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Topic : Introduction to Research

Sub- topic : Concept of Research, Meaning of Research, Objectives of Research, Classification of Research, Characteristics or features of Research, Nature of Research, Importance or Significance of Research, Steps evolved in Research Process and Scope of Research

Introduction to Research

Concept of Research :

The study of research methods provides knowledge and skills which are needed to solve the problems and meet the challenges of a fast-paced decision-making environment. Business research courses have recognised that students preparing to manage business, not for profit, and public organisations - in all functional areas - need training in a disciplined process for conducting an inquiry related to a management dilemma. Three factors stimulate an interest in a scientific approach to decision-making :

1. The manager's increased need for more and better information.
2. The availability of improved techniques and tools to meet this need, and
3. The resulting information overload if discipline is not employed in the process.

During the last two decades, we have witnessed dramatic changes in the business environment. Emerging from a historical economic role, the business organisation has evolved in response to the social and political mandate of national public policy, explosive technology growth, and continuing innovations in global communication. These changes have created new knowledge needs for the manager and new publics to consider when evaluating any decision. The other knowledge demands have arisen from problems with mergers, trade policies, protected markets, technology transfers, and macroeconomic saving-investments issues.

The trend towards complexity has increased the risk associated with business decisions, making it more important to have a sound information base. Each of the factors, listed below, which characterise the complex business-making environment, demands that managers have more and better information on which to base decision :

- More knowledge exists in every field of management.
 - There are more variables to consider in every decision.
 - Global and domestic competition is more vigorous with many business down sizing to refocus on primary competencies, reduce costs, and make competitive gains.
 - Workers, shareholders, customers, and the general public are demanding to be included in company decision- making, they are better informed and more sensitive to their own self- interests than over before.
 - The power and ease of use of today's computer have given us the capacity to analyse data to deal with complex managerial problems of today and tomorrow.
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- The qualities of theories and models to explain tactical and strategic results is improving.
 - Organisations are increasingly practicing data mining, learning to extract meaningful knowledge from large data contained within internal databases.
 - Government continues to show concern with all aspects of society, becoming increasingly aggressive in protecting these various publics.
 - Explosive growth of company sites on the World Wide Web (WWW) and company publications via desktop and electronic publishing have brought the prospect of extensive new arrays of information- but information quality is increasingly aspect.
 - Computer advances have allowed business to create the architecture for data warehousing, electronic storehouses where vast arrays of

collected, integrated data are ready for mining.

- Communication and measurement techniques within research have been enhanced.
- Techniques of quantitative analysis take advantage of increasingly powerful computing capabilities.
- The number and power of the tools used to conduct research have increased, commensurate with the growing complexity of business decisions.

To do well in such an environment, you will need to understand how to identify quality information and to recognise the solid, reliable research on which your high-risk decisions as a manager can be based. It is also required to be understood how to conduct such research.

Meaning of Research : Research in common parlance refers to a search of knowledge. The Webster's International Dictionary of Statistics and Research Methodology dictionary proposes a very inclusive definition of research as "a careful critical inquiry or examination in seeking facts or principles; diligent investigation in order to ascertain something". The above definition while helpful in indicating in a very general way what people mean when they talk about research is not specific and precise enough to give us a complete and clear idea of what research involves. Research involves mainly a 're-search' i.e., activities undertaken to repeat a search. Thus, it may be stated that research refers to "a critical and exhaustive investigation and experimentation having as its aim the revision of accepted conclusions in the light of newly discovered facts". The researcher is constantly concerned with re-searching the accepted conclusions of his field i.e., the theories of differing the levels of generality and degrees of confirmation existing at a given point in time.

One can also define research as a scientific and systematic search for

pertinent information on a specified topic. Infact research is an art of scientific investigation.

Redman and Mory define research as "a systematized effort to gain new knowledge".

In brief, the search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem is research. As such the term 'research' refers to the systematic method consisting of enunciating the problem, formulating a hypothesis collecting the facts and data, analysing the facts and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solutions towards the concerned problem or in certain generalisations for some theoretical formulation.

