

*Chapter*

# 1

# Research Methodology: An Introduction

## 1.1 MEANING OF RESEARCH

Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. 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. Dictionary definition of research is a careful investigation or inquiry specially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge. Some people consider research as a movement from the known to the unknown. It is actually a voyage of discovery. We all possess the vital instinct of inquisitiveness. When the unknown confronts us, more and more our inquisitiveness makes us probe and attain understanding of the unknown. This inquisitiveness is the mother of all knowledge and the method, which one employs for obtaining the knowledge of whatever the unknown, can be termed as research.

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 formulated hypothesis. D. Slesinger and M. Stephenson in the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences define research as "the manipulation of things, concepts or symbols for the purpose of generalising to extend, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in construction of theory or in the practice of an art." Research is, thus, an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement. It is the pursuit of truth with the help of study, observation, comparison and experiment. In short, the search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem is research. The systematic approach concerning generalisation and the formulation of a theory is also research. As such the term 'research' refers to the systematic method consisting of enunciating the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting the facts or data, analysing the facts and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solution(s) towards the concerned problem or in certain generalisations for some theoretical formulation.

## 1.2 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 mention some general objectives of research below:

- (i) 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);
- (ii) 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);
- (iii) 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);
- (iv) To test a hypothesis of a causal relationship between variables (such studies are known as *hypothesis-testing* research studies).

## 1.3 TYPES OF RESEARCH

The basic types of research are as follows:

- (i) *Descriptive vs. Analytical:* *Descriptive research* includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. In social science and business research we quite often use the term *Ex post facto research* for descriptive research studies. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening. Most *ex post facto research* projects are used for descriptive studies in which the researcher seeks to measure such items as, for example, frequency of shopping, preferences of people, or similar data. *Ex post facto studies* also include attempts by researchers to discover causes even when they cannot control the variables. The methods of research utilized in descriptive research are survey methods of all kinds, including comparative and correlational methods. 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.
- (ii) *Applied vs. Fundamental:* *Applied research* aims 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. Gathering knowledge for knowledge's sake is termed fundamental research. Research concerning some natural phenomenon or relating to pure mathematics are examples of fundamental research. Similarly, research studies, concerning human behaviour carried on with a view to make generalisations about human behaviour, are also examples of fundamental research. However, research aimed at certain conclusions facing a concrete social or business problem is an example of applied research. Research to identify social, economic or political trends that may affect a particular institution, marketing research, evaluation research are examples of applied research. Thus, the central aim of applied research is to discover a solution for

some pressing practical problems, 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.

(iii) **Quantitative vs. Qualitative:** Quantitative research is based on the quantitative measurements of some characteristics. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantities. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind. For instance, when we are interested in investigating the reasons for human behaviour (i.e., why people think or do certain things), we quite often talk of 'Motivation Research', an important type of qualitative research. This type of research aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires, using in depth interviews for the purpose. Other techniques of such research are word association tests, sentence completion tests, 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. Qualitative research is specially important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. Through such research we can analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing. It may be stated, however, that to apply for qualitative research in practice is relatively a difficult job and therefore, while doing such research, one should seek guidance from experimental psychologists.

(iv) **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 it is necessary to get facts at firsthand, at their source, and actively to go about doing certain things to stimulate the production of desired information. 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. He then sets up experimental designs which he thinks will manipulate the persons or the materials concerned so as to bring forth the desired information. Such research is thus characterised by the experimenter's control over the variables under study and his deliberate manipulation of one of them to study its effects. Empirical research is appropriate when proof is sought that certain variables affect other variables in some way. Evidence gathered through experiments or empirical studies are considered to be the most powerful support possible for testing a given hypothesis.

(v) **Some Other Types of Research:** All other types of research are variations of one or more of the above stated approaches, based on either the purpose of research, or the time required to accomplish research, on the environment in which research is done, or on the basis of some other similar factors. From the point of view of time, we can think of research either as *one-time research* or *longitudinal research*. In the former case the research is confined to a single time-period, whereas in the latter case the research is carried on over

several time-periods. Research can be *field-setting research or laboratory research or simulation research*, depending upon the environment in which it is to be carried out. Research can as well be understood as *clinical or diagnostic research*. Such research follow case-study methods or indepth approaches to reach the basic causal relations. Such studies usually go deep into the causes of things or events that interest us, using very small samples and very deep probing data gathering devices. The research may be *exploratory* or it may be formalized. The objective of exploratory research is the development of hypotheses rather than their testing, whereas formalized research studies are those with substantial structure and with specific hypotheses to be tested. *Historical research* is that which utilizes historical sources like documents, remains, etc. to study events or ideas of the past, including the philosophy of persons and groups at any remote point of time. Research can also be classified as *conclusion-oriented* and *decision-oriented*. While doing conclusion-oriented research, a researcher is free to pick up a problem, redesign the enquiry as he proceeds and is prepared to conceptualize as he wishes. Decision-oriented research is always for the need of a decision maker and the researcher in this case is not free to embark upon research according to his own inclination. Operations research is an example of decision oriented research since it is a scientific method of providing executive departments with a quantitative basis for decisions regarding operations under their control.

## **1.4 RESEARCH APPROACHES**

The above description of the types of research brings to light the fact that there are two basic approaches to research, viz., *quantitative approach* and the *qualitative approach*. The former involves the generation of data in quantitative form which can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal and rigid fashion. This approach can be further sub-classified into *inferential*, *experimental* and *simulation approaches* to research. The purpose of *inferential approach* is to form a data base to infer characteristics or relationships of population. This usually means survey research where a sample of population is studied (questioned or observed) to determine its characteristics, and it is then inferred that the population has the same characteristics. *Experimental approach* is characterised by much greater control over the research environment and in this case some variables are manipulated to observe their effect on other variables. *Simulation approach* involves the construction of an artificial environment within which relevant information and data can be generated. This permits an observation of the dynamic behaviour of a system (or its sub-system) under controlled conditions. The term 'simulation' in the context of business and social sciences applications refers to "the operation of a numerical model that represents the structure of a dynamic process. Given the values of initial conditions, parameters and exogenous variables, a simulation is run to represent the behaviour of the process over time."<sup>5</sup> Simulation approach can also be useful in building models for understanding future conditions.

*Qualitative approach* to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which is not subjected to rigorous quantitative and analysis. Generally, the techniques of focus group interviews, projective techniques and depth interviews are used. All these are explained at length in chapters that follow.

## 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

"All progress is born of inquiry. Doubt is often better than overconfidence, for it leads to inquiry, and inquiry leads to invention" is a famous Hudson Maxim in context of which the significance of research can well be understood. Increased amounts of research make progress possible. *'Research inculcates scientific and inductive thinking and it promotes the development of logical habits of thinking and organisation.'*

*'The role of research in several fields of applied economics, whether related to business or to the economy as a whole, has greatly increased in modern times.'* The increasingly complex nature of business and governance has focussed attention on the use of research in solving operational problems. Research, as an aid to economic policy, has gained added importance, both for governance and business.

*'Research provides the basis for nearly all government policies in our economic system.'* For instance, government's budgets rest in part on an analysis of the needs and desires of the people and on the availability of revenues to meet those needs. The cost of needs has to be equated to probable revenues and this is a field where research is most needed. Through research we can devise alternative policies and can as well examine the consequences of each of these alternatives. Decision-making may not be a part of research, but research certainly facilitates the decisions of the policy maker. Government has to chalk out programmes for dealing with all facets of the country's various operations and most of these are related directly or indirectly to economic conditions. The plight of cultivators, the problems of big and small business and industry, working conditions, trade union activities, the problems of distribution, even the size and nature of defence services are matters requiring research. Thus, research is considered necessary with regard to the allocation of nation's resources. Another area in government, where research is necessary, is collecting information on the economic and social structure of the nation. Such information indicates what is happening in the economy and what changes are taking place. Collecting such statistical information is by no means a routine task, but it involves a variety of research problems. These days nearly all governments maintain large staff of research technicians or experts to carry on this work. Thus, in the context of government, research as a tool to economic policy has three distinct phases of operation, viz., (i) investigation of economic structure through continual compilation of facts; (ii) diagnosis of events that are taking place and the analysis of the forces underlying them; and (iii) the prognosis, i.e., the prediction of future developments.

*'Research has its special significance in solving various operational and planning problems of business and industry.'* Operations research and market research, along with motivational research, are considered crucial and their results assist, in more than one way, in taking business decisions. Market research is the investigation of the structure and development of a market for the purpose of formulating efficient policies for purchasing, production and sales. Operations research refers to the application of mathematical, logical and analytical techniques to the solution of business problems of cost minimisation or of profit maximisation or what can be termed as optimisation problems. Motivational research of determining why people behave as they do is mainly concerned with market characteristics. In other words, it is concerned with the determination of motivations underlying the consumer (market) behaviour. All these are of great help to people in business and industry who are responsible for taking business decisions. Research with regard to demand and market factors has great utility in business. Given knowledge of future demand, it is generally not difficult for a firm, or for an industry

to adjust its supply schedule within the limits of its projected capacity. Market analysis has become an integral tool of business policy these days. Business budgeting, which ultimately results in a projected profit and loss account, is based mainly on sales estimates which in turn depends on business research. Once sales forecasting is done, efficient production and investment programmes can be set up around which are grouped as the purchasing and financing plans. Research, thus, replaces intuitive business decisions by more logical and scientific decisions.

*Research is equally important for social scientists in studying social relationships and in seeking answers to various social problems!* It provides the intellectual satisfaction of knowing a few things just for the sake of knowledge and also has practical utility for the social scientist to know for the sake of being able to do something better or in a more efficient manner. Research in social sciences is concerned with (i) the development of a body of principles that helps in understanding the whole range of human interactions, and (ii) the practical guidance in solving immediate problems of human relations.

In addition to what has been stated above, the significance of research can also be understood keeping in view the following points:

- (a) To those students who are to write a master's or Ph.D. thesis, research may mean a careerism or a way to attain a high position in the social structure;
- (b) To professionals in research methodology, research may mean a source of livelihood;
- (c) To philosophers and thinkers, research may mean the outlet for new ideas and insights;
- (d) To literary men and women, research may mean the development of new styles and creative work; and
- (e) To analysts and intellectuals, research may mean the development of new theories.

Thus, research is the fountain of knowledge for the sake of knowledge and an important source of providing guidelines for solving different business, governmental and social problems. It is a sort of formal training which enables one to understand the new developments in one's field in a better way.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODS VERSUS METHODOLOGY**

It seems appropriate at this juncture to explain the difference between research methods and research methodology. *Research methods* may be understood as all those methods/techniques that are used for conduction of research. *Research methods or techniques, thus, refer to the methods the researchers use in performing research operations.* In other words, all those methods which are used by the researcher during the course of studying his research problem are termed as research methods. Since the object of research, particularly the applied research, it to arrive at a solution for a given problem, the available data and the unknown aspects of the problem have to be related to each other to make a solution possible. Keeping this in view, research methods can be put into the following three groups:

1. In the first group we include those methods which are concerned with the collection of data. These methods will be used where the data already available is not sufficient to arrive at the required solution;

2. The second group consists of those statistical techniques which are used for establishing relationships between the data and the unknowns;
3. The third group consists of those methods which are used to evaluate the accuracy of the results obtained.

Research methods falling in the above stated last two groups are generally taken as the analytical tools of research.

At times, a distinction is also made between research techniques and research methods. *Research techniques* refer to the behaviour and instruments we use in performing research operations such as making observations, recording data, techniques of processing data and the like. *Research methods* refer to the behaviour and instruments used in selecting and constructing research technique. For instance, the difference between methods and techniques of data collection can better be understood from the details given in the following chart:

Type	Methods	Techniques
1. Library Research	(i) Analysis of historical records (ii) Analysis of documents	Recording of notes, Content analysis, Tape and Film listening and analysis. Statistical compilations and manipulations, reference and abstract guides, contents analysis.
2. Field Research	(i) Non-participant direct observation (ii) Participant observation  (iii) Mass observation  (iv) Mail questionnaire (v) Opinionnaire (vi) Personal interview (vii) Focussed interview (viii) Group interview (ix) Telephone survey  (x) Case study and life history	Observational behavioural scales, use of score cards, etc.  Interactional recording, possible use of tape recorders, photographic techniques. Recording mass behaviour, interview using independent observers in public places. Identification of social and economic background of respondents. Use of attitude scales, projective techniques, use of sociometric scales. Interviewer uses a detailed schedule with open and closed questions. Interviewer focuses attention upon a given experience and its effects. Small groups of respondents are interviewed simultaneously. Used as a survey technique for information and for discerning opinion; may also be used as a follow up of questionnaire. Cross-sectional collection of data for intensive analysis, longitudinal collection of data of intensive character.
3. Laboratory Research	Small group study of random behaviour, play and role analysis	Use of audio-visual recording devices, use of observers, etc.

From what has been stated above, we can say that methods are more general. It is the method that generate techniques. However, in practice, the two terms are taken as interchangeable and when we talk of research methods we do, by implication, include research techniques within their compass.

'*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 along with the logic behind them. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods/techniques but also the methodology. Researchers not only need to know how to develop certain indices or tests, how to calculate the mean, the mode, the median or the standard deviation or chi-square, how to apply particular research techniques, but they also need to know which of these methods or techniques are relevant and which are not, and what would they mean and indicate. Researchers also need to

understand the assumptions underlying various techniques and they need to know the criteria by which they can decide that certain techniques and procedures will be applicable to certain problems and others will not. All this means that it is necessary for the researcher to design a methodology for his problem as the same may differ from problem to problem. For example, an architect, who designs a building, has to consciously evaluate the basis of his decisions, i.e., he has to evaluate why and on what basis he selects particular size, number and location of doors, windows and ventilators, uses particular materials and not others and the like. Similarly, in research the scientist has to expose the research decisions to evaluation before they are implemented. He has to specify very clearly and precisely what decisions he selects and why he selects them so that they can be evaluated by others also.

From what has been stated above, 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. *Thus, when we talk of research methodology we not only talk of the research methods but also consider the logic behind the methods we use in the context of our research study and explain why we are using a particular method or technique and why we are not using others so that research results are capable of being evaluated either by the researcher himself or by others.* 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 about research methodology concerning a research problem or study.

## 1.7 RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD

For a clear perception of the term research, one should know the meaning of scientific method. The two terms, research and scientific method, are closely related. In research, we study the nature, reasons, and the consequences of a set of circumstances which are controlled experimentally or observed as they appear. Researcher is usually interested in particular results, the repetitions of those results, and generalizations. On the other hand, the philosophy common to all research methods and techniques, although they may vary considerably from one science to another, is usually given the name of scientific method. In this context, Karl Pearson writes, "The scientific method is one and same in the branches (of science) and that method is the method of all logically trained minds ... the unity of all sciences consists alone in its methods, not its material; the man who classifies facts of any kind whatever, who sees their mutual relation and describes their sequences, is applying the scientific method and is a man of science." Scientific method is the pursuit of truth as determined by logical considerations. The ideal of science is to achieve a systematic interrelation of facts. Scientific method attempts to achieve this ideal by experimentation, observation, logical arguments from accepted postulates and a combination of these three in varying proportions. In scientific method, logic aids in formulating propositions explicitly and accurately so that their possible alternatives become clear. Further, logic develops the consequences of such alternatives, and when these are compared with observable phenomena, it becomes possible for the researcher or the scientist to state which alternative is the most in harmony with the observed facts. All this is done through experimentation and survey investigations which constitute the integral parts of scientific method.

