




What is a Research problem?

- ▶ So basically it can be a question or issue or a problem that a researcher face or come across, this can be a social problem (we do applied research for that) or a theoretical problem (we do basic or conceptual research for that) and then Researcher will try to understand that problem and define it properly so that next step can be started, the next step in thinking and how to study that problem so that we can try to find solutions to it.
 - ▶ In some research we may not have a concrete or exact research problem to start with, for example in exploratory research our first objective may be to find a research problem itself so largely it will depend on the nature and objective of the research that we are doing.
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What does selecting a Research Problem means?

- ▶ It's a personal journey of a researcher to select what she/he feels that requires attention to study and also she must have done enough literature review to support her claim that issues or topic or social problem should be researched or studies.
- ▶ But still on general level we can try to avoid few things when we are thinking of selecting a research problem (or you can say what researcher wants to study), avoiding already enough studied topic because there may be less areas where you can find some gaps or can contribute anything new in that area,
- ▶ Other things such a topic or issues should not be too narrow or vague, it should be easily understandable.




After selecting why to define a Research Problem?

- ▶ After selecting a research problem by avoiding things that we have discussed above now its time to define that selected problem.
- ▶ Defining that selected problem will help us to exactly pin point and say what exactly we want to study.
- ▶ It will also help us to see which data will be important and good for our research and which is not necessary.
- ▶ It will also help us to see what are relations between different variable we need to study to answers our research questions etc.
- ▶ So basically it will make our job easy because we will have clear idea what all we are going to do.
- ▶ Also it will help us to know the boundaries and limits of our study because we cant study everything that comes to our mind, we have to specify and say that this aspect of this issue/topics/research problem that we want to study.



Steps/techniques that we can follow while defining research problem

- ▶ First step can be just to state our research problem in very general and broad way to start with as it will create a background for to proceed further. If necessary we can do some kind of field observation and pilot survey while doing this step as it will also give us some more ideas about our research problem.
- ▶ Second step can be to first understand the sources of that research problem, source means before us who has done research on similar research problem and understanding what all they have said. It will not only help us to understand our topic but we can also give credit to them for their contribution in that field.
- ▶ When we have found the source of our research problem then we can/should do relevant literature review- we should be aware about relevant theories, reports and already done studies in that field that we are studying. This whole process of literature review will help to more specific our problem and pin point exactly what is our focus of this study.

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- ▶ After literature review when we have enough knowledge and information about our research problem then we can talk with our teacher/professionals/guide and colleagues to know their understanding and get their feedback on what we are thinking, it will help us to further specify our research problem and avoid any unnecessary problem, sometimes this thing of getting people feedback is called “experience survey”.
 - ▶ Now the last step in defining the research problem is developing working hypothesis. So a working hypothesis is suggested tentative ideas or solutions that we frame after literature review. These solutions may not be real and may not work at all but here is our main task, we do research to see this only that these tentative suggested solutions that we decided during the defining research problem works or not. If our findings shows it works then we say it works otherwise we say it doesn't work, that's all but if it doesn't work it do not means research was waste, at least we got to know what doesn't work.



Some other things that we should do while defining the research problem

- ▶ Explaining all the technical terms and meaning used in our research in very simple and understandable manner.
- ▶ Our all basic assumptions like why we believe things are like this, our own understanding of things should be clearly stated.
- ▶ We also need to mention why we selected this specific issues and why this need to be studied.
- ▶ We also need to state, what is our field area, how we will be collecting data.
- ▶ And the scope of our research, how widely its findings can be applied or generalised.