Objectives of Research :

The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet through the application of scientific procedures. Each research study has its own specific purposes. But following are the objectives of research in broad groupings :

- 1) To gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it i.e., exploratory or formulative studies.
- 2) To portray accurately the characteristics of a particular individual, situation or group i.e., descriptive research studies.
- 3) To determine the frequency with which something occurs or with which it is associated with something else i.e., diagnostic reasearch studies.
- 4) To test a hypothesis of a casual relationship between variables i.e., hypothesis- testing research studies.

Classification of Research :

The research activities are conducted with sole object of finding salutations to unsolved problems, so that the services to the society can be provided. There are various approaches for conducting research activities

and important amongst them are explained here :

(1) **Pure and applied research** : Pure research is also called as fundamental research. This is conducted with view for the sake of the knowledge having no intention of its application. This study is conducted for generalization which will help us to form certain theory. In pure research if study is conducted to assess human behaviour, it may provide us generalization in relation to normal human behaviour. Pure research offer solutions to many practical problems. It helps us to find out various crucial factors. It develops many alternative salutations.

Applied research aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem facing society or an industrial/business organisation. Research aimed at certain conclusions (say a solutions) facing a concrete social or business problem of the marketing research or evaluation research are examples of applied research. Applied research has a practical problem- solving emphasis, although problem solving is not always generated by a negative circumstances. Applied research is often used to evaluate opportunities. There is a vast scope for applied research in the field of technology, management, commerce and economics, as it contributes to the development of new facts or testing of new theory. Applied research can put theory to the test, it may add to conceptual clarification and integrate previous existing theories. Thus, central aim of applied research is to find out a solution for some pressing practical problem.

(2) **Descriptive and Analytical Research** : Descriptive research is termed as Ex-post-facto research. This type of research are mainly concerned with description of facts only. It is an expiation of state of affairs as they exists. This includes surveys and fact findings enquiries.

The main important aspect of this type of the study is that the researcher has no control on the variables under investigation, he can only describe things as they exist and discover the causes.

Analytical research relates to critical evaluation of the existing facts and

information is made in order to draw certain conclusions.

(3) Quantitative and Qualitative Research : quantitative denotes methods that generate data comprising of numbers. This research is conducted for the measurement of quantity and it is applicable to the work which can be Express in terms of quantity only.

Quantitative research relates to quality involved in assessment it generates the data that is verbal. Assessment of human behaviour is a qualitative research.

It is very difficult to find out which research is quantitative and which one is qualitative. There are four main methods for this type of research work- interview ,questionnaires, observations and document analysis. On the basis of their explanation of this can be exclusively labelled as quantitative or qualitative. Accordingly, the labels of quantitative and qualitative should be applied to data rather than to methods.

Motive research is important type of qualitative research , which is conducted to assess the the motive or desire of human behaviour. Likewise opinion research is also qualitative research conducted to know how people feel about particular subject.

(4) Conceptual and Empirical Reasearch : Conceptual research is conducted by the thinkers and philosophers for developing new theories or for reinterpret old one.

Empirical research is based on observation or experience without due regards to theories. In this type of research working hypothesis is provided then is collected to prove or disprove this. Researcher here sets up the design for desired results.

(5) Exploratory and Formalized Research : The research study in which hypothesis is developed is called exploratory reasearch. Whereas when hypothesis is tested in the research study it is called as formalized research.

(6) **Survey Research** : a survey is conducted with an object to understand specific aspect in define population. Usually the population in study is so large that the excess to all the elements it is impossible.

Therefore sample taken from the population I will make it possible to draw the conclusions regarding population. The purpose of the survey is to understand phenomenon by identifying influencing factors.

Survey are normally conducted through questionnaires but sometimes interview method is used to collect necessary information. The method of conducting survey may also applied to analysing large data files in an organisation by using sample form. Survey method is widely accepted for following reasons.

- a) Greater amount of objectivity.
- b) Greater reality in findings and conclusions.
- c) It is most specific method for obtaining data and dependable result.
- d) Direct observation of the population is possible resulting accurate results.
- e) Survey is extensively used in all the areas for its merit.

