

Types of Research

In the broadest sense, the definition of research includes any gathering of data, information and facts for the advancement of knowledge. Research can be classified as:

According to Utility or Application

- **Applied Research**, also known as decisional or action research, uses existing knowledge as an aid to the solution of some given problem or set of problems.
- **Fundamental Research** frequently called basic or pure research, seeks to extend the boundaries of knowledge in a given area with no necessary immediate application to existing problems.

According to Purpose of the study

- **Exploratory Research:** Exploratory research is defined as a research used to investigate a problem which is not clearly defined. It is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem, but will not provide conclusive results. For such a research, a researcher starts with a general idea and uses this research as a medium to identify issues that can be the focus for future research.
- **Explanatory Research:** Explanatory research goes beyond description and attempts to explain the reasons for the phenomenon that the descriptive research only observed. The research would use theories or at least hypothesis to account for the forces that caused a certain phenomenon to occur.
- **Descriptive Research** includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. It tries to discover answers to the questions who, what, when and sometimes how. Here the researcher attempts to describe or define a subject, often by creating a profile of a group of problems, people, or events. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present.
- **Analytical Research:** The researcher has to use facts or information already available, and analyze these to make a critical evaluation of the material. These are generally post-mortem studies.

According to the Nature of Data

- **Quantitative Research:** 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:** It is concerned with qualitative phenomenon i.e. phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind. This type of research aims at discovering

underlying motives and desires, using in depth interviews for the purpose. Other techniques of such research are word association test, sentence completion test, story completion tests and similar other projective techniques. Attitude or opinion research i.e., research designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject or institution is also qualitative research.

According to the Place where it is carried out

Depending upon the place where the research is carried out, research can be classified into:

- Field studies or field experiments
- Laboratory studies or Laboratory experiments
- Library studies or documentary research

According to the Research Methods used

Depending upon the research methods used for the investigation, it can be classified as:

- Survey research
- Observation research
- Case research
- Experimental research
- Historical research
- Comparative research

According to the Time Frame

Depending upon the time period adopted for the study, it can be:

- **One time or single time period Research:** e.g. diagnostic studies
- **Longitudinal Research:** e.g. industrial development during the five year plans in India