



Block

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DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

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PROGRAMME DESIGN COMMITTEE

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	Dr. P.V.K.Sasidhar IGNOU, New Delhi

PROGRAMME DESIGN COMMITTEE (REVISED)

Prof. T.S. Papola Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, New Delhi	Prof. Nadeem Mohsin (Rtd) A.N.Sinha Institute of Social Sciences, Patna
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	Dr. Grace Don Nemching IGNOU, New Delhi

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

Unit Writer:

Prof. .N. Narayanasamy
Gandhigram Rural Institute - Deemed University
Gandhigram (Units 1, 2 and 3).

Editors:

Prof. V.K.Jain (Rtd) (Content Editor)
NCERT, New Delhi
Mr. Praveer Shukla (Language Editor) New Delhi
Dr. Nisha Varghese, IGNOU
Prof. B. K. Pattanaick, IGNOU
Prof. Nehal A. Farooquee, IGNOU
Prof. P.V.K. Sasidhar, IGNOU

Course Coordinator : Dr.Nisha Varghese,E-mail : nishavarghese@ignou.ac.in

Programme Coordinators : Prof. P.V.K. Sasidhar, Prof. B.K. Pattanaik,
Prof. Nehal A. Farooquee,

PRINT PRODUCTION

Mr. S. Burman Deputy Registrar (Publication) MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi	Mr. KN Mohanan Asst. Registrar (Publication) MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi	Mr. Babu Lal Rewadia Section Officer (Publication) MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi
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BLOCK 2 DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Block-2 of Course MDV-106 consists of three units namely Basics of Development Research, Methods of Development Research and Development Research Applications.

Unit-1 on **‘Basics of Development Research’**, introduces meaning and concept of development research, purpose of development research, types of development research, approaches to research in development work, conditions for development research, key principles of development research, community consultation and development research. This unit also discusses conventional research vs development research, the roles required of a development researcher, outcome of development research and limitations of development research.

Unit-2 on **‘Methods of Development Research’**, gives an account of various methods of development research namely, direct observation, interviewing, focus group discussion, case study method and processes of development research.

Unit-3 on **‘Development Research Applications’**, discusses application of development research, appraisal of existing situation, need assessment, stakeholders’ analysis, formulation of development project, monitoring of development projects and participatory evaluation.

UNIT 1 BASICS OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Concept and Purpose of Development Research
- 1.3 Approaches to Development Research
- 1.4 Types of Research in Development Work
- 1.5 Conditions and Key Principles of Development Research
- 1.6 Community Consultation and Development Research
- 1.7 Conventional Research and Development Research
- 1.8 The Roles Required of a Development Researcher
- 1.9 The Outcomes of Development Research
- 1.10 The Limitations of Development Research
- 1.11 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.12 Key Words
- 1.13 References and Selected Readings
- 1.14 Check Your Progress - Possible Answers

1.1 INTRODUCTION

We have seen in the previous block that research is an ‘organized inquiry’. It is a systematic and logical study of an issue, a problem, or a phenomenon through scientific methods. We have also seen that social sciences research uses various methods, such as surveys, case studies, experiments, observations, and so on. They are all time-tested methods and are widely used. They have inherent merits and strengths. Yet, they do have certain limitations and shortcomings, especially when they are applied in development-related issues and initiatives especially at the micro level. The limitations include: i) top-down orientation and approach with limited scope for the participation of the respondents or subjects of research; ii) the use of one or two methods of enquiry (mono-method bias) which invariably fails to capture the complexities of various issues at the grassroots level; iii) rigidity, or a blueprint approach adopted in the research process restricting the researcher to see beyond what is in the design; iv) research that take a long time to complete, making the data and information out of date; and v) absence of avenues to share the findings of the research with the subjects of research resulting in the denial of opportunities for the respondents to know the outcome of research. These limitations act as barriers and impediments in taking the benefits of development initiatives and interventions to the people, especially at the grassroots level. Experience has shown that the people, especially the deprived, underprivileged, and marginalized sections of society are excluded from the process of development. Hence, the development facilitators, in order to enable the people to be part and parcel of development process, have come out with alternative ways of doing research which include improvisation of the existing methods and innovation

of new methods. These methods are employed in different stages/phases of development such as the appraisal of existing situation, identifying and prioritizing the problems and needs, finding solutions, preparing development proposal, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects, and learning lessons from the process, and reflecting on them for future guidance. The outcome of all these efforts is the emergence of the concept of development research.

After studying this unit you should be able to

- explain the meaning, concept and purpose of development research
- differentiate the types and approaches to development research
- describe the key principles of development research
- list the differences between conventional research and development research
- identify the roles required of a development researcher
- explain the outcome and limitations of development research.

1.2 CONCEPT AND PURPOSE OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

You will be able to understand the meaning and concept of development research only when you understand the concept of development. Hence, a brief introduction to the concept of development is presented which would be followed by the concept of development research.

Development means a desirable change. The goal of development is wellbeing for all. Wellbeing denotes the experience of good quality life which includes better living standards, access to basic services such as basic education and health care, good relation with others, friendship, love, peace of mind, choice, creativity, fulfilment and fun, and freedom from fear. The means of wellbeing are livelihood security and capability. Livelihood can be defined as adequate stocks and flow of goods and cash to meet basic needs and to support wellbeing. Security refers to reliable access to five types of capital or assets viz., natural, human, physical, financial and social, which in turn, provide secured rights and reliable access to food, income, and basic services. Capability refers to what people are capable of doing and being. Capabilities can be enhanced through learning, practice and training. They help in achieving livelihood security. Principles underlying the objective of wellbeing are equality and sustainability. Equity refers to human rights and gender equity. Sustainability refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future to meet their own needs. Development research largely deals with the issues related to livelihood security, capability, resources associated with livelihood security, and the principles that govern the ends and means of development.