Experimentation is done to test hypotheses and to discover new relationships, if any, among variables. However, sometimes the conclusions drawn on the basis of experimental data may be misleading for either faulty assumptions, poorly designed experiments, badly executed experiments or faulty interpretations. As such the researcher must pay all possible attention while developing the experimental design and drawing inferences. The purpose of survey investigations may also be to provide scientifically gathered information to work as a basis for the researchers for their conclusions.

The scientific method is, thus, based on certain basic postulates which can be stated as under:

1. It relies on empirical evidence;
2. It utilizes relevant concepts;
3. It is committed to only objective considerations;
4. It aims at nothing but making only adequate and correct statements about population objects;
5. It results into probabilistic predictions;
6. Its methodology is made known to all concerned for critical scrutiny and are for use in testing the conclusions through replication;
7. It aims at formulating most general axioms or what can be termed as scientific theories.

Thus, the scientific method encourages a rigorous, method wherein the researcher is guided by the rules of logical reasoning, a method wherein the investigation proceeds in an orderly manner and a method that implies internal consistency.

## **1.8 RESEARCH PROCESS**

Before embarking on the details of research methodology and techniques, it seems appropriate to present a brief overview of the research process. Research process consists of series of actions or steps necessary to effectively carry out research. The chart shown in Figure 1.1 illustrates a research process.

The chart indicates that the research process consists of a number of closely related activities, as shown through I to VII. But such activities overlap continuously rather than following a strictly prescribed sequence. At times, the first step determines the nature of the last step to be undertaken. If subsequent procedures have not been taken into account in the early stages, serious difficulties may arise which may even prevent the completion of the study. One should remember that neither various steps involved in a research process are mutually exclusive; nor they are separate and distinct. They do not necessarily follow each other in any specific order and the researcher has to be constantly anticipating at each step in the research process the requirements of the subsequent steps. However, the following order concerning various steps provides a useful procedural guideline regarding the research process: (i) formulating the research problem; (ii) extensive literature survey; (iii) developing the hypothesis; (iv) preparing the research design; (v) determining sample design; (vi) collecting the data; (vii) execution of the project; (viii) analysis of data; (ix) hypothesis testing; (x) generalisations and interpretation; and (xi) preparation of the report or presentation of the results, i.e., formal write-up of conclusions reached.

A brief description of the above stated steps will be helpful.

## RESEARCH PROCESS IN FLOW CHART

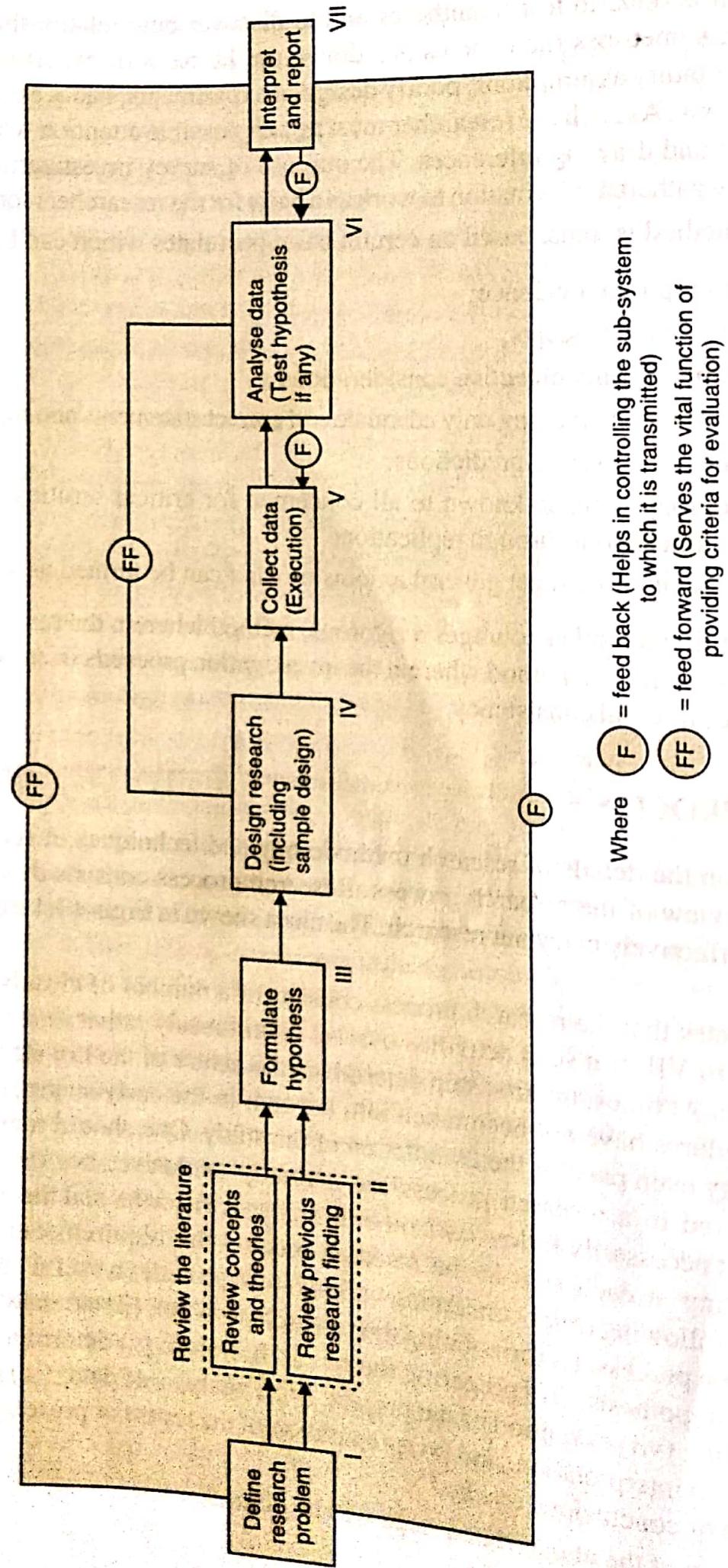


Fig. 1.1

(i) **Formulating the research problem:** There are two types of research problems, viz., those which relate to states of nature and those which relate to relationships between variables. At the very outset, the researcher must single out the problem he wants to study, i.e., he must decide the general area of interest or aspect of a subject-matter that he would like to inquire into. Initially, the problem may be stated in a broad general way and then the ambiguities, if any, relating to the problem be resolved. Then, the feasibility of a particular solution has to be considered before a working formulation of the problem can be set up. The formulation of a general topic into a specific research problem, thus, constitutes the first step in a scientific enquiry. Essentially two steps are involved in formulating the research problem, viz., understanding the problem thoroughly, and rephrasing the same into meaningful terms from an analytical point of view.

The best way of understanding the problem is to discuss it with one's own colleagues or with those having some expertise in the matter. Often, a problem is put in general terms and it is up to the researcher to narrow it down and phrase the problem in operational terms. In private business units or in governmental organisations, the problem is usually earmarked by the administrative agencies with whom the researcher can discuss as to how the problem originally came out and what considerations are involved in its possible solutions.

The researcher must at the same time examine all available literature to get himself acquainted with the selected problem. He may review two types of literature—the conceptual literature concerning the concepts and theories, and the empirical literature consisting of studies made earlier which are similar to the one proposed. The basic outcome of this review will be the knowledge as to what data and other materials are available for operational purposes which will enable the researcher to specify his own research problem in a meaningful context. After this the researcher rephrases the problem into analytical or operational terms i.e., to put the problem in as specific terms as possible. This task of formulating, or defining a research problem is a step of greatest importance in the entire research process. The problem to be investigated must be defined unambiguously for that will help discriminating relevant data from irrelevant ones. Care must, however, be taken to verify the objectivity and validity of the background facts concerning the problem. The statement of the objective is of basic importance because it determines the data which is to be collected, the characteristics of the data which is relevant, relations which are to be explored, the choice of techniques to be used in these explorations and the form of the final report. If there are certain pertinent terms, the same should be clearly defined along with the task of formulating the problem. In fact, formulation of the problem often follows a sequential pattern where a number of formulations are set up, each formulation more specific than the preceding one, each one phrased in more analytical terms, and each more realistic in terms of the available data and resources.

(ii) **Extensive literature survey:** Once the problem is formulated, a brief summary of it should be written down. At this juncture the researcher should undertake extensive literature survey connected with the problem. For this purpose, the abstracting and indexing journals and published or unpublished bibliographies are the first place to go to. Academic journals, conference proceedings, government reports, books etc., must be tapped depending on the nature of the problem. In this process, it should be remembered that one source will lead to

another. The earlier studies, if any, which are similar to the study in hand should be carefully studied. A good library will be of a great help to the researcher at this stage. In this era of internet, it has become quite easy to search the articles. One can use some search engine, like 'google' or specially 'google scholars' to search scholarly articles.

**(iii) Development of working hypotheses:** After extensive literature survey, researcher should state in clear terms the working hypothesis or hypotheses. Working hypothesis is tentative assumption made in order to draw out and test its logical or empirical consequences. As such the manner in which research hypotheses are developed is particularly important since they provide the focal point for research. They also affect the manner in which tests must be conducted in the analysis of data and indirectly the quality of data which is required for the analysis. Hypothesis should be very specific and limited to the piece of research in hand because it has to be tested. The role of the hypothesis is to guide the researcher by delimiting the area of research and to keep him on the right track. It sharpens his thinking and focuses attention on the more important facets of the problem. It also indicates the type of data required and the type of methods of data analysis to be used.

How does one go about developing working hypotheses? The answer is by using the following approach:

- (a) Discussions with colleagues and experts about the problem, its origin and the objectives in seeking a solution;
- (b) Examination of data and records, if available, concerning the problem for possible trends, peculiarities and other clues;
- (c) Review of similar studies in the area or of the studies on similar problems; and
- (d) Exploratory personal investigation which involves original field interviews on a limited scale with interested parties and individuals with a view to secure greater insight into the practical aspects of the problem.

Thus, working hypotheses arise as a result of a priori thinking about the subject, examination of the available data and material including related studies and the counsel of experts and interested parties. Working hypotheses are more useful when stated in precise and clearly defined terms. It may as well be remembered that occasionally we may encounter a problem where we do not need working hypotheses, specially in the case of exploratory or formulative researches which do not aim at testing the hypothesis. But as a general rule, specification of working hypotheses is another basic step of the research process in many research problems.

**(iv) Preparing the research design:** The research problem having been formulated in clear terms, the researcher will be required to prepare a research design, i.e., he will have to state the conceptual structure within which research would be conducted. The preparation of such a design facilitates research to be as efficient as possible yielding maximal information. In other words, the function of research design is to provide for the collection of relevant evidence with optimum effort, time and expenditure. But how all these can be achieved depends mainly on the research purpose. Research purposes may be grouped into four categories, viz., (i) Exploration, (ii) Description, (iii) Diagnosis, and (iv) Experimentation. A flexible research design which provides opportunity for considering

many different aspects of a problem is considered appropriate if the purpose of the research study is that of exploration. But when the purpose happens to be an accurate description of a situation or of an association between variables, the suitable design will be one that minimises bias and maximises the reliability of the data collected and analysed.

There are several research designs, such as, experimental and non-experimental hypothesis testing. Experimental designs can be either informal designs (such as before-and-after without control, after-only with control, before-and-after with control) or formal designs (such as completely randomized design, randomized block design, Latin square design, simple and complex factorial designs), out of which the researcher must select one for his own project.

The preparation of the research design, appropriate for a particular research problem, involves usually the consideration of the following:

- (a) the means of obtaining the information;
  - (b) the availability and skills of the researcher and his staff (if any);
  - (c) explanation of the way in which selected means of obtaining information will be organised and the reasoning leading to the selection;
  - (d) the time available for research; and
  - (e) the cost factor relating to research, i.e., the finance available for the purpose.
- (v) **Determining sample design:** All the items under consideration in any field of inquiry constitute a 'universe' or 'population'. A complete enumeration of all the items in the 'population' is known as a census inquiry. It can be presumed that in such an inquiry when all the items are covered, no element of chance is left and highest accuracy is obtained. But in practice this may not be true. Even the slightest element of bias in such an inquiry will get larger and larger as the number of observations increases. Moreover, there is no way of checking the element of bias or its extent except through a resurvey or use of sample checks. Besides, this type of inquiry involves a great deal of time, money and energy. Not only this, census inquiry is not possible in practice under many circumstances. For instance, blood testing is done only on sample basis. Hence, quite often we select only a few items from the universe for our study purposes. The items so selected constitute what is technically called a sample.

The researcher must decide the way of selecting a sample or what is popularly known as the sample design. In other words, a sample design is a definite plan determined before any data is actually collected for obtaining a sample from a given population. Thus, the plan to select 12 of a city's 200 drugstores in a certain way constitutes a sample design. Samples can be either probability samples or non-probability samples. With probability samples each element has a known probability of being included in the sample but the non-probability samples do not allow the researcher to determine this probability. Probability samples are those based on simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster/area sampling whereas non-probability samples are those based on convenience sampling, judgement sampling and quota sampling techniques. A brief mention of the important sample designs is as follows:

- (a) ***Deliberate sampling:*** Deliberate sampling is also known as purposive or non-probability sampling. This sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe. When population elements are selected for inclusion in the sample based on the ease of access, it can be called *convenience sampling*. If a researcher wishes to secure data from, say, gasoline buyers, he may select a fixed number of petrol stations and may conduct interviews at these stations. This would be an example of convenience sample of gasoline buyers. At times such a procedure may give very biased results particularly when the population is not homogeneous. On the other hand, in *judgement sampling* the researcher's judgement is used for selecting items which he considers as representative of the population. For example, a judgement sample of college students might be taken to secure reactions to a new method of teaching. Judgement sampling is used quite frequently in qualitative research where the desire happens to develop hypothesis rather than to generalise to larger populations.
- (b) ***Simple random sampling:*** This type of sampling is also known as chance sampling or probability sampling where each and every item in the population has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample and each one of the possible samples, in case of finite universe, has the same probability of being selected. For example, if we have to select a sample of 300 items from a universe of 15,000 items, then we can put the names or numbers of all the 15,000 items on slips of paper and conduct a lottery. Using the random number tables is another method of random sampling. To select the sample, each item is assigned a number from 1 to 15,000. Then, 300 five digit random numbers are selected from the table. To do this we select some random starting point and then a systematic pattern is used in proceeding through the table. We might start in the 4th row, second column and proceed down the column to the bottom of the table and then move to the top of the next column to the right. When a number exceeds the limit of the numbers in the frame, in our case over 15,000, it is simply passed over and the next number selected that does fall within the relevant range. Since the numbers were placed in the table in a completely random fashion, the resulting sample is random. This procedure gives each item an equal probability of being selected. In case of infinite population, the selection of each item in a random sample is controlled by the same probability and that successive selections are independent of one another.
- (c) ***Systematic sampling:*** In some instances the most practical way of sampling is to select every 15th name on a list, every 10th house on one side of a street and so on. Sampling of this type is known as systematic sampling. An element of randomness is usually introduced into this kind of sampling by using random numbers to pick up the unit with which to start. This procedure is useful when sampling frame is available in the form of a list. In such a design the selection process starts by picking some random points in the list and then every  $n$ th element is selected until the desired number is secured.
- (d) ***Stratified sampling:*** If the population from which a sample is to be drawn does not constitute a homogeneous group, then stratified sampling technique is applied so as to obtain a representative sample. In this technique, the population is stratified into a number of non-overlapping subpopulations or strata and sample items are selected from each stratum. If the items selected from each stratum is based on simple random sampling the entire procedure, first stratification and then simple random sampling, is known as *stratified random sampling*.

