

BASICS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

Understanding social Research

Social Research is the systematic study of human society and social behavior. It involves the use of scientific methods to investigate social phenomenon, relationships and issues.

Features :-

- Systematic and structured approach.
- It is based on empirical evidence.
- Uses scientific methods for data collection and analysis.
- Its aim is to understand and solve social problems.

Objectives :-

- To explore and describe social phenomenon.
- To explain causes and effects of social issues.
- To predict social trends and changes.
- To develop solutions for social problems.
- To test social theories and hypothesis.

Q. TYPES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH:

A. Based on Purpose

1. **Exploratory Research** :- It is conducted to explore new areas where little information is available.
2. **Descriptive Research** :- Its aim is to describe characteristics of a group or phenomenon.
3. **Explanatory Research** :- Tries to establish cause and effect relationships.
4. **Applied Research** :- It is conducted to solve specific social problems.

B. Based on Methodology.

1. **Qualitative Research**:- It focuses on understanding human experiences and social processes through interviews, observations, and case studies.
2. **Quantitative Research**:- It is used in statistical and numerical data to test hypothesis and establish patterns.

STEPS USED IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

1. **Identifying a Research Problem**:- It is used to select a relevant social issues to study.
2. **Reviewing Literature**:- studying existing research on the topic.
3. **Formulating Research Questions/Hypothesis**:- Defining what the research aims to find out.
4. **Choosing Research Design**:- It is used in selecting the method of data collection and analysis.
5. **Data collection**:- Gathering information through surveys, interviews, observation etc.
6. **Data Analysis**:- using Qualitative and Quantitative methods to interpret the data.
7. **Drawing conclusions**:- Summarising findings and relating them to the research questions.
8. **Reporting and publishing**:- Presenting the results in research papers, articles or reports.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

→ **Primary Data**:- (Directly collected from respondents)

- Surveys and Questionnaires.
- Interviews.
- Observations.
- Case studies.

→ **Secondary Data**:- (Collecting from existing sources).

- Government Reports.
- Books and journals.
- Newspapers and Magazines.
- Online Databases.

ETHICS IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

- **Informed Consent**:- Participants must agree voluntarily.
- **Confidentiality**:- Personal information should be kept private.
- **Avoidance of Harm**:- Research should not cause harm to participants.
- **Objectivity and Honesty**:- Researchers must not manipulate data.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

- Helps in policy making and social planning.
 - Improves understanding of social behavior and institutions.
 - Identifies social problems and solutions.
 - Enhances knowledge in sociology, anthropology, psychology and related fields.
- Social research is a crucial tool for understanding human society. By using scientific methods, it provides insights into social

problems and helps in formulating policies for social development.

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MEANING OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Introduction:- Social research is a systematic process of investigating social phenomenon, behaviors, relationships, and structures to understand and explain human interactions within society. It involves collecting and analyzing data to develop knowledge about social life.

DEFINITION:-

Social research can be defined as:-

"The systematic method of exploring, analyzing, and conceptualizing social life to extend, correct or verify knowledge."

According to Pauline V. Young "social research is a systematic method of discovering new facts or verifying old facts, their sequences, interrelationships, and casual explanations in social life."

Objectives of Social Research

1. To discover new facts:- Helps in exploring unknown aspects of social life
2. To identify social problems:- Analyzes societal issues like poverty, crime and unemployment.
3. To verify existing knowledge:- Tests the validity of current theories and assumptions.
4. To understand Human Behavior:- Explores individual and group behaviors.
5. To provide solutions:- Suggests solutions

to improve social conditions.

Social research is essential in understanding societal trends, behaviors, and issues. It contributes to knowledge development, policy-making, and improving human life by providing systematic insights into social problems.

Q: NATURE OF SOCIAL PHENOMENA

The nature of social phenomenon refers to the characteristics and dynamics of human interactions, behaviors, and structures within societies. Social phenomena are complex multifaceted, and influenced by a variety of factors including cultural, economic, political, and psychological elements.