Development research is utility oriented. It must be noted that it is not pure or basic research. It is applied, application-oriented, and action-oriented research. It is not aimed at contributing to, or extending the knowledge in a given field. Yet, it has a tendency to contribute to the knowledge in a given field or sector towards better practice. It is the knowledge that

enhances the way development practice takes place. It expands avenues for better comprehension of issues and intricacies which results in enhancing the effectiveness of development practice.

1.2.1 Concept of Development Research

Development research aims at providing knowledge on which the best decisions can be made. The target may be to solve specific policy related problems, or to help practitioners accomplish tasks. It means to say that research is used in development work for a variety of purposes. It may set out to explore an issue in order to plan a programme; it may, more broadly, ask people in an area about their own needs; or, it may aim to collect in-depth information about a specific issue, to find out a case for change. It may also aid in monitoring, evaluating, reviewing, and reflecting the outcome of a development programme. It can range from comparing a small piece of existing data to major international projects.

Development practitioners, in their ordinary work, do some things that are similar to researchers. They are very likely to undertake situation analysis and need assessment. They investigate people's opinions and probe their explanations for problems in their lives. They work with people to help them to analyse their situations – to make sense of things beyond the individual. Development researchers do some of the same methods as researchers, but the way in which things are done will be somewhat different. Both may conduct interviews, undertake observation, hold group discussions, and ask groups what is most important to them. However, development researchers do differ from conventional researchers as they generally specialise in being with people in an informal way. They treat people as partners and collaborators in their research. They consider themselves as learners and actively listen to the voice of the people. They respect the knowledge and wisdom of the people. They strongly believe in the culture of sharing. They have unshakable conviction that any development research can be done only when the subjects of research play a predominant role in different phases of research and action. All these are based on mutual trust which is being gradually developed at different stages of the development research. The skills and knowledge of the development worker have a great deal to contribute towards research processes. One key role is identifying issues on which research is required.

Development workers are in the business of creating social change, and need to take a pragmatic approach to the use of research in their work. Policy makers rarely commission such research, at least, compared to investments for development itself. Its characteristics and added value demand better theoretical articulation, more empirical evidence, wider application in development practices, and a more prominent place in professional and scientific publications. There is a broad variety of activities, with different emphasis in their primary aims, under the main umbrella of development research. Also, on a rather abstract level, one can distil a very general aim of all approaches: reducing uncertainty of decision making in developing interventions. The term 'intervention' then serves as common denominator for programs, procedures, scenarios, processes, and the like. That general aim can be specified in two more specific goals that apply to those approaches in various degrees: (a) providing ideas (suggestions, directions) for optimizing the quality of the intervention to be developed;

and (b) generating, articulating, and testing principles. These principles can be of a substantive nature, referring to characteristics of the intervention (what it should look like), or, of a procedural nature (how it should be developed).

1.2.2 Purpose of Development Research

There can be various purposes for conducting development research. A basic motive stems from the experience that traditional research approaches (e.g., experiments, surveys, correlation analyses) with their focus on descriptive knowledge, hardly provide prescriptions with useful solutions for a variety of development problems. Probably the greatest challenge for a development worker is how to cope with the manifold uncertainties in their complex tasks in very dynamic contexts. If they do seek support from research to reduce those uncertainties, several frustrations often arise: answers are too narrow to be meaningful, too superficial to be instrumental, too artificial to be relevant, and, on top of that, they usually come too late to be of any use.

Optimization of intervention is especially oriented towards practical ends in a given situation. An additional objective is also visible in various approaches stimulating professional development of participants. This motive even appears to be in the forefront of many 'action research' activities.

1.3 APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Development research is a rather volatile term that has known changing connotations over the last decades, in various contexts. In practice, it often refers to activities that almost exclusively convey the 'action' component and lack an explicit, scholarly orientation on contributions to knowledge that is accessible to others. An approach which is to be subsumed under the heading of development research must possess more balance between development and research.

Another way to differentiate between various types of development research is to focus on the temporal relation between development activities on one hand, and the research activities on the other: is the research concentrated in the stages before, during, or after the bulk of development activities?

In their overview of developmental research, Richey and Nelson (1996) distinguish between type I and type II approaches. Type I refers to an approach in which the roles of researcher (partly) coincide within a specific development context. Such research usually occurs throughout the complete development cycle. In type II, however, that relationship is more loose; the researchers are not involved in the development process themselves, but they study those processes (including tools and models applied) as practiced by others, in order to come to conclusions concerning principles of generalizable nature.

Some of the approaches to development research are discussed below:

- (i) **Explorative Design Studies:** the first type worth mentioning is explorative design studies. The activities undertaken under this type precede the actual development work and aim at clarifying the design

problem-in-context, and at generating tentative design ideas. Such explorations can be very valuable in directing the development work. However, we may not include these studies under the heading of scientific research, because they do not aim at statements of a more or less generalizable nature.

- (ii) **Formative studies:** the research activities performed during the entire development process of a specific intervention, from exploratory studies through (formative and summative) evaluation studies are known as formative research. It aims at optimization of the quality of the intervention, as well as testing development strategies and principles.
- (iii) **Reconstructive Studies:** the research activities conducted sometimes during, but often, after the development process of several interventions are known as reconstructive studies. They focus on the articulation and specification of strategies, and principles of development.