- (e) **Quota sampling:** In stratified sampling the cost of taking random samples from individual strata is often so expensive that interviewers are simply given quota to be filled from different strata, the actual selection of items for sample being left to the interviewer's judgement. This is called *quota sampling*. The size of the quota for each stratum is generally proportionate to the size of that stratum in the population. Quota sampling is thus an important form of non-probability sampling. Quota samples generally happen to be judgement samples rather than random samples.
- (f) **Cluster sampling and area sampling:** Cluster sampling involves grouping the population and then selecting the groups or the clusters rather than individual elements for inclusion in the sample. Suppose some departmental store wishes to sample its credit card holders. It has issued its cards to 15,000 customers. The sample size is to be kept say 450. For cluster sampling this list of 15,000 card holders could be formed into 100 clusters of 150 card holders each. Three clusters might then be selected for the sample randomly. The sample size must often be larger than the simple random sample to ensure the same level of accuracy because cluster sampling procedural potential for order bias and other sources of error is usually accentuated. The clustering approach can, however, make the sampling procedure relatively easier and increase the efficiency of field work, specially in the case of personal interviews.

*Area sampling* is quite close to cluster sampling and is often talked about when the total geographical area of interest happens to be big one. Under area sampling we first divide the total area into a number of smaller non-overlapping areas, generally called geographical clusters, then a number of these smaller areas are randomly selected, and all units in these small areas are included in the sample. Area sampling is specially helpful where we do not have the list of the population concerned. It also makes the field interviewing more efficient since interviewer can do many interviews at each location.

- (g) **Multi-stage sampling:** This is a further development of the idea of cluster sampling. This technique is meant for big inquiries extending to a considerably large geographical area like an entire country. Under multi-stage sampling the first stage may be to select large primary sampling units such as states, then districts, then towns and finally certain families within towns. If the technique of random-sampling is applied at all stages, the sampling procedure is described as multi-stage random sampling.
- (h) **Sequential sampling:** This is somewhat a complex sample design where the ultimate size of the sample is not fixed in advance but is determined according to mathematical decisions on the basis of information yielded as survey progresses. This design is usually adopted under acceptance sampling plan in the context of statistical quality control.

In practice, several of the methods of sampling described above may well be used in the same study in which case it can be called mixed sampling. It may be pointed out here that normally one should resort to random sampling so that bias can be eliminated and sampling error can be estimated. But purposive sampling is considered desirable when the universe happens to be small and a known characteristic of it is to be studied intensively. Also, there are conditions under which sample designs other than random sampling may be considered better for reasons like convenience and low costs. *The sample design to be used must be decided by the researcher taking into consideration the nature of the inquiry and other related factors.*

(vi) **Collecting the data:** In dealing with any real life problem it is often found that data at hand is inadequate, and hence, it becomes necessary to collect data that is appropriate. There are several ways of collecting the appropriate data which differ considerably in context of cost, time and other resources at the disposal of the researcher.

Primary data can be collected either through experiment or through survey. If the researcher conducts an experiment, he observes some quantitative measurements, or the data, with the help of which he examines the truth contained in his hypothesis. But in the case of a survey, data can be collected by any one or more of the following ways:

- (i) **By observation:** This method implies the collection of information by way of investigator's own observation, without interviewing the respondents. The information obtained relates to what is currently happening and is not complicated by either the past behaviour or future intentions or attitudes of respondents. This method is no doubt an expensive method and the information provided by this method is also very limited. As such this method is not suitable in inquiries where large samples are concerned.
- (ii) **Through personal interview:** The investigator follows a rigid procedure and seeks answers to a set of pre-conceived questions through personal interviews. This method of collecting data is usually carried out in a structured way where output depends upon the ability of the interviewer to a large extent.
- (iii) **Through telephone interviews:** This method of collecting information involves contacting the respondents on telephone itself. This is not a very widely used method but it plays an important role in industrial surveys in developed regions, particularly, when the survey has to be accomplished in a very limited time.
- (iv) **By mailing of questionnaires:** The researcher and the respondents do come in contact with each other if this method of survey is adopted. Questionnaires are mailed to the respondents with a request to return after completing the same. It is the most extensively used method in various economic and business surveys. Before applying this method, usually a Pilot Study for testing the questionnaire is conducted which reveals the weaknesses, if any, of the questionnaire. Questionnaire to be used must be prepared very carefully so that it may prove to be effective in collecting the relevant information.
- (v) **Through schedules:** Under this method the enumerators are appointed and given training. They are provided with schedules containing relevant questions. These enumerators go to respondents with these schedules. Data is collected by filling up the schedules by enumerators on the basis of replies given by respondents. Much depends upon the capability of enumerators so far as this method is concerned. Some occasional field checks on the work of the enumerators may ensure sincere work.

The researcher should select one of these methods of collecting the data taking into consideration the nature of investigation, objective and scope of the inquiry, financial resources, available time and the desired degree of accuracy. Though he should pay attention to all these factors but much depends upon the ability and experience of the researcher. In this context Dr. A.L. Bowley very aptly remarks that in collection of statistical data commonsense is the chief requisite and experience of the chief teacher.

**(vii) Execution of the project:** Execution of the project is a very important step in the research process. If the execution of the project proceeds on correct lines, the data to be collected would be adequate and dependable. The researcher should see that the project is executed in a systematic manner and or time. If the survey is to be conducted by means of structured questionnaires, data can be readily machine processed. In such a situation, questions as well as the possible answers may be coded. If the data is to be collected through interviewers, arrangements should be made for proper selection and training of the interviewers. The training may be given with the help of instruction manuals which explain clearly the job of the interviewers at each step. Occasional field checks should be made to ensure that the interviewers are doing their assigned job sincerely and efficiently. A careful watch should be kept for unanticipated factors in order to keep the survey realistic as much as possible. This, in other words, means that steps should be taken to ensure that the survey is under statistical control so that the collected information is in accordance with the pre-defined standard of accuracy. If some of the respondents do not cooperate, some suitable methods should be designed to tackle this problem. One method of dealing with the non-response problem is to make a list of the non-respondents and take a small sub-sample of them, and then with the help of experts vigorous efforts can be made for securing response.

**(viii) Analysis of data:** After the data has been collected, the researcher turns to the task of analysing them. The analysis of data requires a number of closely related operations such as establishment of categories, the application of these categories to raw data through coding, tabulation and then drawing statistical inferences. The unwieldy data should necessarily be condensed into a few manageable groups and tables for further analysis. Thus, researcher should classify the raw data into some purposeful and usable categories. *Coding* operation is usually done at this stage through which the categories of data is transformed into symbols that may be tabulated and counted. *Editing* is the procedure that improves the quality of the data for coding. With coding the stage is ready for tabulation. *Tabulation* is a part of the technical procedure wherein the classified data is put in the form of tables. The mechanical devices can be made use of at this juncture. A great deal of data, specially in large inquiries, is tabulated by computers. Computers not only save time but also make it possible to study large number of variables affecting a problem simultaneously.

Analysis work after tabulation is generally based on the computation of various percentages, coefficients, etc., by applying various well defined statistical formulae. In the process of analysis, relationships or differences supporting or conflicting with original or new hypothesis should be subjected to tests of significance to determine with what validity data can be said to indicate any conclusion(s). For instance, if there are two samples of weekly wages, each sample being drawn from factories in different parts of the same city, giving two different mean values, then our problem may be whether the two mean values are significantly different or the difference is just a matter of chance. Through the use of statistical tests we can establish whether such a difference is a real one or is the result of random fluctuations. If the difference happens to be real, the inference will be that the two samples come from different universe and if the difference is due to chance, the conclusion would be that the two samples belong to the same universe. Similarly, the technique of analysis of variance can help us in analysing whether three or more varieties of seeds grown on certain fields yield significantly different results or not. In brief, the researcher can analyse the collected data with the help of various statistical measures.

(ix) **Hypothesis-testing:** After analysing the data as stated above, the researcher is in a position to test the hypothesis, if any, he had formulated earlier. Do the facts support the hypothesis or they happen to be contrary? This is the usual question which should be answered while testing hypothesis. Various tests, such as Chi square test, *t*-test, *F*-test, have been developed by statisticians for the purpose. These tests are discussed in detail later in the book. The hypothesis may be tested through the use of one or more of such tests, depending upon the nature and object of research inquiry. Hypothesis-testing will result in either accepting the hypothesis or in rejecting it. If the researcher had no hypothesis to start with, generalisations established on the basis of data may be stated as hypothesis to be tested by subsequent researches in times to come.

(x) **Generalisations and interpretation:** If a hypothesis is tested and upheld several times, it may be possible for the researcher to arrive at generalisation, i.e., to build a theory. As a matter of fact, the real value of research lies in its ability to arrive at certain generalisations. If the researcher had no hypothesis to start with, he might seek to explain his findings on the basis of some theory. It is known as interpretation. The process of interpretation may quite often trigger off new questions which in turn may lead to further researches.

(xi) **Preparation of the report or the thesis:** Finally, the researcher has to prepare the report of what has been done by him. Writing of report must be done with great care keeping in view the followings:

(a) The layout of the report should be as follows: the preliminary pages; the main text, and the end matter.

In its preliminary pages the report should carry title and date followed by acknowledgements and foreword. Then there should be a table of contents followed by a list of tables and list of illustrations, if any, given in the report.

The main text of the report should have the following parts:

- **Introduction:** It should contain a clear statement of the objective of the research and an explanation of the methodology adopted in accomplishing the research. The scope of the study along with various limitations should as well be stated in this part.
- **Summary of findings:** After introduction there would appear a statement of findings and recommendations in non-technical language. If the findings are extensive, they should be summarised.
- **Main report:** The main body of the report should be presented in logical sequence and broken-down into readily identifiable sections.
- **Conclusion:** Towards the end of the main text, researcher should again put down the results of his research clearly and precisely. In fact, it is the final summing up.

At the end of the report, appendices should be enlisted in respect of all technical data. Bibliography, i.e., list of books, journals, reports, etc., consulted, should also be given at the end. Index should also be given specially in a published research report.

(b) Report should be written in a concise and objective style in simple language avoiding vague expressions such as 'it seems,' 'there may be', and the like.

- (c) Charts and illustrations in the main report should be used only if they present the information more clearly and forcibly.
- (d) Calculated 'confidence limits' must be mentioned and the various constraints experienced in conducting research operations may as well be stated.

## 1.9 CRITERIA OF GOOD RESEARCH

One expects scientific research to satisfy the following criteria:

- (a) The purpose of the research should be clearly defined and common concepts be used.
- (b) The research procedure used should be described in sufficient detail to permit another researcher to repeat the research for further advancement, keeping the continuity of what has already been attained.
- (c) The procedural design of the research should be carefully planned to yield results that are as objective as possible.
- (d) The researcher should report with complete frankness, flaws in procedural design and estimate their effects upon the findings.
- (e) The analysis of data should be sufficiently adequate to reveal its significance and the methods of analysis used should be appropriate. The validity and reliability of the data should be checked carefully.
- (f) Conclusions should be confined to those justified by the data of the research and limited to those for which the data provide an adequate basis.
- (g) Greater confidence in research is warranted if the researcher is experienced, has a good reputation in research and is a person of integrity.

In other words, we can state the qualities of a good research as under:

- (a) *Good research is systematic*: It means that research is structured with specified steps to be taken in a specified sequence in accordance with the well defined set of rules. Systematic characteristic of the research does not rule out creative thinking but it certainly does reject the use of guessing and intuition in arriving at conclusions.
- (b) *Good research is logical*: This implies that research is guided by the rules of logical reasoning and the logical process of induction and deduction are of great value in carrying out research. Induction is the process of reasoning from a part to the whole whereas deduction is the process of reasoning from some premise to a conclusion which follows from that very premise. In fact, logical reasoning makes research more meaningful in the context of decision making.
- (c) *Good research is empirical*: It implies that research is related basically to one or more aspects of a real situation and deals with concrete data that provides a basis for external validity to research results.
- (d) *Good research is replicable*: This characteristic allows research results to be verified by replicating the study and thereby building a sound basis for decisions.

## 1.10 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY RESEARCHERS IN INDIA

Researchers in India, particularly those engaged in empirical research, are facing several problems. Some of the important problems are as follows:

- (a) *The lack of a scientific training in the methodology of research* is a great impediment for researchers in our country. There is a paucity of competent researchers. Many researchers take a leap in the dark without knowing research methods. Most of the work, which goes in the name of research is not methodologically sound. Research to many researchers and even to their guides, is mostly a scissor and paste job without any insight shed on the collated materials. The consequence is obvious, viz., the research results, quite often, do not reflect the reality or realities. Thus, a systematic study of research methodology is an urgent necessity. Before undertaking research projects, researchers should be well equipped with all the methodological aspects. As such, *efforts should be made to provide short-duration intensive courses for meeting this requirement.*
- (b) There is *insufficient interaction* between the university research departments on one side and business establishments, government departments and research institutions on the other side. A great deal of primary data of non-confidential nature remains untouched/untreated by the researchers for want of proper contacts. *Efforts should be made to develop satisfactory liaison among all concerned for better and realistic researches.* There is need for developing some mechanisms of a university—industry interaction programme so that academics can get ideas from practitioners on what needs to be researched and practitioners can apply the research done by the academics.
- (c) Most of the business units in our country do not have the confidence that the material supplied by them to researchers will not be misused and as such they are often reluctant in supplying the needed information to researchers. The concept of secrecy seems to be sacrosanct to business organisations in the country so much that it proves an impermeable barrier to researchers. Thus, *there is the need for generating the confidence that the information/data obtained from a business unit will not be misused.*
- (d) *Research studies overlapping one another are undertaken quite often for want of adequate information.* This results in duplication and fritters away resources. This problem can be solved by proper compilation and revision, at regular intervals, of a list of subjects on which and the places where the research is going on. Due attention should be given towards identification of research problems in various disciplines of applied science which are of immediate concern to the industries.
- (e) *There does not exist a code of conduct for researchers* and inter-university and inter-departmental rivalries are also quite common. Hence, there is need for developing a code of conduct for researchers which, if adhered sincerely, can win over this problem.
- (f) Many researchers in our country also face *the difficulty of adequate and timely secretarial assistance*, including computerial assistance. This causes unnecessary delays in the completion of research studies. All possible efforts to be made in this direction so that efficient secretarial assistance is made available to researchers and that too well in time. University Grants Commission must play a dynamic role in solving this difficulty.