(7) **Case Study** : It is very difficult to define, when the phenomena under investigation are not readily form its context then case study becomes appropriate. It is characterized by in-depth study of organisation. It is a concept and intensive study of business situation.

Case study is method of investigation for exploring ad livesituations it is a in depth study off situation as whole. It is in form of of qualitative and quantitative analysis and careful observation of situation.

A case study uses various methods for collecting information maybe in form of interview questionnaires , observation and documentary analysis. By this wide variety of relevant data is collected.

(8) **Action Research** : When research is conducted for the study in a single workplace, than action research is commonly used in such cases. The focus in action research is given in improving working practices. The action research has practical purpose and it is directed towards organisational changes in managerial setup.

The action research theories are valid through practice rather than applied independently to practice. It is conducted through direct action. Action research is conducted in various phases like baseline survey systematic action and periodical assessment.

(9) **Field Investigation** : The field investigation is conducted in the assessment of actual situations. The results in this type of work is more realistic. In order to have these results accuracy is required to be maintained by making selection of proper sample. In field investigation it is very difficult to control variables and informants in the field.

(10) **Evaluation Research** : The evaluation of any project is the subject matter of the evaluation research. This type of study is conducted to evaluate ongoing projects are project already carried on. The performance evaluation, job evaluation and PERT are main aspects of the studies.

(11) **Library Research** : When secondary data is reliable enough to be used for drawing conclusions than library research is useful. This type of research is based on the assessment of the data available from books, periodicals and journals available in the library.

Characteristics of Research :

1. Define the purpose
2. Controlled
3. Rigorous
4. Systematic
5. Valid and verifiable

6. Empirical
7. Critical
8. Present findings unambiguously
9. Reveal of limitations frankly
10. Detail of research process

Nature of Research :

Research is process in which in- depth study of the problem is carried out. This requires investigation to be conducted based on collection and compilation of data along with its interpretation and presentation.

Research, if properly conducted, is helpful in decision making process. There can not be any research exercise which will not yield any additional inputs to knowledge. As such research involves critical examination of facts which leads to formation of new concepts or modification of old concepts.

The research activities will help us in testing of hypothesis and establishing relationship between variables, by this we can identify the methods for solution of the research problems.

The research is a fact finding process, which influences the decision to be taken. This also provides an opportunity to check the effectively of the decision taken. The research is a scientific process and it is required to be conducted in proper sequences, which includes activities right from identification of research problem, formulation of hypothesis, testing of hypothesis, observation and relationship of variables and drawing of conclusions.

Importance or Significance of Research :

All development and progress in the society is an outcome of a research work. The development of logical thinking is promoted by conduct of

research activities.

Research provides base for the policies formation of the Government related to agriculture, industries and infra- structural services in the region.

In this context investigation in the structure of economy is conducted through compilation of data and analysis of facts is made. Research provides for predicting of future prospects of the region.

Research has special importance in relation to solving various problems of business and industries. Market research, operation research and motivation research are conducted in the business for various requirements.

The importance of research can also be ascertain through its application in sociopolitical sector in order to find out the solution to social and political problem of the society.

Steps in Research Process :

(1) Deciding

- ★ What an I expected to do ?
- ★ What do I already know.
- ★ What questions do need to answer.
- ★ What i need to find out ?

(2) Finding

- ★ What sort of information I need where do I find this information.
- ★ Should I use catalogues, index computers.

(3) Using

- ★ What do the resources tell me ?

- ★ Do they answer my question ?
- ★ Do I have skills to extract and use information ?

(4) Recording

- ★ What do I need to make a role of ?
- ★ Can I make effective notes.
- ★ Can I organise my notes.

(5) Presenting

- ★ How I am going to pull this information together and present it so that I can communicate effectively.

(6) Evaluating

- ★ I can found information to complete the task.
- ★ How well did I do.
- ★ Am I satisfied with the result ?
- ★ Do I need more practice with any stage or skill.

Scope of Research :

The scope of a research study explains the extent to which the research area will be explored in the work and specifies the parameters within the study will be operating. Basically, this means that you will have to define what the study is going to cover and what it is focusing on.

References :

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