Obviously, this typology does not pay justice to many possible differences and linkages between various sorts of development research. The boundaries and labels are not very strict (for example, exploratory design studies often convert to formative research) but they do make a distinction between approaches with relatively different emphasis.

In this section, you studied the concept and purpose of development research, and approaches to development research. Now, answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress-1*.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.
(b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What is developmental research? Explain briefly.

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2. What are the different approaches to developmental research?

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1.4 TYPES OF RESEARCH IN DEVELOPMENT WORK

In development work, research is undertaken for two main reasons. They are: informing about the programme (either as needs assessment before starting, or, as monitoring and evaluation as the programme develops); or,

to learn more about issues with a view to influencing policy. Based on focussed development, research can be broadly classified as under: (i) policy focused research; and (ii) programme focused research.

(i) Policy Focused Research

- Raising a new issue in the public domain
- Putting forward a new perspective on a live issue
- Producing strong evidence of the benefit or harm of a particular policy
- Drawing together and learning from different studies to support a policy position

(ii) Programme Focused Research

- Investigating the needs of a community, or specific group of people
- Investigating the need for a particular programme
- Demonstrating convincingly the effectiveness of a particular programme (evaluation)

1.5 CONDITIONS AND KEY PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

1.5.1 Conditions of Development Research

The conditions required for development research can be categorised into two. These are:

(i) When research may be an effective approach

- When no one has much information on a situation
- When there is only anecdotal evidence of a hidden problem
- When the group you are working with feels that their point of view has not been heard
- When-policy makers, e.g., in government, are considering a policy change and want to investigate its possible impact
- When it is important to show that you have accurately represented people's views
- When you know that past attempts to address this issue through programmes have not produced proper results.

(ii) When research is not likely to be helpful

- When it is clear what needs to be done, but no one is getting on with it
- When you are trying to decide where to start the programme, in a known environment
- When political conflict or state repression is particularly intense
- When communities have already been the subject of many research projects
- When the primary concern is to increase people's participation, and build their personal development, rather than to act upon research findings

- Where there are no resources to follow up research with any action
- To avoid making a decision

1.5.2 Key Principles of Development Research

Development research is often initiated for complex, innovative tasks for which only very few validated principles are available to structure and support the development activities. Since, in those situations, the image and impact of the intervention to be developed is often still unclear, the research focuses on realizing limited but promising examples of those interventions. The aim is not to elaborate and implement complete interventions, but to come to (successive) prototypes that increasingly meet the innovative aspirations and requirements. The process is often cyclic or spiral: analysis, design, evaluation, and revision activities are iterated until a satisfying balance between ideals and realization has been achieved. Important principles of development research are

- i) preliminary investigation
- ii) theoretical embedding
- iii) empirical testing
- iv) documentation, analysis and reflection on process and outcome
- v) seeking complexity and diversity
- vi) methodological pluralism
- vii) multidisciplinary approach
- viii) self-critical awareness
- ix) empowerment

(i) Preliminary investigation

An intensive and systematic preliminary investigation of tasks, problems, and context is made in development research. It also includes searching for more accurate and explicit connections of that analysis with latest knowledge from literature. Some typical activities include: literature review; consultation of experts; analysis of available promising examples for related purposes; case studies of current practices and better understanding of needs and problems in intended user contexts.

(ii) Theoretical embedding privilege

More systematic efforts are made to apply state-of-the-art knowledge in articulating the theoretical rationale for design choices. Moreover, explicit feedback to assertions in the rationale about essential characteristics of the intervention is made after empirical testing of its quality. This theoretical articulation can increase the transparency and plausibility of the rationale. Because of their specific focus, these theoretical notions are usually referred to as mini- or local theories, although sometimes connections can also be made to middle-range theories with a somewhat broader scope.

(iii) Empirical testing

Clear empirical evidence is delivered about the practicality and effectiveness of the intervention for the intended target group in real

user settings. In view of the wide variation of possible interventions and contexts, a broad range of (direct/indirect; intermediate/ultimate) indicators for success should be considered.

(iv) Documentation, analysis and reflection on process and outcomes

Much attention is paid to systematic documentation, analysis and reflection on the entire design, development, and evaluation and implementation process and on its outcomes in order to contribute to the expansion and specification of the methodology of design and development.

(v) Seeking complexity and diversity

Development research takes into account complex and diverse nature of society. It recognizes the differences between community and within communities and their significance. Hence, it seeks and enables the expression and analysis of complex and diverse information and judgment. This has been expressed in terms of seeking variability rather than averages. It has been described as the principle of maximum diversity, or maximizing the diversity and richness of information. This includes looking for, learning from exceptions, oddities, dissenters, and outliers in any distribution. It deliberately looks for, notices and investigates contradictions, anomalies, and differences. Development research, thus, recognizes and supports diversity, complexity, and multiple realities.

(vi) Methodological pluralism

A development problem or issue has several dimensions. Each dimension of a problem or an issue has to be carefully examined. It may be difficult and, at times, it may not be possible to capture the different dimensions of a problem / issue which may be mainly attributed to mono-method bias in the conventional research. Hence, in order to have a deeper understanding of the problem / issue, development research adopts the principle of methodological pluralism in its investigation. In other words, it always adopts a mix of methods depending upon the nature, type, and context of a problem / issue. Further, it strikes a balance between quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation – using mixed methodology. It greatly helps in the diagnosis of a problem in the right perspective, and provides correct solution to any problem.