- (g) *Library management and functioning is not satisfactory at many places* and much of the time and energy of researchers is spent in tracing out the books, journals, reports, etc., rather than in tracing out relevant material from them.
- (h) *There is also the problem that many of our libraries are not able to get copies of old and new Acts/Rules, reports and other government publications in time.* This problem is felt more in libraries which are away in places from Delhi and/or the state capitals. Thus, efforts should be made for the regular and speedy supply of all governmental publications to reach our libraries.
- (i) *There is also the difficulty of timely availability of published data* from various government and other agencies doing this job in our country. Researcher also faces the problem on account of the fact that the published data vary quite significantly because of differences in coverage by the concerning agencies.
- (j) There may, at times, take place *the problem of conceptualization* and also problems relating to the process of data collection and related things.

### PROBLEMS

1. Briefly describe the different steps involved in a research process.
2. What do you mean by research? Explain its significance in modern times.
3. Distinguish between Research methods and Research methodology.
4. Describe the different types of research, clearly pointing out the difference between an experiment and a survey.
5. Write short notes on:
  - (a) Design of the research project;
  - (b) Ex post facto research;
  - (c) Objectives of research;
  - (d) Criteria of good research;
  - (e) Research and scientific method.
6. "Empirical research in India in particular creates so many problems for the researchers". State the problems that are usually faced by such researchers.
7. "A research scholar has to work as a judge and derive the truth and not as a pleader who is only eager to prove his case in favour of his plaintiff." Discuss the statement pointing out the objectives of research.
8. "Creative management, whether in public administration or private industry, depends on methods of inquiry that maintain objectivity, clarity, accuracy and consistency". Discuss this statement and examine the significance of research".
9. "Research is much concerned with proper fact finding, analysis and evaluation." Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons in support of your answer.
10. It is often said that there is not a proper link between some of the activities under way in the world of academics and in most businesses in our country. Account for this state of affairs and give suggestions for improvement.

## **Defining the Research Problem**

In research process, the first and foremost step happens to be that of selecting and properly defining a research problem. A researcher must find the problem and formulate it so that it becomes susceptible to research. Like a medical doctor, a researcher must examine all the symptoms (presented to him or observed by him) concerning a problem before he can diagnose correctly. To define a problem correctly, a researcher must know: what a problem is?

### **2.1 WHAT IS A RESEARCH PROBLEM?**

A research problem, in general, refers to some difficulty which a researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation and wants to obtain a solution for the same. Usually we say that a research problem does exist if the following conditions are met with:

- (i) There must be an individual (or a group or an organisation), let us call it ' $I$ ', to whom the problem can be attributed. The individual or the organisation, as the case may be, occupies an environment, say ' $N$ ', which is defined by values of the uncontrolled variables,  $Y_j$ .
- (ii) There must be at least two courses of action, say  $C_1$  and  $C_2$ , to be pursued. A course of action is defined by one or more values of the controlled variables. For example, the number of items purchased at a specified time is said to be one course of action.
- (iii) There must be at least two possible outcomes, say  $O_1$  and  $O_2$ , of a course of action, of which one should be preferable to the other. In other words, this means that there must be at least one outcome that the researcher wants, i.e., an objective.
- (iv) The courses of action available must provide some chance of obtaining the objective, but they cannot provide the same chance, otherwise the choice would not matter. Thus, if  $P(O_j|I, C_j, N)$  represents the probability that an outcome  $O_j$  will occur, if  $I$  select  $C_j$  in  $N$ , then  $P(O_1|I, C_1, N) \neq P(O_1|I, C_2, N)$ . In simple words, we can say that the choices must have unequal efficiencies for the desired outcomes.

Over and above these conditions, the individual or the organisation can be said to have the problem only if ' $I$ ' does not know what course of action is best, i.e., ' $I$ ', must be in doubt about the solution. Thus, an individual or a group of persons can be said to have a problem which can be

technically described as a research problem, if they (individual or the group), having one or more desired outcomes, are confronted with two or more courses of action that have some but not equal efficiency for the desired objective(s) and are in doubt about which course of action is best.

We can, thus, state the components of a research problem as under:

- (i) There must be an individual or a group which has some difficulty or the problem.
- (ii) There must be some objective(s) to be attained at. If one wants nothing, one cannot have a problem.
- (iii) There must be alternative means (or the courses of action) for obtaining the objective(s) one wishes to attain. This means that there must be *at least two means* available to a researcher for if he has no choice of means, he cannot have a problem.
- (iv) There must remain some doubt in the mind of a researcher with regard to the selection of alternatives. This means that research must answer the question concerning the relative efficiency of the possible alternatives.
- (v) There must be some environment(s) to which the difficulty pertains.

Thus, a research problem is one which requires a researcher to find out the best solution for the given problem, i.e., to find out by which course of action the objective can be attained optimally in the context of a given environment. There are several factors which may result in making the problem complicated. For instance, the environment may change affecting the efficiencies of the courses of action or the values of the outcomes; the number of alternative courses of action may be very large; persons not involved in making the decision may be affected by it and react to it favourably or unfavourably, and similar other factors. All such elements (or at least the important ones) may be thought of in context of a research problem.

## 2.2 SELECTING THE PROBLEM

The research problem undertaken for study must be carefully selected. The task is a difficult one, although it may not appear to be so. Help may be taken from a research guide in this connection. Nevertheless, every researcher must find out his own salvation for research problems cannot be borrowed. A problem must spring from the researcher's mind like a plant springing from its own seed. If our eyes need glasses, it is not the optician alone who decides about the number of the lens we require. We have to see ourselves and enable him to prescribe for us the right number by cooperating with him. Thus, a research guide can at the most only help a researcher choose a subject. However, the following points may be observed by a researcher in selecting a research problem or a subject for research:

- (i) Subject which is overdone should not be normally chosen, for it will be a difficult task to throw any new light in such a case.
- (ii) Controversial subject should not become the choice of an average researcher.
- (iii) Too narrow or too vague problems should be avoided.
- (iv) The subject selected for research should be familiar and feasible so that the related research material or sources of research are within one's reach. Even then it is quite difficult to supply definitive ideas concerning how a researcher should obtain ideas for his research. For this purpose, a researcher should contact an expert or a professor in the University

who is already engaged in research. He may as well read articles published in current literature available on the subject and may think how the techniques and ideas discussed therein might be applied to the solution of other problems. He may discuss with others what he has in mind concerning a problem. In this way he should make all possible efforts in selecting a problem.

(v) The importance of the subject, the qualifications and the training of a researcher, the cost involved, the time factor are few other criterias that must also be considered in selecting a problem. In other words, before the final selection of a problem is done, a researcher must ask himself the following questions:

- Whether he is well equipped in terms of his background to carry out the research?
- Whether the study falls within the budget he can afford?
- Whether the necessary cooperation can be obtained from those who must participate in research as subjects?

If the answers to all these questions are in the affirmative, one may become sure so far as the practicability of the study is concerned.

(vi) The selection of a problem must be preceded by a preliminary study. This may not be necessary when the problem requires the conduct of a research closely similar to one that has already been done. But when the field of inquiry is relatively new and does not have available a set of well developed techniques, a brief feasibility study must always be undertaken.

If the subject for research is selected properly by observing the above mentioned points, the research will not be a boring drudgery, rather it will be love's labour. In fact, zest for work is a must. The subject or the problem selected must involve the researcher and must have an upper most place in his mind so that he may undertake all pains needed for the study.

### **2.3 NECESSITY OF DEFINING THE PROBLEM**

Quite often we all hear that a problem clearly stated is a problem half solved. This statement signifies the need for defining a research problem. The problem to be investigated must be defined unambiguously for that will help to discriminate relevant data from the irrelevant ones. A proper definition of research problem will enable the researcher to be on the track whereas an ill-defined problem may create hurdles. Questions like: What data is to be collected? What characteristics of data are relevant and need to be studied? What relations are to be explored. What techniques are to be used for the purpose? and similar other questions crop up in the mind of the researcher who can well plan his strategy and find answers to all such questions only when the research problem has been well defined. Thus, defining a research problem properly is a prerequisite for any study and is a step of the highest importance. In fact, formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution. It is only on the careful detailing of the research problem that we can work out the research design and can smoothly carry on all the consequential steps involved while doing research.

## 2.4 TECHNIQUE INVOLVED IN DEFINING A PROBLEM

*SUSDR*

Let us start with the question: What does one mean when he/she wants to define a research problem? The answer may be that one wants to state the problem along with the bounds within which it is to be studied. In other words, defining a problem involves the task of laying down boundaries within which a researcher shall study the problem with a pre-determined objective in view.

How to define a research problem is undoubtedly a herculean task. However, it is a task that must be tackled intelligently to avoid the perplexity encountered in a research operation. The usual approach is that the researcher should himself pose a question (or in case someone else who wants the researcher to carry on research, the concerned individual, organisation or an authority should pose the question to the researcher) and set-up techniques and procedures for throwing light on the question concerned for formulating or defining the research problem. But such an approach generally does not produce definitive results because the question phrased in such a fashion is usually in broad general terms and as such may not be in a form suitable for testing.

Defining a research problem properly and clearly is a crucial part of a research study and must in no case be accomplished hurriedly. However, in practice this is frequently overlooked which causes a lot of problems later on. Hence, the research problem should be defined in a systematic manner, giving due weightage to all relating points. The technique for the purpose involves the undertaking of the following steps generally one after the other: (i) statement of the problem in a general way; (ii) understanding the nature of the problem; (iii) surveying the available literature; (iv) developing the ideas through discussions; and (v) rephrasing the research problem into a working proposition.

A brief description of all these points will be helpful.

*Pilot Survey*

**(i) Statement of the problem in a general way:** First of all the problem should be stated in a broad general way, keeping in view either some practical concern or some scientific or intellectual interest. For this purpose, the researcher must immerse himself thoroughly in the subject matter concerning which he wishes to pose a problem. In case of social research, it is considered advisable to do some field observation and as such the researcher may undertake some sort of preliminary survey or what is often called *pilot survey*. Then the researcher can himself state the problem or he can seek the guidance of the guide or the subject expert in accomplishing this task. Often, the guide puts forth the problem in general terms, and it is then up to the researcher to narrow it down and phrase the problem in operational terms. In case there is some directive from an organisational authority, the problem then can be stated accordingly. The problem stated in a broad general way may contain various ambiguities which must be resolved by cool thinking and rethinking over the problem. At the same time the feasibility of a particular solution has to be considered and the same should be kept in view while stating the problem.

**(ii) Understanding the nature of the problem:** The next step in defining the problem is to understand its origin and nature clearly. The best way of understanding the problem is to discuss it with those who first raised it in order to find out how the problem originally came about and with what objectives in view. If the researcher has stated the problem himself, he should consider once again all those points that induced him to make a general statement concerning the problem. For a better understanding of the nature of the problem involved,

he can enter into discussion with those who have a good knowledge of the problem concerned or similar other problems. The researcher should also keep in view the environment within which the problem is to be studied and understood.

(iii) **Surveying the available literature:** All available literature concerning the problem at hand must necessarily be surveyed and examined before a definition of the research problem is given. This means that the researcher must be well-conversant with relevant theories in the field, reports and records as also all other relevant literature. He must devote sufficient time in reviewing of research already undertaken on related problems. This is done to find out what data and other materials, if any, is available for operational purposes. "Knowing what data is available often serves to narrow the problem itself as well as the technique that might be used."<sup>1</sup> This would also help a researcher to know if there are certain gaps in the theories, or whether the existing theories applicable to the problem under study are inconsistent with each other, or whether the findings of the different studies do not follow a pattern consistent with the theoretical expectations and so on. All this will enable a researcher to take new strides in the field for furtherance of knowledge i.e., he can move up starting from the existing premise. Studies on related problems are useful for indicating the type of difficulties that may be encountered in the present study as also the possible analytical shortcomings. At times such studies may also suggest useful and even new lines of approach to the present problem.

*Experience Survey*

(iv) **Developing the ideas through discussions:** Discussion concerning a problem often produces useful information. Various new ideas can be developed through such an exercise. Hence, a researcher must discuss his problem with his colleagues and others who have enough experience in the same area or in working on similar problems. This is quite often known as an *experience survey*. People with rich experience are in a position to enlighten the researcher on different aspects of his proposed study and their advice and comments are usually invaluable to the researcher. They help him sharpen his focus of attention on specific aspects within the field. Discussions with such persons should not only be confined to the formulation of the specific problem at hand, but should also be concerned with the general approach to the given problem, techniques that might be used, possible solutions, etc.

(v) **Rephrasing the research problem:** Finally, the researcher must sit to rephrase the research problem into a working proposition. Once the nature of the problem has been clearly understood, the environment (within which the problem has got to be studied) has been defined, discussions over the problem have taken place and the available literature has been surveyed and examined, rephrasing the problem into analytical or operational terms is not a difficult task. Through rephrasing, the researcher puts the research problem in as specific terms as possible so that it may become operationally viable and may help in the development of working hypothesis.\*

<sup>1</sup> Robert Ferber and P.J. Verdoorn, *Research Methods in Economics and Business*, pp. 33–34.

\* Working hypotheses are a set of suggested tentative solutions of explanations of a research problem which may or may not be the real solutions. The task of research is to test and establish such hypothesis. Hypothesis should be clearly and precisely stated in simple terms, they should be testable, limited in scope and should state relationship between variables. They should be amenable to testing within a reasonable time and should be consistent with most of the known facts (Testing of hypothesis has been dealt later in the book).

In addition to what has been stated above, the following points must also be observed while defining a research problem:

- (a) Technical terms and words or phrases, with special meanings used in the statement of the problem, should be clearly defined.
- (b) Basic assumptions or postulates (if any) relating to the research problem should be clearly stated.
- (c) A straight forward statement of the value of the investigation (i.e., the criteria for the selection of the problem) should be provided.
- (d) The suitability of the time-period and the sources of data available must also be considered by the researcher in defining the problem.
- (e) The scope of the investigation or the limits within which the problem is to be studied must be mentioned explicitly in defining a research problem.

## 2.5 AN ILLUSTRATION

The technique of defining a problem outlined above can be illustrated for better understanding by taking an example as under:

Let us suppose that a research problem in a broad general way is as follows:

“Why is productivity in Japan so much higher than in India”?

