

CHAPTER 1

Social Research Meaning and definition

Society is an organized group of persons associated together with shared objective, norms and values pertain to the society. People have social life and social process. Research is systematic and organized effort to investigate a specific problem that needs a solution. It contributes to the general body of knowledge. It also corrects human knowledge. Social research now can be defined as the systematic and objective analysis and recording of controlled observations that may lead to the development of generalization, principles or theories resulting in prediction and possibly ultimate control of events in society. It attempts to answer or solve social problems. 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.” Characteristics of social research

- It is directed towards the solution of problems. The ultimate goal is to discover cause-and-effect relationship between social problems.
- It emphasis the development of generalizations, principles or theories that will be helpful in predicting future occurrences.
- It is based upon observable experience or empirical evidence.
- It demands accurate observations and description. Researchers may choose from a variety or non-qualitative description of their observations.
- It involves gathering new data from primary sources or using existence data for new purpose.
- Although social research activities may at time be somewhat random and unsystematic, it is more often characterized by carefully designed procedure that applies rigorous analysis.
- It requires expertise. The researcher knows what is already known about the problem and how others have investigated.
- It strives to the objective and logical applying every possible test to validate the procedure employed, data collected and conclusion reached.
- It involves the guests for answer to unsolved problems.
- It is characterized by patient and unhurried activity. Researcher must expect disappointment and discouragement as they pursue the answer to difficult question.

It is carefully recorded and reported. Each important term is defined, limiting factors are recognized, procedures are described in detail, reference are carefully documented, results are objectively recorded and conclusions are presented with scholarly caution and restraint.

- It is interdisciplinary in nature
- It sometimes requires courage.

Objectives of social research

- ™To facilitate the understanding of human behavior.
- ™To acquire knowledge about social phenomena, events, issue, problems etc.
- ™To identify functional relationship existing in the society phenomena.
- ™To find out the natural laws that regulates or directs social phenomena.
- ™To standardize the society concept, e.g. culture, struggle, generation gap, social distance etc.
- ™To formulate solution to social problems.
- ™To maintain social organization, remove social tension, misconception, etc
- ™To develop social revival plan.

Phases of social research (S.R.) Phases of social research consist of a series of steps necessary to efficiently carry out research on any social phenomena. These actions are closely related. They can be overlapped. Phases of S.R. basically refer to scientific research process. There are nine phases of social research.

- ™Sensing or realizing problem: - The first step in SR process is observing the situation and sensing problem. New problems keep on emerging in the social environment. One should sense these development origins in the environment. At this stage, one may not know exactly what is happening but one can definitely sense that things are not going smoothly as they should be.
- ™Problem identification: Once one become aware of what is happening in the environment, he/she would then focus on the problem. The researcher singles out the problem for the study, i.e. what exactly are the problems in the situation. It is thus, problem-defining stage. Without a focused definition of problem, data tends to be irrelevant, expensive and confusing. Research problem should be specific.
- ™Theoretical framework: Once the problem is identified, the researcher carefully studies the earlier studies, if any which are similar to the study in hand. It helps to integrate information locally so that reason for the problem can be conceptualized. This helps to develop theoretical framework. This step essentially involves a review of related literature. It familiarizes the researcher with what is already known and what is still unknown and untested.