(vii) Multidisciplinary approach

Development is multidisciplinary, with many dimensions. Recognizing and positioning the problem and solution, therefore, require deployment of a multidisciplinary team. The team is also a mix of outsiders and insiders. Depending on the problem to be studied or issue to be solved, the nature and blend of the team from outside can be decided; and, similarly, the team from inside can be identified and deployed. It should be noted that the community has specialists in varied fields. They are experience based specialists. The team from the outside needs to identify such specialists, include them in their research pursuit, and make use of their services for better outcome. The team should treat such specialists as their partners and collaborators. This kind of multidisciplinary team not only enriches the knowledge base, it also

facilitates effective implementation of various phases of the programme in a development cycle.

(viii) Self-critical awareness

This means that the development researchers ought to examine their own behaviour continuously and critically. They must develop a spirit of self-criticism. Self-criticism or self awareness is the ability of each person to accurately analyse his, or her own work, or his, or her own behaviour, or attitude in undertaking work to distinguish good from bad practice. Such an analysis would help in acknowledging one's own behaviour and to discuss the causes and effects of these errors. Self critical awareness is an act of frankness, courage, comradeship and an awareness of one's responsibility. It is a proof of will to accomplish and to accomplish properly. To criticize oneself is to reconstruct one's self from within, in order to serve better.

Self-critical awareness includes embracing the error. The development researcher needs to welcome the error as an opportunity to learn. They have to face failure positively. Such an attitude helps the development researcher to pursue development research with a sense of honesty and devotion. It also helps them to go nearer to the people and ultimately helps them to serve them better.

(ix) Empowerment

Development research seeks to empower the subjects of research. It strongly believes in the voice of the people, and puts the people first in all its endeavours. It adopts the philosophy of 'Let them do', 'Let them decide', and 'Let them own'. Thus, it consciously allows the voiceless, the powerless, and the marginalized and deprived sections of the community to take control over their lives. The researchers in course of time need to hand over the stick to the people. This process enables the people to make a choice and take action on their own behalf with self-confidence, from a position of economic, political and social strength.

1.6 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

One important activity of any development worker who believes in the bottom up approach or the participatory process is that they have to consult the community even on a day-to-day basis. The local people need to be involved in decision making of various kinds. Consultation is about taking advice from people, asking their opinions, and not just about recording their experiences or collecting information. One important thing to keep in mind is that, in some cases, the intention is to consult people because they have had a particular experience, and in others simply as members of the public. However, there is some common ground between the two kinds of process, including the necessity of

- (a) being fair about who is involved
- (b) asking questions in a way which is seen to be unbiased
- (c) ensuring that people are consulted in a way which enables them to participate properly - clear communication

(d) reporting findings accurately and honestly

Research tradition may have many useful things to teach those involved in consultation, but consultation exercises should not be turned into research projects. This is because terming a simple consultation process research can create problems rather than help people.

In this section, you studied about types of research in development work, conditions for development research and key principles of development research, community consultation and development research. Now answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress-2*.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

(b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What are the different types of research in development work? Briefly explain any one.

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2. What are the key principles of developmental research?

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1.7 CONVENTIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Development research often turns out to be participatory research, as it entails dealing with primary sources of data collection involving a community in face to face situations. The development researcher builds trust, enables and engages in close dialogue. She/he engages in joint analysis and negotiation trying to build understanding through engagement. This element of closeness, or building understanding between the researcher and respondents, is not required in conventional research. The interaction between the investigator and the objects of research is intense unlike in a conventional research where responses are generally sought in an insensitive cold-blooded way.

Table 1.1: Distinctions between Development research and Conventional research

Point of Reference	Conventional Reference	Development Research
Assumptions about reality	Assumptions about reality Assumption of singular, tangible reality.	Assumption of multiple realities that are socially constructed.
Scientific method	Scientific method is reductionist and positivist; complex world split into independent variables and cause-effect relationships; researchers' perceptions are central.	Scientific method of holistic and post-positivist; local categories and perceptions are central; subject and method-data distinctions are blurred.
Strategy and context of inquiry	Investigators know what they want; pre-specified research plan or design. Information is extracted from respondents or derived from controlled experiments; context is independent and controlled.	Investigators do not know where the research will lead; it is an open-ended learning process. Understanding and focus emerges through interaction; context of inquiry is fundamental.
Who sets priorities?	Professionals set priorities together	Local people and professionals
Relationship between all actors in the process	Professionals control and motivate clients from a distance; they tend not to trust people (farmers, rural people etc.) who are simply the object of inquiry.	Professionals enable and engage in close dialogue; they attempt to build trust through joint analysis and negotiation; understanding arises through this engagement, resulting in inevitable interactions between the investigator and the 'objects' of research.
Mode of working	Single disciplinary – working alone.	Multi-disciplinary - working in groups.
Technology or services	Rejected technology or service assumed to be fault of local people or local conditions.	Rejected technology or service is a failed technology.
Career development	Careers are inwards and upwards – as practitioners get better, they become promoted and take on more administration.	Careers include outward and downward movement; professionals stay in touch with action at all levels.

Source: Adapted from Jules N Pretty and Chambers, 1993

1.8 THE ROLES REQUIRED OF A DEVELOPMENT RESEARCHER

A development researcher, unlike a conventional academic researcher, will have to play different roles as a professional development practitioner. She/he has to deal with multiple realities most of which are socially constructed. Therefore, apart from being a person with an unbiased research bent, she/he has to rise to the occasion to wear the cap that a given situation may warrant in the field. Primarily, she/he has to be a team player open to ideas, and giving shape to ideas. The following could be stated as some of the roles that a development researcher generally assumes.