In this form the question has a number of ambiguities such as: What sort of productivity is being referred to? With what industries the same is related? With what period of time the productivity is being talked about? In view of all such ambiguities the given statement or the question is much too general to be amenable to analysis. Rethinking and discussions about the problem may result in narrowing down the question to:

“What factors were responsible for the higher labour productivity of Japan’s manufacturing industries during the decade 1971 to 1980 relative to India’s manufacturing industries?”

This latter version of the problem is definitely an improvement over its earlier version for the various ambiguities have been removed to the extent possible. Further rethinking and rephrasing might place the problem on a still better operational basis as shown below:

“To what extent did labour productivity in 1971 to 1980 in Japan exceed that of India in respect of 15 selected manufacturing industries? What factors were responsible for the productivity differentials between the two countries by industries?”

With this sort of formulation, the various terms involved such as ‘labour productivity’, ‘productivity differentials’, etc. must be explained clearly. The researcher must also see that the necessary data is available. In case the data for one or more industries selected is not available for the concerning time-period, then the said industry or industries will have to be substituted by other industry or industries. The suitability of the time-period must also be examined. Thus, all relevant factors must be considered by a researcher before finally defining a research problem.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

We may conclude by saying that the task of defining a research problem, very often, follows a sequential pattern—the problem is stated in a general way, the ambiguities are resolved, thinking and rethinking process results in a more specific formulation of the problem so that it may be a realistic one in terms of the available data and resources and is also analytically meaningful. All this results in a well defined research problem that is not only meaningful from an operational point of view, but is equally capable of paving the way for the development of working hypotheses and for means of solving the problem itself.

### PROBLEMS

1. Describe fully the techniques of defining a research problem.
2. What is research problem? Define the main issues which should receive the attention of the researcher in formulating the research problem. Give suitable examples to elucidate your points.
3. How do you define a research problem? Give three examples to illustrate your answer.
4. What is the necessity of defining a research problem? Explain.
5. Write short notes on:
  - (a) Experience survey;
  - (b) Pilot survey;
  - (c) Components of a research problem;
  - (d) Rephrasing the research problem.
6. "The task of defining the research problem often follows a sequential pattern". Explain.
7. "Knowing what data are available often serves to narrow down the problem itself as well as the technique that might be used." Explain the underlying idea in this statement in the context of defining a research problem.
8. Write a comprehensive note on the "Task of defining a research problem".

## *Chapter*

# **3**

# **Research Design**

### **3.1 MEANING OF RESEARCH DESIGN**

The formidable problem that follows the task of defining the research problem is the preparation of a design of the research project, popularly known as "research design". A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. In fact, the research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. As such the design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data. More explicitly, the design decisions happen to be in respect of:

- (i) What is the study about?
- (ii) Why is the study being made?
- (iii) Where will the study be carried out?
- (iv) What type of data is required?
- (v) Where can the required data be found?
- (vi) What periods of time will the study include?
- (vii) What will be the sample design?
- (viii) What techniques of data collection will be used?
- (ix) How will the data be analysed?
- (x) In what style will the report be prepared?

Keeping in view the above stated design decisions, one may split the overall research design into the following parts:

- (a) *The sampling design* which deals with the method of selecting items to be observed for the given study.

- (b) *The observational design* which relates to the conditions under which the observations are to be made.
- (c) *The statistical design* which concerns the question of how many items are to be observed and how the information and data gathered is to be analysed.
- (d) *The operational design* which deals with the techniques by which the procedures specified in the sampling, statistical and observational designs can be carried out.

From what has been stated above, we can state the important features of a research design as under:

- (i) It is a plan that specifies the sources and types of information relevant to the research problem.
- (ii) It is a strategy specifying which approach will be used for gathering and analysing the data.
- (iii) It also includes the time and cost budgets since most studies are done under these two constraints.

In brief, research design must, at least, contain (a) a clear statement of the research problem; (b) procedures and techniques to be used for gathering information; (c) the population to be studied; and (d) methods to be used in processing and analysing data.

### 3.2 NEED FOR RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is needed because it facilitates the smooth sailing of the various research operations, thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money. Just as for better, economical and attractive construction of a house, we need a blueprint (or what is commonly called the map of the house) well thought out and prepared by an expert architect, similarly, we need a research design or a plan in advance of data collection and analysis for our research project. Research design stands for advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in their analysis, keeping in view the objective of the research and the availability of staff, time and money. Preparation of the research design should be done with great care as any error in it may upset the entire project. Research design, in fact, has a great bearing on the reliability of the results arrived at and as such constitutes the firm foundation of the entire edifice of the research work.

Even then the need for a well thought out research design is at times not realised by many. The importance which this problem deserves is not given to it. As a result many researches do not serve the purpose for which they are undertaken. In fact, they may even give misleading conclusions. Thoughtlessness in designing the research project may result in rendering the research exercise futile. It is, therefore, imperative that an efficient and appropriate design must be prepared before starting research operations. The design helps the researcher to organize his ideas in a form whereby it will be possible for him to look for flaws and inadequacies. Such a design can even be given to others for their comments and critical evaluation. In the absence of such a course of action, it will be difficult for the critic to provide a comprehensive review of the proposed study.

### 3.3 FEATURES OF A GOOD DESIGN

A good design is often characterised by adjectives like flexible, appropriate, efficient, economical and so on. Generally, the design which minimises bias and maximises the reliability of the data collected and analysed is considered a good design. The design which gives the smallest experimental error is supposed to be the best design in many investigations. Similarly, a design which yields maximal information and provides an opportunity for considering many different aspects of a problem is considered most appropriate and efficient design in respect of many research problems. Thus, the question of good design is related to the purpose or objective of the research problem and also with the nature of the problem to be studied. A design may be quite suitable in one case, but may be found wanting in one respect or the other in the context of some other research problem. One single design cannot serve the purpose of all types of research problems.

A research design appropriate for a particular research problem, usually involves the consideration of the following factors:

- (i) the means of obtaining information;
- (ii) the availability and skills of the researcher and his staff, if any;
- (iii) the objective of the problem to be studied;
- (iv) the nature of the problem to be studied; and
- (v) the availability of time and money for the research work.

If the research study happens to be an exploratory or a formulative one, wherein the major emphasis is on discovery of ideas and insights, the research design most appropriate must be flexible enough to permit the consideration of many different aspects of a phenomenon. But when the purpose of a study is accurate description of a situation or of an association between variables (or in what are called the descriptive studies), accuracy becomes a major consideration and a research design which minimises bias and maximises the reliability of the evidence collected is considered a good design. Studies involving the testing of a hypothesis of a causal relationship between variables require a design which will permit inferences about causality in addition to the minimisation of bias and maximisation of reliability. But in practice it is the most difficult task to put a particular study in a particular group, for a given research may have in it elements of two or more of the functions of different studies. It is only on the basis of its primary function that a study can be categorised either as an exploratory or descriptive or hypothesis-testing study and accordingly the choice of a research design may be made in case of a particular study. Besides, the availability of time, money, skills of the research staff and the means of obtaining the information must be given due weightage while working out the relevant details of the research design such as experimental design, survey design, sample design and the like.

### 3.4 IMPORTANT CONCEPTS RELATING TO RESEARCH DESIGN

Before describing the different research designs, it will be appropriate to explain the various concepts relating to designs so that these may be better and easily understood.

### **3.4.1 Dependent and Independent Variables**

A concept which can take on different quantitative values is called a *variable*. As such the concepts like weight, height, income are all examples of variables. Qualitative phenomena (or the attributes) are also quantified on the basis of the presence or absence of the concerning attribute(s). Phenomena which can take on quantitatively different values even in decimal points are called ‘continuous variables’.\* But all variables are not continuous. If they can only be expressed in integral values, they are non-continuous variables or in statistical language ‘discrete variables’.\*<sup>\*\*</sup> Age is an example of continuous variable, but the number of children is an example of non-continuous variable. If one variable depends upon or is a consequence of the other variable, it is termed as a dependent variable, and the variable that is antecedent to the dependent variable it is termed as an independent variable. For instance, if we say that height depends upon age, then height is a dependent variable and age is an independent variable. Further, if in addition to being dependent upon age, height also depends upon the individual’s sex, then height is a dependent variable and age and sex are independent variables. Similarly, readymade films and lectures are examples of independent variables, whereas behavioural changes, occurring as a result of the environmental manipulations, are examples of dependent variables.

### **3.4.2 Extraneous Variable**

Independent variables that are not related to the purpose of the study, but may affect the dependent variable are termed as extraneous variables. Suppose the researcher wants to test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between children’s gains in social studies achievement and their self-concepts. In this case self-concept is an independent variable and social studies achievement is a dependent variable. Intelligence may as well affect the social studies achievement, but since it is not related to the purpose of the study undertaken by the researcher, it will be termed as an extraneous variable. Whatever effect is noticed on dependent variable as a result of extraneous variable(s) is technically described as an ‘experimental error’. A study must always be so designed that *the effect upon the dependent variable is attributed entirely to the independent variable(s), and not to some extraneous variable or variables*.

### **3.4.3 Control**

One important characteristic of a good research design is to minimise the influence or effect of extraneous variable(s). The technical term ‘control’ is used when we design the study minimising the effects of extraneous independent variables. In experimental researches, the term ‘control’ is used to refer to restrain experimental conditions.

### **3.4.4 Confounded Relationship**

When the dependent variable is not free from the influence of extraneous variable(s), the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is said to be confounded by an extraneous variable(s).

\* A continuous variable is that which can assume any numerical value within a specific range.

\*\* A variable for which the individual values fall on the scale only with distinct gaps is called a discrete variable.

### 3.4.5 Research Hypothesis

When a prediction or a hypothesised relationship is to be tested by scientific methods, it is termed as research hypothesis. The research hypothesis is a predictive statement that relates an independent variable to a dependent variable. Usually, a research hypothesis must contain, at least, one independent and one dependent variable. Predictive statements which are not to be objectively verified or the relationships that are assumed but not to be tested, are not termed research hypothesis.

### 3.4.6 Experimental and Non-Experimental Hypothesis-Testing Research

When the purpose of research is to test a research hypothesis, it is termed as hypothesis-testing research. It can be of the experimental design or of the non-experimental design. Research in which the independent variable is manipulated is termed 'experimental hypothesis-testing research' and a research in which an independent variable is not manipulated is called 'non-experimental hypothesis-testing research'. For instance, suppose a researcher wants to study whether intelligence affects reading ability for a group of students and for this purpose he randomly selects 50 students and tests their intelligence and reading ability by calculating the coefficient of correlation between the two sets of scores. This is an example of non-experimental hypothesis-testing research because herein the independent variable, intelligence, is not manipulated. But now suppose that our researcher randomly selects 50 students from a group of students who are to take a course in statistics and then divides them into two groups by randomly assigning 25 to Group A, the usual studies programme, and 25 to Group B, the special studies programme. At the end of the course, he administers a test to each group in order to judge the effectiveness of the training programme on the student's performance-level. This is an example of experimental hypothesis-testing research because in this case the independent variable, viz., the type of training programme, is manipulated.

### 3.4.7 Experimental and Control Groups

In an experimental hypothesis-testing research when a group is exposed to usual conditions, it is termed a 'control group', but when the group is exposed to some novel or special condition, it is termed as 'experimental group'. In the above illustration, the Group A can be called a control group and the Group B an experimental group. If both groups A and B are exposed to special studies programme, then both groups would be termed 'experimental groups'. It is possible to design studies which include only experimental groups or studies.

### 3.4.8 Treatments

The different conditions under which experimental and control groups are put are usually referred to as 'treatments'. In the illustration taken above, the two treatments are the usual studies programme and the special studies programme. Similarly, if we want to determine through an experiment the comparative impact of three varieties of fertilizers on the yield of wheat, in that case the three varieties of fertilizers will be treated as three treatments.

### **3.4.9 Experiment**

The process of examining the truth of a statistical hypothesis, relating to some research problem, is known as an experiment. For example, we can conduct an experiment to examine the usefulness of a certain newly developed drug. Experiments can be of two types viz., absolute experiment and comparative experiment. If we want to determine the impact of a fertilizer on the yield of a crop, it is a case of absolute experiment; but if we want to determine the impact of one fertilizer as compared to the impact of some other fertilizer, our experiment then will be termed as a comparative experiment. Often, we undertake comparative experiments when we talk about designs of experiments.

### **3.4.10 Experimental Unit(s)**

The pre-determined plots or the blocks, where different treatments are used, are known as experimental units. Such experimental units must be selected (defined) very carefully.

## **3.5 DIFFERENT RESEARCH DESIGNS**

Different research designs can be categorized as below:

We take up each category separately.

### **3.5.1 Research Design in Case of Exploratory Research Studies**

Exploratory research studies are also termed as formulative research studies. The main purpose of such studies is that of formulating a problem for more precise investigation or of developing the working hypothesis from an operational point of view. The major emphasis in such studies is on the discovery of ideas and insights. As such the research design appropriate for such studies must be flexible enough to provide opportunity for considering different aspects of a problem under study. Inbuilt flexibility in research design is needed because the research problem, broadly defined initially, is transformed into one with more precise meaning in exploratory studies, which infact may necessitate changes in the research procedure for gathering relevant data. Generally, the following three methods in the context of research design for such studies are talked about: (a) the survey of concerning literature; (b) the experience survey and (c) the analysis of 'insight-stimulating' examples.

*The survey of concerning literature* happens to be the most simple and fruitful method of formulating precisely the research problem or developing hypothesis. Hypothesis stated by earlier workers may be reviewed and their usefulness be evaluated as a basis for further research. It may also be considered whether the already stated hypothesis suggest new hypothesis. In this way the researcher should review and build upon the work already done by others, but in cases where hypothesis have not yet been formulated, his task is to review the available material for deriving the relevant hypothesis from it.

Besides, the bibliographical survey of studies, already made in one's area of interest may as well be made by the researcher for precisely formulating the problem. He should also make an attempt to apply concepts and develop theories in different research contexts to the area in which he is himself working. Sometimes the works of creative writers also provide a fertile ground for hypothesis formulation and as such may be looked into by the researcher.

*Experience survey* means the survey of people who have had practical experience with the problem to be studied. The object of such a survey is to obtain insight into the relationships between variables and new ideas relating to the research problem. For such a survey people who are competent and can contribute new ideas may be carefully selected as respondents to ensure a representation of different types of experience. The respondents so selected may then be interviewed by the investigator. The researcher must prepare an interview schedule for the systematic questioning of informants. But the interview must ensure flexibility in the sense that the respondents should be allowed to raise issues and questions which the investigator has not previously considered. Generally, the experience-collecting interview is likely to be long and may last for few hours. Hence, it is often considered desirable to send a copy of the questions to be discussed to the respondents well in advance. This will also give an opportunity to the respondents for doing some advance thinking over the various issues involved so that, at the time of interview, they may be able to contribute effectively. Thus, an experience survey may enable the researcher to define the problem more concisely and help in the formulation of the research hypothesis. This survey may as well provide information about the practical possibilities for doing different types of research.

