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## Book Review

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### A B S T R A C T

Dinesh S. Hegde, *Essays on Research Methodology*, Springer India .2015. pp 234. ISBN 978-81-322-2213-2. DOI 10.1007/978-81-322-2214-9. 99. 99 €

This book is a collection of ten essays on research methodology written by eminent academicians and economists from India. The book delves into the issues of research methodology especially in the area of social science and the need of research to be logical, critical and relevant.

This book can be divided into three sections based on its contents. Section 1, comprising of Chapters 1, 2 and 3, introduces the reader to the basic philosophy of research, knowledge claims and epistemological norms in scientific theory. Section 2 containing chapters from 4 to 9 gives the readers an insight into research methodology, research methods and tools. Section 3 with chapter 10 ponders over the issue of ethics in research.

Section 1 provides the backdrop for the book, the need to look into the philosophy of research. It also lays down the limitations in current approach to research. The author

highlights the need to have serious discussion on research methodology. The chapter on 'Knowledge Claims: Approaches and Perspectives' dwells on the nature, basis, classification and approaches to knowledge claims. The author impresses upon the need to have a larger perspective of knowledge claims supported by thorough analysis and experiments. The chapter takes the reader through concepts of apriori knowledge, posteriori knowledge, inferential knowledge and situational knowledge with suitable examples. Three different approaches have been discussed – Positivism, Phenomenology and Mixed Approach. The next chapter discusses the logical and epistemological norms in scientific theory construction. The author has highlighted the importance of logic in construction of scientific theories, logic of induction and deduction. The empiricism in concrete science, deductivism and rationalism in abstract science and the marriage between the two is well brought out through examples and cases. The Axiomatic Systemic Notion of Theory is also critically evaluated with illustrations from the works of Amartya Sen and M. N. Srinivas.

Section 2 gives the reader an insight into the process of problem identification, problem formulation and problem structuring in research. Classification of problem as per the research objective i.e. advancement of knowledge, academic research for solving real life problems etc. is explained. The author has also discussed various factors influencing a problem,

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variable identification in problem and benefits of problem formulation in research. The concept and application of problem formulation have been clearly explained through cases. The need and importance of systems approach in management and social research is dealt with in the next chapter. The readers are also exposed to tools, techniques and diagrammatic methods of problem solving through soft systems method. The concept of system, hierarchies, environment of system, types of systems - dynamic system, homeostatic system, dynamic equilibrium, synergy and anergy in system, purposeful system, ideal seeking system etc. Basic laws of system like law of equifinality and law of requisite variety is well brought out. Various tools and techniques for systemic research like hard and soft systems is also explained. Diagrammatic and Non-diagrammatic techniques in soft system methodology and how adoption of these methods will benefit management, social science and organisational research. Chapter 6 discusses qualitative research and its application in social research and organisational management. The distinct characteristic features of qualitative research and quantitative research are clearly brought out in the chapter. Models of qualitative research like naturalism, Emotionalism, Ethnomethodology, post modernism are discussed. Intricacies in online qualitative research, case study research and action research are well brought out. The author also proposes combination of methods through triangulation. One very important area highlighted is the need and methods of evaluating a qualitative research. The next chapter is on the importance of contextualisation in economic research. It is a very interesting take on how it is important to simplify and abstract complex interactions between society, their politics, economies and people. The author insists that researchers should abandon straightjacket framework of thinking and analysis. The ever changing socio cultural contexts, pressure on land, population densities in developing economies needs to be considered while making inferences about an economic phenomenon. The need to relook at assumptions is very clearly brought out through appropriate examples. The impact of technology, change in consumption patterns should be reasons to ask questions on existing assumptions. The spillover effects

of technology across various subsectors also needs to be considered. All these point out to the need to conceptualise and modify theories and models. Experimentation is very relevant in the context of social sciences. The author takes the reader through steps in creating an experiment framework. The readers are also guided through different types of experimental designs - Solomon Four group design, design with and without control, designs with repeated measures, Latin square design etc. The challenges and pitfalls of using experiments in research are also laid down. The chapter clearly brings out the utility of experimental designs in enhancing the experiments. Chapter 9 highlights the relevance of questionnaire based research in conducting a perception based assessment. The author lays down in detail the steps involved in developing a questionnaire. Insight is provided into the establishment of validity and reliability of questionnaire. The author also provides useful tips on designing survey questionnaire from preparing statements, scaling techniques, verification of item contents etc. The case examples aptly guide the reader through the process of questionnaire design.

Section 3 containing the book's concluding chapter brings out a very important though less discussed area in research, that is, ethics especially in social sciences. The current trends in research and the ethical problems in research are well brought out. Researchers are reminded about the importance of integrity and ethics and the need to be sensitive to the same.

The book is very distinct from the run of the mill books on research methodology. It delves deep into the philosophy of true research and exposes the reader to interesting areas in social sciences research. The role of a researcher in expanding the borders of knowledge adopting appropriate tools and methods is envisaged. The topics cover important areas like conceptualisation of problem, modelling, design and analysis to give the readers a complete overview of research and methods. The case examples at the end of each chapter guide the reader in assimilating the chapter contents. This book is highly recommended for new researchers.