- **The Coordinator:** listens well; able to elicit contribution from all members of the team; promotes decision making; need not be a brilliant intellect.
- **The Spark:** the chief source of ideas: creative, unorthodox, imaginative.
- **The Implementer:** the workhorse; turns ideas into practical actions and gets on with them logically and loyally; disciplined, reliable, and conservative.
- **The Shaper:** usually the self-elected leader: dynamic, positive, outgoing, argumentative, a pressurizer; seeks ways around research obstacles.
- **The Monitor Evaluator:** the team's rock, strategic, analytical, introvert; capable of deep analysis of huge quantities of data; rarely wrong.
- **The Team worker:** a counsellor and conciliator; social, perceptive, accommodating, aware of undercurrents and other's problems; promotes harmony; most valuable at times of crisis.
- **The completer/finisher:** the team's stickler for detail, deadlines and schedules; has relentless follow-through; chief catcher of errors and omissions.
- **The Specialist:** the team's chief source of rare knowledge and skill; a single-minded loner; self-starting, dedicated and makes the occasional dazzling breakthrough.

1.9 THE OUTCOMES OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Development research aims at making both practical and scientific contribution. Therefore the search for innovative 'solutions' for social problems, interaction with practitioners (in various professional roles: policy makers, developers, and the like) is essential. The ultimate aim is not to test whether theory, when applied to practice, is a good predictor of events. The interrelation between theory and practice is more complex and dynamic: is it possible to create a practical and effective intervention for an existing problem or intended change in the real world? The innovative challenge is usually quite substantial; otherwise the research would not be initiated at all. Interaction with practitioners is needed to gradually clarify both the problem at stake and the characteristics of its potential solution. An iterative process of successive approximation or evolutionary prototyping of the ideal intervention is desirable. Direct application of theory is not sufficient to solve those complicated problems. One might state that a more constructivist

development approach is preferable: researchers and practitioners cooperatively construct workable interventions and articulate principles that underpin the effects of those interventions.

The prime reason for cooperation is that without the involvement of practitioners, it is impossible to gain clear insight in potential implementation problems and to generate measures to reduce those problems. New interventions, however imaginative, their design require continuous anticipation at implementation issues, not only for social reasons but also for technical benefits. Therefore, rigorous testing of practicality is a *sine qua non* in development research.

It is not uncommon in formative research that such knowledge, especially the substantive knowledge about essential characteristics of an intervention, can partly be extracted from a resulting prototype itself. That is one of the reasons that make it so profitable to search for, and carefully analyze already available interventions to generate ideas for new tasks. However, the value of that knowledge will strongly increase when justified by theoretical arguments, well articulated in providing directions, and convincingly backed up with empirical evidence about the impact of those principles. Moreover, those heuristic principles will be additionally powerful, if they have been validated in successful design of more interventions in more contexts. The chances for such knowledge growth will increase when development research is conducted in the framework of research programs, because projects can then build upon one another.

1.10 THE LIMITATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

One major constraint with development research is the effort to generalize findings that cannot be based on statistical techniques, focusing on generalizations from sample to population. Instead, one has to invest in analytical forms of generalization. Readers need to be supported to make their own attempts to explore the potential transfer of the research findings to theoretical propositions in relation to their own context. Reports on formative research can facilitate that task of analogy reasoning by a clear theoretical articulation of the design principles applied and by a careful description of both the evaluation procedures as well as the implementation context. Especially a thick description of the process-in-context may increase the ecological validity of the findings, so that others can estimate in what respects, and to what extent, transfer from the reported situation to their own is possible. Another option that may stimulate exploration of possibilities for (virtual) generalization is to organize interactive meetings with experts from related contexts to discuss the plausibility of the research findings and recommendations for related tasks and contexts.

Research based progress to expand and sharpen our knowledge on development is greatly enhanced through interdisciplinary approaches with purposive cross-fertilization between many specialized sub-domains. Moreover, it is our own experience that joint development research efforts of professionals in various roles offer fine opportunities for professional learning and capacity building.

In this section, you studied about conventional research vs. development research, the roles required of a development researcher, outcome of development research, and limitations of development research. Now answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress-3*.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

(b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What are the roles required of a development researcher?

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2. What are the limitations of development research?

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1.11 LET US SUM UP

The goal of development is ‘wellbeing for all’ which means having the experience of a good quality of life. Development research largely deals with issues, problems, strategies related to means, ends and principles needed for the achievement of this goal.

Development research is not research for knowledge sake. It is action oriented. The purpose of development research is to enable the development workers to cope with the manifold uncertainties in their complex tasks. It also stimulates professional development of participants.

Development research is a valuable term with changing connotations. The major types of development research are explorative design studies, formative research and reconstructive studies. However, the boundaries are not clearly demarcated. Development research is based on two approaches

- i) policy focused research
- ii) programme focused research.

The key principles of development research are: i) preliminary investigation ii) theoretical embedding iii) empirical testing iv) documentation, analysis and reflection of process and outcome v) seeking complexity and diversity vi) methodological pluralism vii) multidisciplinary approach viii) self-critical awareness and ix) empowerment.

Though development research adopts various conventional methods of research, it is distinctly different from conventional research such as methods adopted, strategy and context of enquiry, relationship among various factors of research, mode of working, etc. The outcome of development research is creating a pragmatic intervention for an existing problem and for an intended change in the real world through a process of successive approximation or prototyping of the ideal intervention. An important constraint of development research is that findings cannot be generalized based on statistical techniques.