*Analysis of 'insight-stimulating' examples* is also a fruitful method for suggesting hypothesis for research. It is particularly suitable in areas where there is little experience to serve as a guide. This method consists of the intensive study of selected instances of the phenomenon in which one is interested. For this purpose the existing records, if any, may be examined, the unstructured interviewing may take place, or some other approach may be adopted. Attitude of the investigator, the intensity of the study and the ability of the researcher to draw together diverse information into a unified interpretation are the main features which make this method an appropriate procedure for evoking insights.

Now, what sort of examples are to be selected and studied? There is no clear cut answer to it. Experience indicates that for particular problems certain types of instances are more appropriate than others. One can mention few examples of 'insight-stimulating' cases such as the reactions of strangers, the reactions of marginal individuals, the study of individuals who are in transition from one stage to another, the reactions of individuals from different social strata and the like. In general, cases that provide sharp contrasts or have striking features are considered relatively more useful while adopting this method of hypothesis formulation.

Thus, in an exploratory or formulative research study which merely leads to insights or hypothesis, whatever method or research design outlined above is adopted, the only thing essential is that it must continue to remain flexible so that many different facets of a problem may be considered as and when they arise and come to the notice of the researcher.

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### 3.5.2 Research Design in Case of Descriptive and Diagnostic Research Studies

Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group, whereas diagnostic research studies determine the frequency with which something occurs or its association with something else. The studies concerning whether certain variables are associated are examples of diagnostic research studies. As against this, studies concerned with specific predictions, with narration of facts and characteristics concerning individual, group or situation are all examples of descriptive research studies. Most of the social research

comes under this category. From the point of view of the research design, the descriptive as well as diagnostic studies share common requirements and as such we may group together these two types of research studies. In descriptive as well as in diagnostic studies, the researcher must be able to define clearly, what he wants to measure and must find adequate methods for measuring it along with a clear cut definition of 'population' he wants to study. Since the aim is to obtain complete and accurate information in the said studies, the procedure to be used must be carefully planned. The research design must make enough provision for protection against bias and must maximise reliability, with due concern for the economical completion of the research study. The design in such studies must be rigid and not flexible and must focus attention on the following:

- (a) Formulating the objective of the study (what the study is about and why is it being made?)
- (b) Designing the methods of data collection (what techniques of gathering data will be adopted?)
- (c) Selecting the sample (how much material will be needed?)
- (d) Collecting the data (where can the required data be found and with what time period should the data be related?)
- (e) Processing and analysing the data.
- (f) Reporting the findings.

In a descriptive/diagnostic study the first step is to specify the objectives with sufficient precision to ensure that the data collected is relevant. If this is not done carefully, the study may not provide the desired information.

Then comes the question of selecting the methods by which the data is to be obtained. In other words, techniques for collecting the information must be devised. Several methods (viz., observation, questionnaires, interviewing, examination of records, etc.), with their merits and limitations, are available for the purpose and the researcher may use one or more of these methods which have been discussed in detail in the later chapters. While designing data-collection procedure, adequate safeguards against bias and unreliability must be ensured. Whichever method is selected, questions must be well examined and be made unambiguous; interviewers must be instructed not to express their own opinion; observers must be trained so that they uniformly record a given item of behaviour. It is always desirable to pre-test the data collection instruments before they are finally used for the study purposes. In other words, we can say that "*structured instruments*" are used in such studies.

In most of the descriptive/diagnostic studies the researcher takes out sample(s) and then wishes to make statements about the population on the basis of the sample analysis or analyses. More often than not, sample has to be designed. Different sample designs have been discussed in detail in a separate chapter in this book. Here, we may only mention that the problem of designing samples should be tackled in such a fashion that the samples may yield accurate information with a minimum amount of research effort. Usually one or more forms of probability sampling, or what is often described as random sampling, are used.

To obtain data free from errors introduced by those responsible for collecting them, it is necessary to supervise closely the staff of field workers as they collect and record information. Checks may be set up to ensure that the data collecting staff perform their duty honestly and without prejudice. Collected should be examined for its completeness, comprehensibility, consistency and reliability.

The data collected must be processed and analysed. This includes steps like coding the interview replies, observations, etc.; tabulating the data; and performing several statistical computations. To the extent possible, the processing and analysing procedure should be planned in detail before actual work is started. This will prove economical in the sense that the researcher may avoid unnecessary labour such as preparing tables for which he later finds he has no use or on the other hand, re-doing some tables because he failed to include relevant data. Coding should be done carefully to avoid error in coding and for this purpose the reliability of coders needs to be checked. Similarly, the accuracy of tabulation may be checked by having a sample of the tables re-done. In case of mechanical tabulation the material (i.e., the collected data or information) must be entered on appropriate cards which is usually done by punching holes corresponding to a given code. The accuracy of punching is to be checked and ensured. Finally, statistical computations are needed and as such averages, percentages and various coefficients must be worked out. Probability and sampling analysis may as well be used. The appropriate statistical operations, along with the use of appropriate tests of significance should be carried out to safeguard the drawing of conclusions concerning the study.

Last of all comes the question of reporting the findings. This is the task of communicating the findings to others and the researcher must do it in an efficient manner. The layout of the report needs to be well planned so that all things relating to the research study may be well presented in simple and effective style.

Thus, the research design in case of descriptive/diagnostic studies is a comparative design throwing light on all points narrated above and must be prepared keeping in view the objective(s) of the study and the resources available. However, it must ensure the minimisation of bias and maximisation of reliability of the evidence collected. The said design can be appropriately referred to as a *survey design* since it takes into account all the steps involved in a survey concerning a phenomenon to be studied.

The difference between research designs in respect of the above two types of research studies can be conveniently summarised in tabular form as under:

**Table 3.1**

<i>Research Design</i>	<i>Type of Study</i>	
	<i>Exploratory or Formulative</i>	<i>Descriptive/Diagnostic</i>
Overall design	Flexible design (design must provide opportunity for considering different aspects of the problem)	Rigid design (design must make enough provision for protection against bias and must maximise reliability)
(i) Sampling design	Non-probability sampling design (purposive or judgement sampling)	Probability sampling design (random sampling)
(ii) Statistical design	No pre-planned design for analysis	Pre-planned design for analysis
(iii) Observational design	Unstructured instruments for collection of data	Structured or well thought out instruments for collection of data
(iv) Operational design	No fixed decisions about the operational procedures	Advanced decisions about operational procedures.

### 3.5.3 Research Design in Case of Hypothesis-Testing Research Studies

Hypothesis-testing research studies (generally known as experimental studies) are those where the researcher tests the hypothesis of causal relationships between variables. Such studies require procedures that will not only reduce bias and increase reliability, but will permit drawing inferences about causality. Usually experiments meet this requirement. Hence, when we talk of research design in such studies, we often mean the design of experiments.

Professor R.A. Fisher's name is associated with experimental designs. Beginning of such designs was made by him when he was working at Rothamsted Experimental Station (Centre for Agricultural Research in England). As such the study of experimental designs has its origin in agricultural research. Professor Fisher found that by dividing agricultural fields or plots into different blocks and then by conducting experiments in each of these blocks, whatever information is collected and inferences drawn from them, happens to be more reliable. This fact inspired him to develop certain experimental designs for testing hypothesis concerning scientific investigations. Today, the experimental designs are being used in researches relating to phenomena of several disciplines. Since experimental designs originated in the context of agricultural operations, we still use, though in a technical sense, several terms of agriculture (such as treatment, yield, plot, block etc.) in experimental designs.

### 3.6 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

Professor Fisher has enumerated three principles of experimental designs: The Principle of Replication; The Principle of Randomization; and The Principle of Local Control.

According to the *Principle of Replication*, the experiment should be repeated more than once. Thus, each treatment is applied in many experimental units instead of one. By doing so the statistical accuracy of the experiments is increased. For example, suppose we are to examine the effect of two varieties of rice. For this purpose we may divide the field into two parts and grow one variety in one part and the other variety in the other part. We can then compare the yield of the two parts and draw conclusion on that basis. But if we are to apply the principle of replication to this experiment, then we first divide the field into several parts, grow one variety in half of these parts and the other variety in the remaining parts. We can then collect the data of yield of the two varieties and draw conclusion by comparing the same. The result so obtained will be more reliable in comparison to the conclusion we draw without applying the principle of replication. The entire experiment can even be repeated several times for better results. Conceptually replication does not present any difficulty, but computationally it does. For example, if an experiment requiring a two-way analysis of variance is replicated, it will then require a three-way analysis of variance since replication itself may be a source of variation in the data. However, it should be remembered that replication is introduced in order to increase the precision of a study; that is to say, to increase the accuracy with which the main effects and interactions can be estimated.

The *Principle of Randomization* provides protection when we conduct an experiment against the effect of extraneous factors by randomization. In other words, this principle indicates that we should design or plan the experiment in such a way that the variations caused by extraneous factors

can all be combined under the general heading of "chance." For instance, if we grow one variety of rice, say, in the first half of the parts of a field and the other variety is grown in the other half, then it is just possible that the soil fertility may be different in the first half in comparison to the other half. If this is so, our results would not be realistic. In such a situation, we may assign the variety of rice to be grown in different parts of the field on the basis of some random sampling technique i.e., we may apply randomization principle and protect ourselves against the effects of the extraneous factors (soil fertility differences in the given case). As such, through the application of the principle of randomization, we can have a better estimate of the experimental error.

The *Principle of Local Control* is another important principle of experimental designs. Under it the extraneous factor, the known source of variability, is made to vary deliberately over as wide range as necessary and this needs to be done in such a way that the variability it causes can be measured and hence eliminated from the experimental error. This means that we should plan the experiment in a manner that we can perform a two-way analysis of variance, in which the total variability of the data is divided into three components attributed to treatments (varieties of rice in our case), the extraneous factor (soil fertility in our case) and experimental error.\* In other words, according to the principle of local control, we first divide the field into several homogeneous parts, known as blocks, and then each such block is divided into parts equal to the number of treatments. Then the treatments are randomly assigned to these parts of a block. Dividing the field into several homogeneous parts is known as 'blocking'. In general, blocks are the levels at which we hold an extraneous factor fixed, so that we can measure its contribution to the total variability of the data by means of a two-way analysis of variance. In brief, through the principle of local control we can eliminate the variability due to extraneous factor(s) from the experimental error.

### **3.7 IMPORTANT EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS**

Experimental design refers to the framework or structure of an experiment and as such there are several experimental designs. We can classify experimental designs into two broad categories, viz., informal experimental designs and formal experimental designs. Informal experimental designs are those designs that normally use a less sophisticated form of analysis based on differences in magnitudes, whereas formal experimental designs offer relatively more control and use precise statistical procedures for analysis. Important experimental designs are as follows:

- (a) **Informal experimental designs:**
  - (i) Before-and-after without control design.
  - (ii) After-only with control design.
  - (iii) Before-and-after with control design.
- (b) **Formal experimental designs:**
  - (i) Completely randomized design (C.R. Design).
  - (ii) Randomized block design (R.B. Design).
  - (iii) Latin square design (L.S. Design).
  - (iv) Factorial designs.

\*See Chapter Analysis of Variance for details.

We may briefly deal with each of the above stated informal as well as formal experimental designs.

### 3.7.1 Before-and-After Without Control Design

In such a design a single test group or area is selected and the dependent variable is measured before the introduction of the treatment. The treatment is then introduced and the dependent variable is measured again after the treatment has been introduced. The effect of the treatment would be equal to the level of the phenomenon after the treatment minus the level of the phenomenon before the treatment. The design can be represented thus:

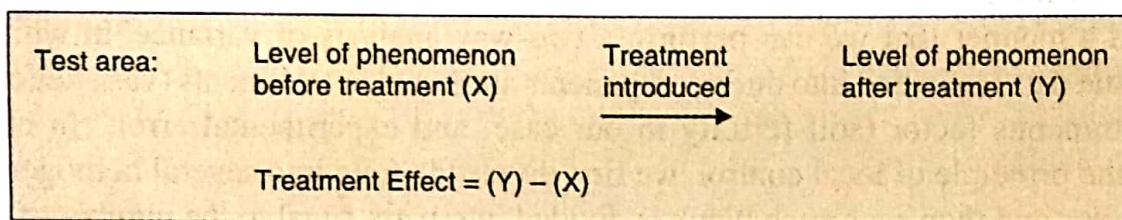


Fig. 3.1

The main difficulty of such a design is that with the passage of time considerable extraneous variations may be there in its treatment effect.

### 3.7.2 After-Only with Control Design

In this design two groups or areas (test area and control area) are selected and the treatment is introduced into the test area only. The dependent variable is then measured in both the areas at the same time. Treatment impact is assessed by subtracting the value of the dependent variable in the control area from its value in the test area. This can be exhibited in the following form:

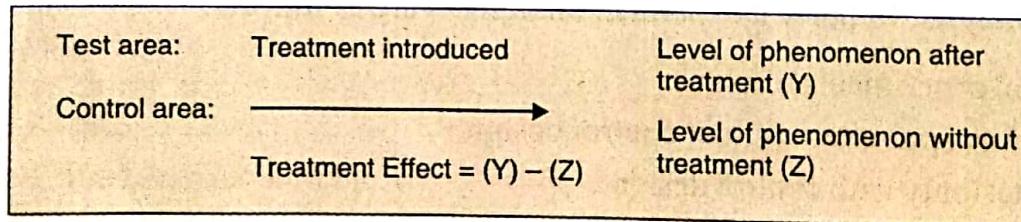


Fig. 3.2

The basic assumption in such a design is that the two areas are identical with respect to their behaviour towards the phenomenon considered. If this assumption is not true, there is the possibility of extraneous variation entering into the treatment effect. However, data can be collected in such a design without the introduction of problems with the passage of time. In this respect the design is superior to before-and-after without control design.

### 3.7.3 Before-and-After with Control Design

In this design two areas are selected and the dependent variable is measured in both the areas for an identical time-period before the treatment. The treatment is then introduced into the test area only, and the dependent variable is measured in both for an identical time-period after the introduction of the treatment. The treatment effect is determined by subtracting the change in the dependent variable in the control area from the change in the dependent variable in test area. This design can be shown in this way:

	Time Period I		Time Period II
Test area:	Level of phenomenon before treatment (X)	Treatment introduced	Level of phenomenon after treatment (Y)
Control area:	Level of phenomenon without treatment (A)		Level of phenomenon without treatment (Z)
Treatment Effect = $(Y - X) - (Z - A)$			

Fig. 3.3

This design is superior to the above two designs for the simple reason that it avoids extraneous variation resulting both from the passage of time and from non-comparability of the test and control areas. But at times, due to lack of historical data, time or a comparable control area, we should prefer to select one of the first two informal designs stated above.

