

# Sociology

## CHAPTER -3

### Research Methods and Analysis

#### a. Qualitative and Quantitative methods

# Syllabus

## **3. Research Methods and Analysis:**

**a. Qualitative and Quantitative methods.**

**b. Techniques of data collection.**

**c. Variables, sampling, hypothesis, reliability and validity.**

# **QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

# **POSITIVISM**

- Introduced by Comte – sociology as a science of society based on positive philosophy
- This conception of positivism involves search for laws that uses both reason as well as observation. That is, it is neither purely inductivist nor purely deductivist.
  - Durkheim: study of suicide and social facts (enriched positivism)
    - Use of statistical data
- Correlation (b/w different social facts- Durkheim protestants and high suicide)

# **POSITIVISM**

- **Causation- to find cause and effect but possibility of third factor**
- **Multivariate analysis: isolating effect of particular independent variable on dependent variables**
- **Use of computer software to study statistical significance of correlation**
- **Theorisation: to form laws of human behaviour eg Durkheim (suicide), Comte (3 types of society)**
  - **Inductive methodology**

# Critical Evaluation

Karl Popper in his book 'the logic of scientific discovery' promotes idea of deductivism and falsification (no theory is absolutely true, need to keep testing)

(Already studied in Chapter-2)

# **LABORATORY EXPERIMENT and SOCIOLOGY**

## **Why sociologists don't use lab experiment**

- 1) Unnatural situation while society is natural**
- 2) Artificiality of situation can lead to loss of ecological validity**
- 3) Payne and Payne – Getting informed consent is difficult without altering behaviour (ethical issue)**
- 4) Payne and Payne - Human beings are complex; matching one with other is impossible**
- 5) Alan Bryman says that human beings as an independent variable cannot be manipulated beyond an extent ex: changing male to female**
- 6) Impossibility of fitting entire society into lab**
- 7) Longitudinal Studies can't be conducted - Difficult to keep subjects long in lab to study social change**

# **SOME EXAMPLES OF LAB EXPERIMENT**

- **Weber's charismatic leaders were found to be most effective**
- **Children were impacted by viewing violent images**
- **(Read more from Haralombos)**



# **FIELD EXPERIMENT**

**Because of inability to perform lab experiment, field experiment becomes important**

**Intervening in social world such that hypothesis can be tested by isolating particular variables**

## **Example**

**Study done by J.W. Sissons (an actor dresses up like businessman and then later as a labourer, asked directions, businessman gets most replies)**

## **Natural Experiment**

**when researcher doesn't intervene and simply observes**

# **FIELD EXPERIMENT**

## **Problems**

**Not completely possible to control variables as directed**

## **Hawthorne Effect**

**Presence of researcher can effect results**

## **Ethical Issues**

**Problem of informed consent**

**Mostly confined to small scale studies for short period**

# **COMPARATIVE METHODS**

**Comparing various studies/societies/times/groups and variables**

**Identifying critical factors leading to different outcomes**

**Victor Jupp says this method can be used to do-**

**Content Analysis (comparing documents)**

**Historical analysis ( comparing time periods)**

**Official statistics analysis (comparing areas, groups etc in terms of social indicators)**

**Data can be collected from primary as well as secondary sources**

# **COMPARATIVE METHODS**

## **Benefits**

**Less moral issues**

**(easier to obtain prior consents, generally, of previous researchers)**

**No direct intervention**

**Hawthorne effect eliminated**

**Less likely to artificially effect behaviour of subjects**

**Can be used in both quantitative and qualitative**

**Can be used to establish correlation and causal connection**

**Analyse large scale social change over long periods of times**

# **COMPARATIVE METHODS**

## **Drawbacks**

**Paucity of desired data**

**Difficult to determine independent variables**

**Used by Karl Marx , Durkheim and Weber;  
Cicourel used it to compare juvenile delinquency in two  
Californian cities.**

# **QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

**To supplement quantitative**

**Qualitative data in forms of words, description, narratives and  
greater depth**

# **INTERPRETATIVE APPROACH**

**Weber**

**Social action/ establishing causal relations**

**Verstehen**

**Human beings different than subjects of natural science**

# **SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM**

**Mead. Cooley. Schutz.**

**Does not reject attempt to establish causal relations**

**Individuals possess a self concept or image of themselves  
Which is built/ reinforced or modified during interactions (with  
others)**

**Labelling can produce self-fulfilling prophecies**



# **PHENOMENOLOGY**

**Study of phenomenon from perspective of those who witness it  
i.e. not what we know but how we come to know**

**Reject possibilities of causal explanations of human behaviour  
reject imposing meanings  
reject objective reality**

**They believe social world and its construction as social construction**

**Ex. Cicourel questions the stereotypical definition of delinquency by officials**

## **Criticisms**

**Challenges very existence of sociology**

**Discarding other methodology making phenomenology victim of its own  
ideology**

# QUANTITATIVE VS QUALITATIVE

RAY PAWSON

distinction exaggerated for ex Durkheim gave mental sketches of roman catholics and protestants.

So even strongest advocates of either methodology have not stuck their position

60s hangover

Truce

Methodological pluralism

New methods like post modernism and feminism do not fit into any branch

Alan Bryman

choice of methodology affects research planning and data analysis.

Purposive research.