1.12 KEY WORDS

Appraisal	: assessment, or taking consideration of a given situation, or context, or phenomenon. When you appraise a situation, you are trying to understand a situation systematically, using methods that are scientifically accepted in social sciences research.
Conventional research	: this is also known as a traditional approach to research that is conservative, unadventurous, and conformist to the accepted methods, tools and techniques. It does not seek diversity or anomaly. It employs mostly quantitative methods that measure, or takes into account things that are measurable.
Development cycle	: is the path a development intervention towards wellbeing takes. The path usually consists of several phases.
Empirical	: this is pragmatic and observable, and not imaginative or rhetoric.
Evolutionary prototyping	: an intervention model (design) that evolves or gets shape over a period of time out of experimentation.
Generalization	: providing generality or an overview of a phenomenon. An occurrence that is argued as very commonly present. Often, it may even be easily observable too.
Mixed methodology	: making use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of research in social sciences.
Mono-method	: making use of a single method, and this might sometimes turn out to be biased.
Scientific methods	: unbiased, objective and provable with evidences.
Successive approximation	: rough estimation found consecutively, or repeatedly.
Validation	: a way of ensuring that the evidence collected in support of empirical presence of a phenomenon is scientifically correct.

1.13 REFERENCES AND SELECTED READINGS

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1.14 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Development research aims at providing knowledge on which the best decisions can be made. The target may be to solve specific policy related problems or to help practitioners accomplish tasks. It means to say that research is used in development work for a variety of purposes.
2. Type I refers to an approach in which the roles of researcher (partly) coincide within a specific development context. In type II, however, that relationship is more loose: the researchers are not involved in the development process themselves, but they study those processes (including tools and models applied) as practiced by others.

Some approaches to development research include explorative, formative and reconstructive studies.

Check Your Progress 2

1. The different types of research in development work are: i) Policy focussed research and ii) Programme focussed research. The Policy focused research, which includes raising a new issue in the public domain, putting forward a new perspective on a live issue, producing strong evidence of the benefit or harm of a particular policy and drawing together and learning from different studies to support a policy position.
2. The key principles of development research are: preliminary investigation, theoretical embedding, empirical testing, documentation, analysis and reflection on process and outcome, seeking complexity and diversity, methodological pluralism, multidisciplinary approach, self-critical awareness, and empowerment.

Check Your Progress 3

1. The roles of a development researcher are: (i) The Coordinator: listens well; able to elicit contribution from all members of the team; promotes decision making; need not be a brilliant intellect. (ii) The Spark: the chief source of ideas; creative, unorthodox, imaginative. (iii) The Implementer: the workhorse; turns ideas into practical actions and gets on with them logically and loyally; disciplined, reliable, and conservative.
2. One major constraint in development research is the efforts to generalize findings that cannot be based on statistical techniques, focusing on generalizations from sample to population. Instead, one has to invest in analytical forms of generalization. Readers needed to be supported to make their own attempts to explore the potential transfer of the research findings to theoretical propositions in relation to their own context.

UNIT 2 METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Methods Of Development Research
- 2.3 Direct Observation
- 2.4 Interviewing
- 2.5 Focus Group Discussion
- 2.6 Case Study
- 2.7 Process of Development Research
- 2.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.9 Key Words
- 2.10 References and Selected Readings
- 2.11 Check Your Progress - Possible Answers

2.1 INTRODUCTION

You have studied in the previous unit that research has become established in recent years as a powerful tool for development workers. Development workers widely differ (from conventional researchers) in their orientation towards the use of research, as they intend it to be mostly participatory and utility-oriented in approach, rather than research merely for the sake of adding to the existing body of knowledge in a given field. Therefore, research for development is utility-oriented. It is not pure, or basic research as it is technically known. It is applied or application-oriented in approach.

Development research aims at providing better understanding of a given context or phenomenon, so as to devise appropriate interventions. The knowledge generated through development research usually enhances the way development practice takes place. It expands avenues for better comprehension of issues and intricacies, which results in enhancing the effectiveness of development practice or social action.

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- analyse the various methods of development research
- describe in detail the meaning, features, merits and limitations of development research methods
- explain the process of development research

2.2 METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

The methods of development research serve as systems of inquiry or interaction. Assemblages of methods to suit the requirements that the context or research problem warrants is what is in the ingenuity of the development researcher – no matter whether the type of development research taken up is programme focused or issue focused. Development researchers use a wide range of methods which are mostly borrowed from

various sources such as conventional methods of research and participatory research methods. The methods that are used by development researchers include: review of secondary sources, direct observation, semi-structured interviews, ranking and scoring, diagrams of different types, case studies, games and role plays, workshops, informal and formal survey, and so on. The methods borrowed and used largely depend on the felt needs of the development researcher. We will present, here, the four most popular and widely used methods of development research. They are

- Direct Observation
- Interviewing
- Focus Group Discussion
- Case Study

2.3 DIRECT OBSERVATION

Observation is viewing. Observation as a method of data collection is different from casual viewing. Observation is a method that employs vision and alert mind as main means of data collection. Observation is defined as ‘a systematic viewing of specific phenomenon in its proper setting for the specific purpose of gathering data for a particular study’. It is planned methodical viewing. Scientific observation differs from other methods of data collection specifically in four ways: (i) observation is always direct while other methods could be direct or indirect (ii) field observation takes place in a natural setting (iii) Observations tend to be less structured (iv) it makes only the qualitative (and not quantitative) study which aims at discovering subjects experiences, and how subjects make sense of them, or how subjects understand their life.