### 3.7.4 Completely Randomized Design (C.R. Design)

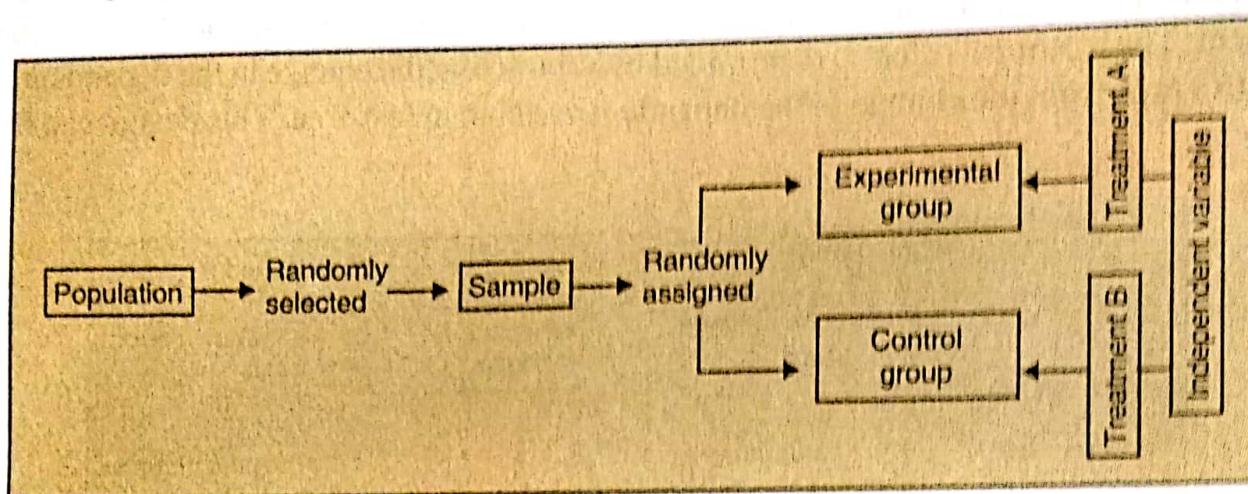
Involves only two principles viz., the principle of replication and the principle of randomization of experimental designs. It is the simplest possible design and its procedure of analysis is also easier. The essential characteristic of the design is that subjects are randomly assigned to experimental treatments (or vice-versa). For instance, if we have 10 subjects and if we wish to test 5 under treatment A and 5 under treatment B, the randomization process gives every possible group of 5 subjects selected from a set of 10 an equal opportunity of being assigned to treatment A and treatment B. One-way analysis of variance (or one-way ANOVA)\* is used to analyse such a design. Even unequal replications can also work in this design. It provides maximum number of degrees of freedom to the error. Such a design is generally used when experimental areas happen to be homogeneous. Technically, when all the variations due to uncontrolled extraneous factors are included under the heading of chance variation, we refer to the design of experiment as C.R. design.

We can present a brief description of the two forms of such a design as given in Fig. 3.4.

- (i) **Two-group simple randomized experimental design:** In a two-group simple randomized design, first of all the population is defined and then from the population a sample is selected randomly. Further, requirement of this design is that items, after being selected randomly

\* See Chapter 11 for one-way ANOVA technique.

from the population, be randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups (such random assignment of items to two groups is technically described as principle of randomization). Thus, this design yields two groups as representatives of the population. In a diagram form this design can be shown in this way:



**Fig. 3.4:** Two-group simple randomized experimental design (in diagram form)

Since in the sample randomized design the elements constituting the sample are randomly drawn from the same population and randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups, it becomes possible to draw conclusions on the basis of samples applicable for the population. The two groups (experimental and control groups) of such a design are given different treatments of the independent variable. This design of experiment is quite common in research studies concerning behavioural sciences. The merit of such a design is that it is simple and randomizes the differences among the sample items. But the limitation of it is that the individual differences among those conducting the treatments are not eliminated, i.e., it does not control the extraneous variable and as such the result of the experiment may not depict a correct picture. This can be illustrated by taking an example. Suppose the researcher wants to compare two groups of students who have been randomly selected and randomly assigned. Two different treatments viz., the usual training and the specialised training are being given to the two groups. The researcher hypothesis greater gains for the group receiving specialised training. To determine this, he tests each group before and after the training, and then compares the amount of gain for the two groups to accept or reject his hypothesis. This is an illustration of the two-groups randomized design, wherein individual differences among students are being randomized. But this does not control the differential effects of the extraneous independent variables (in this case, the individual differences among those conducting the training programme).

**(ii) Random replications design:** The limitation of the two-group randomized design is usually eliminated within the random replications design. In the illustration just cited above, the *teacher differences* on the dependent variable were ignored, i.e., the extraneous variable was not controlled. But in a random replications design, the effect of such differences are minimised (or reduced) by providing a number of repetitions for each treatment. Each repetition is technically called a 'replication'. Random replication design serves two purposes

viz., it provides controls for the differential effects of the extraneous independent variables and secondly, it randomizes any individual differences among those conducting the treatments. Diagrammatically we can illustrate the random replications design thus: (Fig. 3.5).

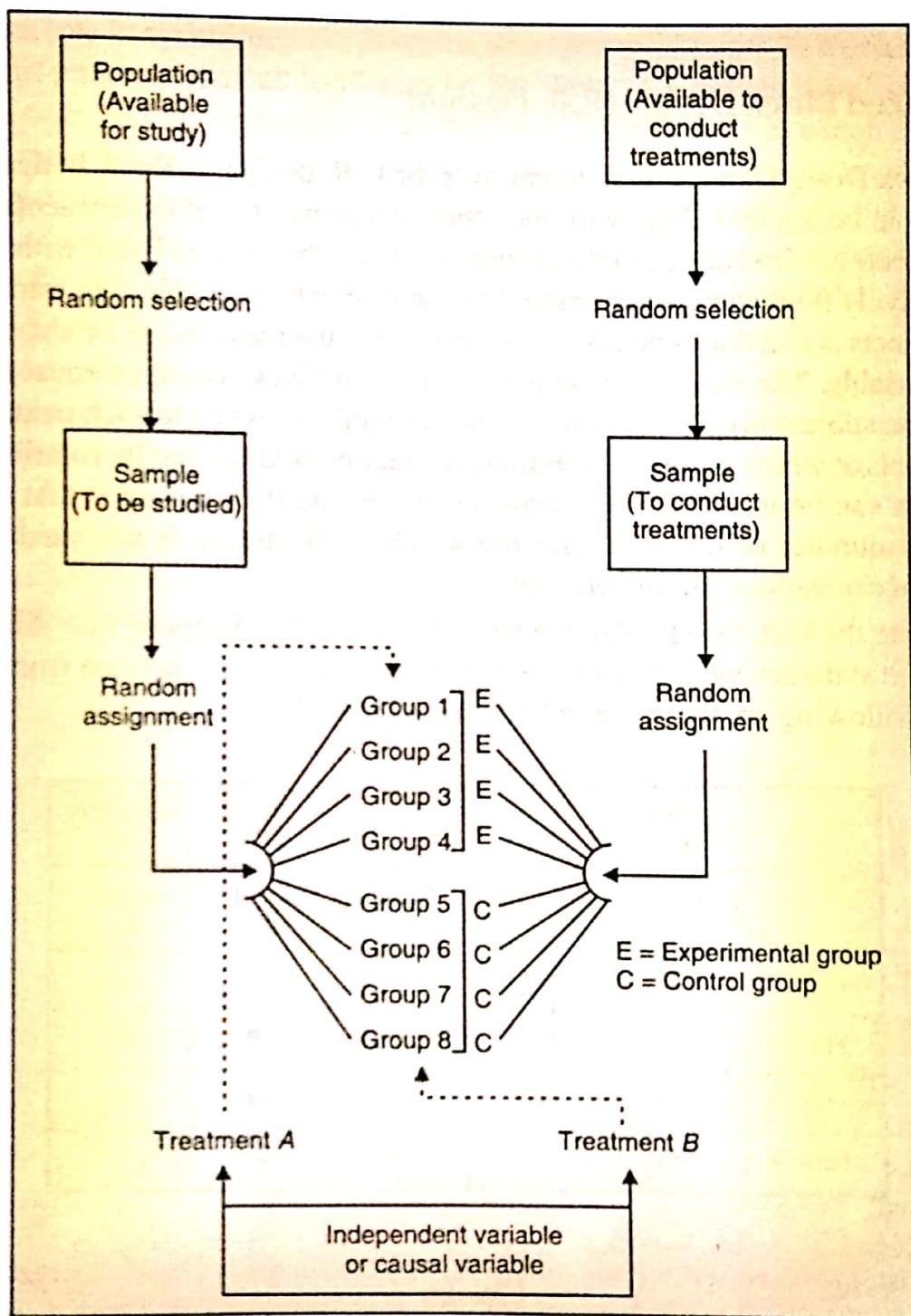


Fig. 3.5: Random replication design (in diagram form)

From the diagram it is clear that there are two populations in the replication design. The sample is taken randomly from the population available for study and is randomly assigned to, say, four experimental and four control groups. Similarly, sample is taken randomly from the population available to conduct experiments (because of the eight groups eight such individuals be selected) and the eight individuals so selected should be randomly assigned to the eight groups. Generally, equal number of items are put in each group so that the size of

the group is not likely to affect the result of the study. Variables relating to both population characteristics are assumed to be randomly distributed among the two groups. Thus, this random replication design is, in fact, an extension of the two-group simple randomized design.

### 3.7.5 Randomized Block Design (R.B. Design)

Randomized Block Design is an improvement over the C.R. design. In the R.B. design the principle of local control can be applied along with the other two principles of experimental designs. In the R.B. design, subjects are first divided into groups, known as blocks, such that within each group the subjects are relatively homogeneous in respect to some selected variable. The variable selected for grouping the subjects is one that is believed to be related to the measures to be obtained in respect of the dependent variable. The number of subjects in a given block would be equal to the number of treatments and one subject in each block would be randomly assigned to each treatment. In general, blocks are the levels at which we hold the extraneous factor fixed, so that its contribution to the total variability of data can be measured. The main feature of the R.B. design is that in this treatment appears the same number of times in each block. The R.B. design is analysed by the two-way analysis of variance technique, discussed later.

Let us illustrate the R.B. design with the help of an example. Suppose four different forms of a standardised test in statistics were given to each of five students (selected one from each of the five I.Q. blocks) and following are the scores which they obtained.

	Very low I.Q.	Low I.Q.	Average I.Q.	High I.Q.	Very High I.Q.
	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E
Form 1	82	67	57	71	73
Form 2	90	68	54	70	81
Form 3	86	73	51	69	84
Form 4	93	77	60	65	71

Fig. 3.6

If each student separately randomized the order in which he or she took the four tests (by using random numbers or some similar devices), we refer to the design of this experiment as a R.B. design. The purpose of this randomization is to take care of such possible extraneous factors (say as fatigue) or perhaps the experience gained from repeatedly taking the test.

### 3.7.6 Latin Square Design (L.S. Design)

This is an experimental design very frequently used in agricultural research. The conditions under which agricultural investigations are carried out are different from those in other studies for nature plays an important role in agriculture. For instance, an experiment has to be made through which the effects of five different varieties of fertilizers on the yield of a certain crop, say wheat, is to be judged. In such a case the varying fertility of the soil in different blocks in which the experiment has to be performed must be taken into consideration; otherwise the results obtained may not be very dependable because the output happens to be the effect of not only fertilizers, but it may also be the effect of fertility of soil. Similarly, there may be impact of varying seeds on the yield. To overcome such difficulties, the L.S. design is used when there are two major extraneous factors such as the varying soil fertility and varying seeds.

The Latin-square design is one wherein each fertilizer, in our example, appears five times but is used only once in each row and in each column of the design. In other words, the treatments in a L.S. design are so allocated among the plots that no treatment occurs more than once in any one row or any one column. The two blocking factors may be represented through rows and columns (one through rows and the other through columns). The following is a diagrammatic form of such a design in respect of, say, five types of fertilizers, viz., A, B, C, D and E and the two blocking factors viz., the varying soil fertility and the varying seeds:

		FERTILITY LEVEL				
		I	II	III	IV	V
Seeds differences	X <sub>1</sub>	A	B	C	D	E
	X <sub>2</sub>	B	C	D	E	A
	X <sub>3</sub>	C	D	E	A	B
	X <sub>4</sub>	D	E	A	B	C
	X <sub>5</sub>	E	A	B	C	D

Fig. 3.7

The above diagram clearly shows that in a L.S. design the field is divided into as many blocks as there are varieties of fertilizers and then each block is again divided into as many parts as there are varieties of fertilizers in such a way that each of the fertilizer variety is used in each of the block (whether column-wise or row-wise) only once. The analysis of the L.S. design is very similar to the two-way ANOVA technique.

The merit of this experimental design is that it enables differences in fertility gradients in the field to be eliminated in comparison to the effects of different varieties of fertilizers on the yield of the crop. But this design suffers from one limitation, and it is that although each row and each column represents all fertilizer varieties equally, there may be considerable difference in the row and column means both up and across the field. This, in other words, means that in L.S. design we must assume

that there is no interaction between treatments and blocking factors. This defect can, however, be removed by taking the means of rows and columns equal to the field mean by adjusting the results. Another limitation of this design is that it requires number of rows, columns and treatments to be equal. This reduces the utility of this design. In case of  $(2 \times 2)$  L.S. design, there are no degrees of freedom available for the mean square error and hence the design cannot be used. If treatments are 10 or more, than each row and each column will be larger in size so that rows and columns may not be homogeneous. This may make the application of the principle of local control ineffective. Therefore, L.S. design of orders  $(5 \times 5)$  to  $(9 \times 9)$  are generally used.

### 3.7.7 Factorial Designs

Factorial designs are used in experiments where the effects of varying more than one factor are to be determined. They are specially important in several economic and social phenomena where usually a large number of factors affect a particular problem. Factorial designs can be of two types: (i) simple factorial designs and (ii) complex factorial designs. We take them separately.

