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**Key Concepts in Research**

Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. Some people consider research as a movement, a movement from the known to the unknown. It is actually a voyage of discovery. One can also define research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. In fact, research is an art of scientific investigation. Research is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in a technical sense. According to Clifford Woody research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organising and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. Thus, it is the persuit of truth with the help of study, observation, comparison and experiment.

**Objectives of Research:**

The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet. Though each research study has its own specific purpose, we may think of

research objectives as falling into a number of following broad groupings:

1. To gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it (studies with this object in view are termed as *exploratory* or *formulative* research studies);

2. To portray accurately the characteristics of a particular individual, situation or a group (studies with this object in view are known as *descriptive* research studies);

3. To determine the frequency with which something occurs or with which it is associated with something else (studies with this object in view are known as *diagnostic* research studies);

4. To test a hypothesis of a causal relationship between variables (such studies are known as *hypothesis-testing* research studies).

**Types of Research**

***Descriptive vs. Analytical****:* The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of

affairs as it exists at present. In analytical research, on the other hand, the researcher has to use facts or information already available, and analyze these to make a critical evaluation of the material.

***Applied vs. Fundamental****:* Research can either be applied (or action) research or fundamental (to basic or pure) research. Applied researchaims at finding a solution for an immediate problem facing a society or an industrial/business organisation, whereas fundamental research is mainly concerned with generalisations and with the formulation of a theory. Thus, the central aim of applied research is to discover a solution for some pressing practical problem, whereas basic research is directed towards finding information that has a broad base of applications and thus, adds to the already existing organized body of scientific knowledge.

***Quantitative vs. Qualitative****:* Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with qualitative phenomenon. Research designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject or institution is also qualitative research.

***Conceptual vs. Empirical****:* Conceptual research is that related to some abstract idea(s) or theory. It is generally used by philosophers and thinkers to develop new concepts or to reinterpret existing ones. On the other hand, empirical research relies on experience or observation alone, often without due regard for system and theory. It is data-based research, coming up with conclusions which are capable of being verified by observation or experiment. We can also call it as experimental type of research.

In such a research, the researcher must first provide himself with a working hypothesis or guess as to the probable results. He then works to get enough facts (data) to prove or disprove his hypothesis.

**Research Methodology versus Methods:**

*Research methodology* is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods/techniques but also the methodology. We can say that research methodology has many dimensions and research methods do constitute a part of the research methodology. The scope of research methodology is wider than that of research methods. Why a research study has been undertaken, how the research problem has been defined, in what way and why the hypothesis has been formulated, what data have been collected and what particular method has been adopted, why particular technique of analysing data has been used and a host of similar other questions are usually answered when we talk of research methodology concerning a research problem or study.