Behavioural scientists observe interaction in small groups, anthropologists observe simple societies and small communities, political scientists observe the behaviour of political leaders and political institutions. In a sense, all branches of social sciences including development research begin with and end with observation. The major purpose of observation is to capture human conduct as it actually happens. In other methods, we get only a static comprehension of people’s activities.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Observation

Researchers consider that this method is more appropriate for studying lifestyles or subcultures, practices, episodes, encounters, relationships, groups, organisations, settlements and roles, etc. The following could be stated as important characteristics of observation.

First, it entails both physical and mental activity. Second, it is selective. A researcher does not observe anything and everything, but selects the range of things to be observed on the basis of the nature, scope and objectives of his/her study. Third, it is purposive and not casual. Fourth, it captures the natural social context in which a person’s behaviour occurs. Fifth, it grasps the significant events and occurrences that affect social relations of the participants. Other characteristics are given below.

- It enables understanding significant events affecting social relations of the participants.

- It determines reality from the perspective of observed person himself /herself.
- It identifies regularities and recurrences in social life by comparing data in one study with those in other studies.

2.3.2 Types of Observation

Observation may be classified in different ways. With reference to the investigator's role, it may be classified into: (i) participant observation and (ii) non-participant observation. In terms of mode of observation, it may be classified into (i) direct observation and (ii) indirect observation. With reference to the rigour of the system adopted, observation is classified into: (i) controlled observation, and (ii) uncontrolled observation.

Participant observation is a method where the observer is a part of the phenomenon or group which is observed and he/she acts as both the observer and a participant. As a non-participant, the observer stands apart and does not participate in the phenomenon observed. Direct observation means observation of an event done personally by the observer when it takes place. Indirect observation does not involve the physical presence of the observer, and it is recorded by mechanical, photographic, or electronic devices. Controlled observation involves standardisation of observational techniques and exercise of maximum control over extrinsic and intrinsic variables by adopting experimental design and systematically recording observation. Uncontrolled observation does not involve control over extrinsic and intrinsic variables.

2.3.3 Application

Observation or direct observation is generally used in combination with other methods. This method is flexible and allows the observer to see and record subtle aspects of events and behaviour as they occur. The observer is also free to shift places and change the focus of observation. Direct observation is useful when the information we want is about observable things and when we need to cross-check people's account of what happens.

2.3.4 Observation in Practice

The quality of direct observation can be ensured through the adoption of step-by-step procedure. The steps that can be adopted are briefly stated here.

- Determine the focus of the observation. Direct observation has to be selective due to time and resource constraints.
- Establish the objective of direct observation and information required.
- The timing of the observation has to be decided in consultation with the people. Timing is a critical factor in direct observation. Wrong timings can distort findings.
- Establishing rapport with the people; community or organisation to be observed is important before embarking on direct observation.
- Make sure that those being observed are aware of the reasons for your study and they do not see you in negative terms.
- Allow sufficient time for observation. Brief visits can be deceptive, partly because people tend to behave differently in the presence of observers.

- Note down any events that you do not understand and try to clarify them with the participants from the community.
- Write down your first impression about your observation before the analysis stage later on.
- Analyse, summarise and report in relation to the objectives set out at the start of the exercise.
- Check for reliability and validity. Direct observation techniques are susceptible to errors and bias that can affect reliability and validity. These can be minimised by recording observation promptly, seeking clarification on the spot, using a multidisciplinary team.

2.3.5 Dangers or Limitations of Observation

Although observation or direct observation is widely used as methods of development research in combination with other methods, one has to be careful in employing this method. Care is needed because of the possibility of the following limitations associated with this method.

- It is susceptible to observer bias.
- It has the danger of leading to over simplification.
- It is not possible to understand the motives of the people.
- People can be alert to when they are being observed, and their behaviour during observation may differ from how they behave in normal situations.

2.4 INTERVIEWING

Interviewing and dialogue skills are quite essential in development research. This is all the more important in rural development work where the outside professionals' level of information and understanding about the rural situation are limited. Interview, in true sense, means dialogue. Dialogue is based on people sharing their own perceptions of a problem, offering their opinions and ideas on the issues or research questions in hand. A series of interviews or a chain of interview with key informants help us gain more accurate insights into rural situations, problems, customs, practices, systems, values, and the way the rural people think, act, and perceive things. Good interviewing and dialogue facilitate an information flow that is true, authentic and relevant.

While interviewing is basically about asking questions and receiving answers, there is much more to it than that, especially in a development research context. The most common type of interviewing is individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, but it can also take the form of face-to-face group interviewing and telephone surveys. Interviewing can be structured, semi structured, or unstructured. It can be used for the purpose of measurement or its scope can be the understanding of an individual or a group perspective. An interview can be a one-time brief exchange, say five minutes over the telephone, or it can take place over multiple, lengthy sessions, sometimes spanning days, as in life history interviewing.

Interviewing can be used in focus group discussions (FGDs) and during direct observations (DO) as well. It can be fully structured or semi structured. Semi structured interviewing in itself has emerged as a skill

among development professionals involved in development research. Direct observation always involves dialogue or interviewing. No observation can take place in a dump-found situation. Passive watching cannot be construed as observation. Observation involves an inquisitive and alert mind. It involves a questioning mind. Direct observation is not passive watching, it involves questioning in an attempt to understand the phenomenon or subject being observed. Therefore, direct observation is also considered as a technique in interviewing.

Similarly, FGD as the method itself suggests, involves dialogue/interview. Often during DO and FGD, checklists are used for interviewing. When the checklist contains only the possible lines of questions (focused to the core of the research), the method is known as semi structured, and not fully structured. Interviewing progresses based on subsequent responses.