Key Aspects of Nature of Social Phenomena

1. **Complexity** :- Social phenomena are often intricate and involve multiple variables and interactions. They cannot be easily reduced to simple cause-effect relationships.
2. **Dynamic and Evolving** :- societies and social behaviors are not static, they change over time due to technological advancements, cultural shifts, economic developments and other factors.
3. **Context dependent** :- Social phenomena are deeply influenced by the cultural, historical and situational context in which they occur. What holds true in one society or time period may not apply in another.

4. **Interconnectedness** :- Social phenomena are interrelated, changes in one area (e.g, economy) can have ripple effects on other areas (e.g; family, structures, education systems).

5. **Subjectivity** :- Social phenomena often involve subjective experiences and perceptions individuals interpret and respond to social realities based on their personal beliefs, values, and experiences.

6. **Normative and value-laden** :- Social phenomena are often shaped by societal norms, values, and ethical considerations. They reflect what a society deems important or acceptable.

7. **Emergent properties** :- Social phenomena can exhibit emergent properties meaning that the collective behavior of individuals can lead to outcomes that are not predictable from the behavior of individuals alone (e.g social movements, market trends).

8. **Agency and structure** :- Social phenomena are influenced by both individual agency (the capacity of individuals to act independently and make free choices) and social structure (the organized patterns of social relationships and institutions that shape and constrain individual actions).

9. **Quantitative and Qualitative Dimensions** :- Social phenomena can be studied using both quantitative methods (e.g, statistical analysis) and qualitative methods (e.g. ethnographic studies), reflecting their measurable and

interpretative aspects.

- 10 **Ethical Implications** :- Research and interventions related to social phenomena often have ethical implications, requiring careful consideration of the impact on individuals and communities. Understanding the nature of social phenomena is crucial for developing effective social policies, interventions, and theoretical frameworks that address the complexities of human societies.

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SCIENTIFIC METHOD

The scientific method is a systematic, organized approach used to investigate phenomena, acquire new knowledge, or correct and integrate previous knowledge. It is the foundation of scientific inquiry and is used across various disciplines, including the natural sciences, social sciences and even in everyday problem-solving. The scientific method involves a series of steps designed to ensure objectivity, reliability and validity in research.

Key steps of the scientific method

1. **** Observations ****

- Identify a phenomena or problem to study.
- Observe and gather preliminary information about the topic.

2. **** Questions ****

- Formulate a clear, specific and testable research question based on the observation
- Example: "Why does X happen?" or "What is the

effect of Y on Z?"

3. **** Hypothesis ****

- Propose a tentative explanation or prediction that answers the research question.
- A hypothesis is often written as an "if-then" statement and must be testable and falsifiable

Example. "if X increases, then Y will decrease."

4. **** Experimentation / Data collection ****

- Design and conduct experiments or studies to test the hypothesis.
- Collect data systematically using controlled conditions to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- Use both Quantitative (Numerical) and Qualitative (descriptive) methods as appropriate.

5. **** Analysis ****

- Analyze the data using statistical or other analytical tools to identify patterns, relationships or trends.
- Determine whether the results support or refute the hypothesis.

6. **** Conclusion ****

- Interpret the results and draw conclusions based on the data.
- If the hypothesis is supported, it may become part of a theory. If not, revise the hypothesis and retest.

7. **** Communication ****

- Share the findings with the Scientific Community through publications, presentations or reports.

- Allow others to replicate the study to verify the results.

8. ** Replication and Peer Review **

- Other scientists replicate the study to confirm or challenge the findings.
- Peer review ensures the research meets scientific standards and contributes to the body of knowledge.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD

1. **Empiricism** :- Reliance on observable and measurable evidence.
2. **Objectivity** :- Minimising bias and ensuring results are based on facts.
3. **Falsifiability** :- Hypothesis must be testable and capable of being proven wrong.
4. **Reproducibility** :- Results should be replicable by other researchers under similar conditions.
5. **Logical Reasoning** :- Using deductive and Inductive reasoning to draw conclusions.

APPLICATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD

1. **Natural Sciences** :- Studying physical and biological phenomena (e.g., Psychology, sociology, economics).
2. **Everyday life** :- Solving practical problems of making informed decisions.

The scientific method is a powerful tool for advancing knowledge and understanding the world in a structured and evidence-based way.

References

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