. The conclusion should be independent of one’s personal beliefs, likes dislikes and hopes. Both the data and the inference drawn from their analysis must be free from bias and prejudices. But modern feminist researchers and critical social researchers argued research is a moral-political activity that requires the researcher to commit to a value position. Value freedom is a myth.

##### Factors Affecting Objectivity

It is very difficult to achieve objectivity in social science research. This difficulty arises out of the adverse influences of (**a**) personal prejudices and bias, (**b**) value judgement, (**c**) ethical dilemma and (**d**) complexity of social phenomena.

##### Personal prejudices and biases

Prejudices and biases are like fantasies to believe what is comforting to believe. It makes to believe something without considering evidence.

###### Value related problem arises

Value related problem arises from the social context with in which research occurs.

A researcher’s attitudes towards socio-economic issues are influenced by his values.

###### Personal preconceptions

Personal preconceptions of research create not only a distorting effect on the data but are also highly insidious. Research failed to examination objectivity.

###### Ethical dilemmas

Research relation with other aspect of research creates ethical problems. E.g. Relation with sponsors, relation with source data, relation with research subject etc,.

##### Limits of objectivity in social sciences

Objectivity in social science research has certain limitations, they are:

* + 1. Social scientist is part of human society and their judgements are subjective and coloured by researchers own experience.
    2. The subject matter of social science research is too complex. All propositions are limited particular social groups and contexts. Thus objectivity in a major issue in social science research.
    3. All members of the society have different values, social researcher will unconsciously influenced by their values.
    4. Social scientist fails to achieve objectivity because the respondents are human beings have certain human problems.e.g. refusal of respondent, improper understanding, reluctance etc,. All these problems cause biases and invalidate the research findings and conclusions.