- (i) *Simple factorial designs:* In case of simple factorial designs, we consider the effects of varying two factors on the dependent variable, but when an experiment is done with more than two factors, we use complex factorial designs. Simple factorial design is also termed as a 'two-factor-factorial design', whereas complex factorial design is known as 'multi-factor-factorial design.' Simple factorial design may either be a  $2 \times 2$  simple factorial design, or it may be, say,  $3 \times 4$  or  $5 \times 3$  or the like type of simple factorial design. We illustrate some simple factorial designs as under:

**Example 3.1:** ( $2 \times 2$  simple factorial design). A  $2 \times 2$  simple factorial design can graphically be depicted as follows:

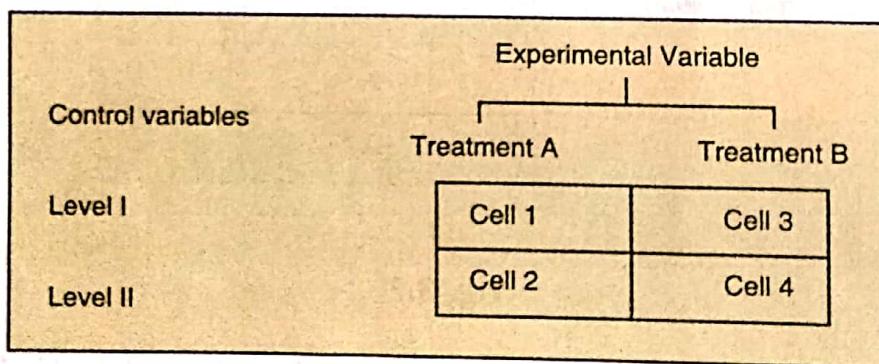


Fig. 3.8:  $2 \times 2$  Simple Factorial Design

In this design the extraneous variable to be controlled by homogeneity is called the control variable and the independent variable, which is manipulated, is called the experimental variable. Then there are two treatments of the experimental variable and two levels of the control variable. As such there are four cells into which the sample is divided. Each of the four combinations would provide one treatment or experimental condition. Subjects are assigned at random to each treatment in the same manner as in a randomized group design. The means for different cells may be obtained along with the means for different rows and columns. Means of different cells represent the mean scores

for the dependent variable and the column means in the given design are termed the main effect for treatments without taking into account any differential effect that is due to the level of the control variable. Similarly, the row means in the said design are termed the main effects for levels without regard to treatment. Thus, through this design we can study the main effects of treatments as well as the main effects of levels. An additional merit of this design is that one can examine the interaction between treatments and levels, through which one may say whether the treatment and levels are independent of each other or they are not so. The following examples make clear the interaction effect between treatments and levels. The data obtained in case of two ( $2 \times 2$ ) simple factorial studies may be as given in Fig. 3.9.

STUDY I DATA

		Training		Row Mean
		Treatment		
Control (Intelligence)	Level I (Low)	15.5	23.3	19.4
	Level II (High)	35.8	30.2	33.0
	Column mean	25.6	26.7	

STUDY II DATA

		Training		Row Mean
		Treatment		
Control (Intelligence)	Level I (Low)	10.4	20.6	15.5
	Level II (High)	30.6	40.4	35.5
	Column mean	20.5	30.5	

Fig. 3.9

All the above figures (the study I data and the study II data) represent the respective means. Graphically, these can be represented as shown in Fig. 3.10.

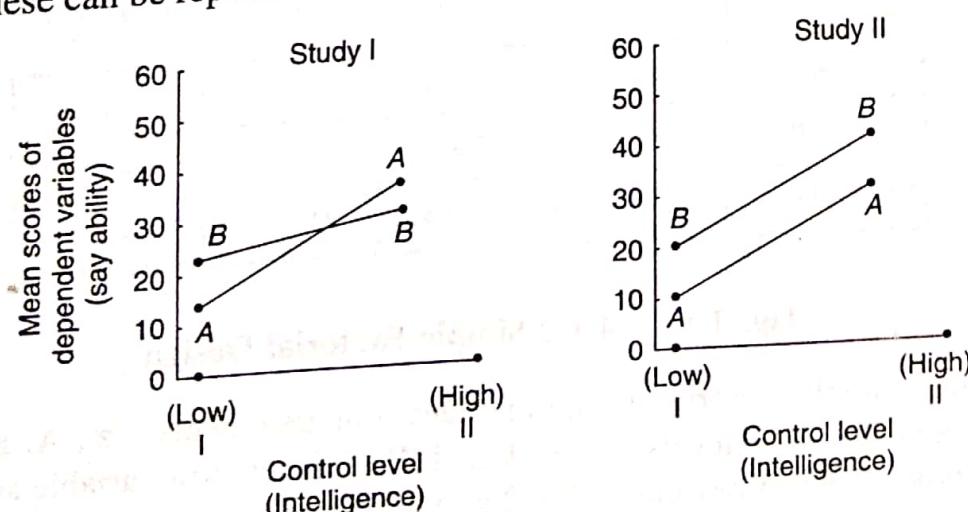


Fig. 3.10

The graph relating to Study I indicates that there is an interaction between the treatment and the level which, in other words, means that the treatment and the level are not independent of each other. The graph relating to Study II shows that there is no interaction effect which means that treatment and level in this study are relatively independent of each other.

The  $2 \times 2$  design need not be restricted in the manner as explained above i.e., having one experimental variable and one control variable, but it may also be of the type having two experimental variables or two control variables. For example, a college teacher compared the effect of the class-size as well as the introduction of the new instruction technique on the learning of research methodology. For this purpose he conducted a study using a  $2 \times 2$  simple factorial design. His design in the graphic form would be as follows:

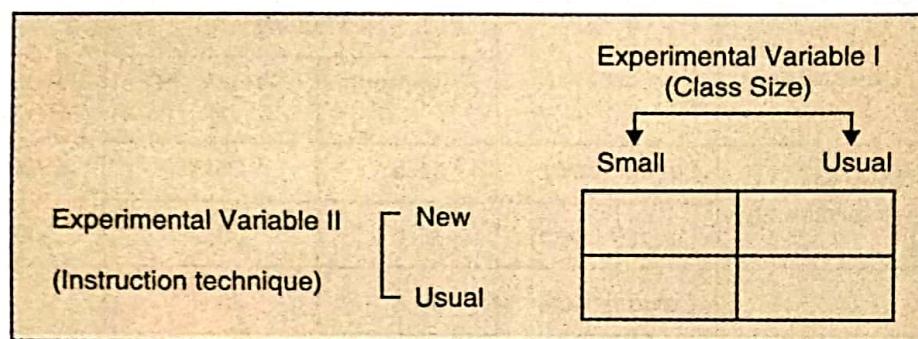


Fig. 3.11

But if the teacher uses a design for comparing male and female and the senior and junior students in the college as they relate to the knowledge of research methodology, in that case we will have a  $2 \times 2$  simple factorial design wherein both the variables are control variables as no manipulation is involved in respect of both the variables.

**Example 3.2:** ( $4 \times 3$  simple factorial design). The  $4 \times 3$  simple factorial design will usually include four treatments of the experimental variable and three levels of the control variable. Graphically it may take the following form:

Control Variable	Experimental Variable			
	Treatment A	Treatment B	Treatment C	Treatment D
Level I	Cell 1	Cell 4	Cell 7	Cell 10
Level II	Cell 2	Cell 5	Cell 8	Cell 11
Level III	Cell 3	Cell 6	Cell 9	Cell 12

Fig. 3.12 :  $4 \times 3$  Simple Factorial Design

This model of a simple factorial design includes four treatments viz., A, B, C, and D of the experimental variable and three levels viz., I, II, and III of the control variable and has 12 different cells as shown above. This shows that a  $2 \times 2$  simple factorial design can be generalised to any number of treatments and levels. Accordingly, we can name it as such and such ( $- \times -$ ) design. In

such a design the means for the columns provide the researcher with an estimate of the main effects for treatments and the means for rows provide an estimate of the main effects for the levels. Such a design also enables the researcher to determine the interaction between treatments and levels.

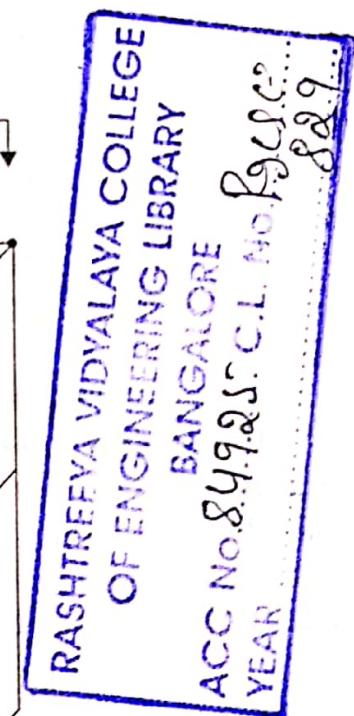
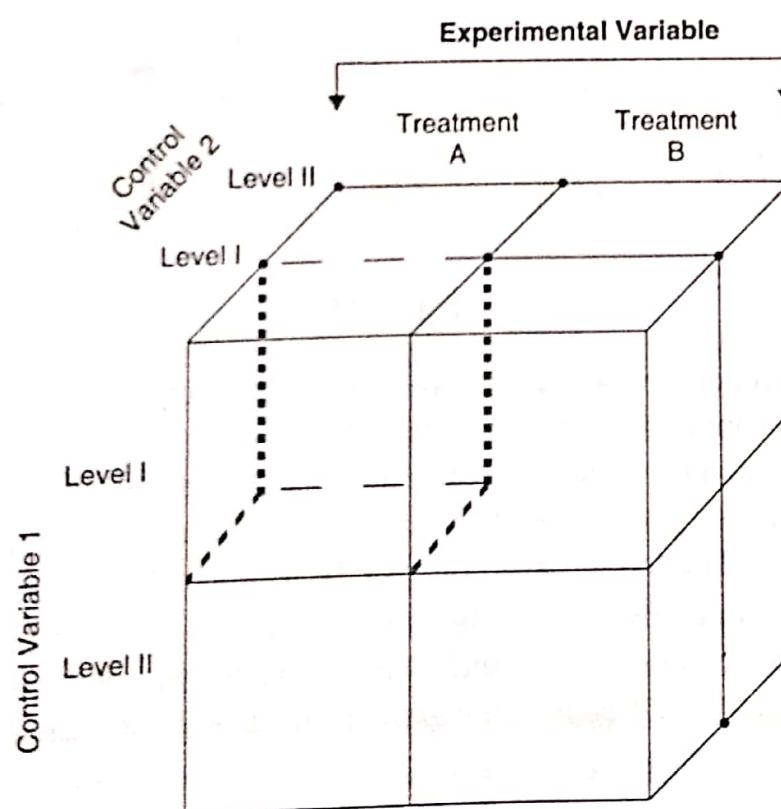
(ii) **Complex factorial designs:** Experiments with more than two factors at a time involve the use of complex factorial designs. A design which considers three or more independent variables simultaneously is called a complex factorial design. In case of three factors with one experimental variable having two treatments and two control variables, each one of which having two levels, the design used will be termed  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  complex factorial design which will contain a total of eight cells as shown below in Fig. 3.13.

**2  $\times$  2  $\times$  2 Complex Factorial Design**

		Experimental Variable			
		Treatment A		Treatment B	
		Control Variable 2 Level I	Control Variable 2 Level II	Control Variable 2 Level I	Control Variable 2 Level II
Control Variable 1	Level I	Cell 1	Cell 3	Cell 5	Cell 7
	Level II	Cell 2	Cell 4	Cell 6	Cell 8

**Fig. 3.13**

In Fig. 3.14 a pictorial presentation is given of the design shown below.



**Fig. 3.14**

The dotted line cell in the diagram corresponds to Cell 1 of the above stated  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  design and is for Treatment A, level I of the control variable 1, and level I of the control variable 2. From this design it is possible to determine the main effects for three variables i.e., one experimental and two control variables. The researcher can also determine the interactions between each possible pair of variables (such interactions are called 'First Order interactions') and interaction between variable taken in triplets (such interactions are called Second Order interactions). In case of a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  design, the further given first order interactions are possible:

Experimental variable with control variable 1 (or EV  $\times$  CV 1);

Experimental variable with control variable 2 (or EV  $\times$  CV 2);

Control variable 1 with control variable 2 (or CV1  $\times$  CV2);

There will be one second order interaction as well in the given design (it is between all the three variables i.e., EV  $\times$  CV1  $\times$  CV2).

To determine the main effects for the experimental variable, the researcher must necessarily compare the combined mean of data in cells 1, 2, 3 and 4 for Treatment A with the combined mean of data in cells 5, 6, 7 and 8 for Treatment B. In this way the main effect for experimental variable, independent of control variable 1 and variable 2, is obtained. Similarly, the main effect for control variable 1, independent of experimental variable and control variable 2, is obtained if we compare the combined mean of data in cells 1, 3, 5 and 7 with the combined mean of data in cells 2, 4, 6 and 8 of our  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  factorial design. On similar lines, one can determine the main effect for the control variable 2 independent of experimental variable and control variable 1, if the combined mean of data in cells 1, 2, 5 and 6 are compared with the combined mean of data in cells 3, 4, 7 and 8.

To obtain the first order interaction, say, for EV  $\times$  CV1 in the above stated design, the researcher must necessarily ignore control variable 2 for which purpose he may develop  $2 \times 2$  design from the  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  design by combining the data of the relevant cells of the latter design as shown in Fig. 3.15.

		Experimental Variables	
		Treatment A	Treatment B
Control Variable 1	Level I	Cells 1, 3	Cells 5, 7
	Level II	Cells 2, 4	Cells 6, 8

Fig. 3.15

Similarly, the researcher can determine other first order interactions. The analysis of the first order interaction, in the manner described above, is essentially a sample factorial analysis as only two variables are considered at a time and the remaining one is ignored. But the analysis of the second order interaction would not ignore one of the three independent variables in case of a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  design. The analysis would be termed as a complex factorial analysis.

It may, however, be remembered that the complex factorial design need not necessarily be of  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  type design, but can be generalised to any number and combination of experimental and control independent variables. Of course, the greater the number of independent variables included

in a complex factorial design, the higher the order of the interaction analysis possible. But the overall task goes on becoming more and more complicated with the inclusion of more and more independent variables in our design.

Factorial designs are used mainly because of the two advantages. (i) They provide equivalent accuracy (as happens in the case of experiments with only one factor) with less labour and as such are a source of economy. Using factorial designs, we can determine the main effects of two (in simple factorial design) or more (in case of complex factorial design) factors (or variables) in one single experiment. (ii) They permit various other comparisons of interest. For example, they give information about such effects which cannot be obtained by treating one single factor at a time. The determination of interaction effects is possible in case of factorial designs.

### 3.8 CONCLUSION

There are several research designs and the researcher must decide in advance of collection and analysis of data as to which design would prove to be more appropriate for his research project. He must give due weight to various points such as the type of universe and its nature, the objective of his study, the resource list or the sampling frame, desired standard of accuracy and the like when taking a decision in respect of the design for his research project.

### PROBLEMS

1. Explain the meaning and significance of a Research design.
2. Explain the meaning of the following in context of Research design.
  - (a) Extraneous variables;
  - (b) Confounded relationship;
  - (c) Research hypothesis;
  - (d) Experimental and Control groups;
  - (e) Treatments.
3. Describe some of the important research designs used in experimental hypothesis-testing research study.
4. "Research design in exploratory studies must be flexible but in descriptive studies, it must minimise bias and maximise reliability." Discuss.
5. Give your understanding of a good research design. Is single research design suitable in all research studies? If not, why?
6. Explain and illustrate the following research designs:
  - (a) Two group simple randomized design;
  - (b) Latin square design;
  - (c) Random replications design;
  - (d) Simple factorial design;
  - (e) Informal experimental designs.
7. Write a short note on 'Experience Survey' explaining fully its utility in exploratory research studies.
8. What is research design? Discuss the basis of stratification to be employed in sampling public opinion on inflation.