Interviewing is one of the major methods of data collection in development research. It is defined as ‘a two-way systematic conversation between an investigator and an informant, initiated for obtaining information relevant to a specific study’. It involves conversation as well as learning from the respondent’s gestures, facial expressions, pauses, and body language, etc. It is useful for collecting a wide range of data from factual demographic data to highly personal and intimate information relating to a person’s opinions, attitudes, beliefs, past experiences and future intentions. Interviewing is often superior to other data-gathering methods, because people are more willing to talk rather than write. It permits probing into the context and reasons for answers to questions.

2.4.1 Types of Interviews

Interviews may be broadly classified into the following categories.

- (i) Structured or Directive Interview
 - (ii) Unstructured or Non-Directive Interview
 - (iii) Semi-Structured Interview (SSI)
- (i) **Structured Interview** is an interview made with a detailed standardised schedule. The same questions are put to all the respondents and in the same order. Each question is asked in the same way in each interview, promoting measurement reliability. This type of interview is used for large scale formalised surveys.
- (ii) **Unstructured Interview** is the least structured one. The interviewer encourages the respondent to talk freely about a given topic with minimum prompting or guidance. Under this type, a detailed pre-planned schedule is not used. The interviewer avoids channelling the direction of the interview. Instead, he develops a very permissive atmosphere. The questions are not standardised and not framed in a particular way.
- (iii) **Semi-structured Interviewing (SSI)** is a focused interview. Here, the interviewer attempts to focus the discussion on the actual effects of a given experience to which the respondents have been exposed. This type of interview is free from the inflexibility of formal methods, yet gives the interview a set form and ensures adequate coverage of all topics.

What type of interviewing method is used when as far as development research is concerned depends on the demands of the contexts. As participatory methods are in the forefront of working of several development organisations, most of them prefer to use SSI for development related research. It is more conversational while still controlled and structured. This is referred to as a semi-structured interview or SSI for short. In SSI, only some of the questions and topics are predetermined. Most often it is only a checklist of topics and subtopics that are used for conducting SSI, and not the structured questions as such. Questions are framed, drawing points from the checklist, based on how the interview progresses. It often becomes a progressive learning process for the interviewer, who has to record all the conversations using shorthand, scribbling, or by recording on a digital voice recorder.

SSI, in short, is a conversation where only some of the questions are predetermined, and new questions or insights arise as a result of discussion and visualised analysis.

2.4.2 Guidelines for Asking Questions

Always start the interview with simple questions. Difficult and sensitive questions may be put near the end of the interview so that if the respondents decide not to answer these, you do not lose his/her willingness to answer other questions. While conducting SSI, questions should be properly worded and asked. Questions should be simple and to the point. The following should be avoided.

- **Leading Questions:** A leading question is one that is worded in a way as to influence the respondents to give a certain answer. It does not elicit an accurate answer or correct view point of the respondent. For example, “Education must have high priority in government spending. What do you think?”
- **Loaded Questions:** A loaded questions is one that contains words, which are emotionally coloured, and suggests an automatic feeling of approval or disapproval. Using words like ‘terrorism’, ‘bureaucracy’, ‘greedy’ ‘vested interest’, and oppressed may seem to imply a judgement. Such words can cause a bias in the answers. Respondents may be reluctant or nervous to give answers, e.g. “Do you think something can be done to repair the vested interests of the state actors and the bureaucracy which is the main reason for child-trafficking in India?”
- **Ambiguous or Vague Questions:** Ambiguous question is a question with no clear meaning. It may mean different things to different people, e.g. “What do you think about the education you have received?”
- **Multiple Questions:** They contain two or three ideas or questions in one, e.g. “Do you favour or oppose the idea of increased job security and productivity-linked wage system for women?”
- **Hypothetical Questions:** These are questions based on a nonexistent situation, e.g. “If you had been able to complete your schooling, what would you be doing today?”

- **Offensive or Insensitive Questions:** These are questions that are rude and insulting in nature. They are most likely to upset the people / respondents, e.g. “Why do you not think it is important to pay for noon-meals at school?”

2.4.3 How to do Semi-structured Interviewing.

- Be sure to start from known to unknown; and from familiar to unfamiliar.
- Ask questions in a logical order.
- Do not ask difficult questions first.
- Mix questions with discussion, and conduct it in an informal way.
- Make sure that the responses you get contain the information you need.
- Listen carefully. Note down and make sure that your recording or noting down does not disturb further responses.
- Look for apparent inconsistencies in what people are saying and probe further to unearth the thinking behind them.
- The responses from the participants may be in the form of a fact, opinion, rumour, or lie. The interviewers need to be careful in judging the responses through probing and liberally trying to get clarity through further questions.
- Avoid leading questions, vague questions, and questions that are loaded.
- Resist the temptation to help the respondents with responses when they are temporarily at loss for words.
- Remember to cross check and triangulate information.

In this section, we have discussed two widely used methods of development research, direct observation and interviewing. Now, answer the questions in *Check Your Progress-1*.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

(b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What do you mean by observation?

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2. What is interview? What are the different types of interview?

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2.5 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Focus groups are basically group interviews. A moderator guides the interview while a small group discusses the topics that the interviewer raises. What the participants in the group say during their discussions is the essential data in focus groups. Typically, there are six to eight participants who come from similar backgrounds, and the moderator is a well trained development professional who raises his questions from a predetermined set of discussion topics, otherwise known as focus group discussion (FGD) checklist.

The hallmark of focus group discussion is the explicit use of group interaction to produce information and insights. The basic tenet of focus group discussion is listening and learning. There is progressive recognition of the use of focus groups in development research. Focus group interviews are used where qualitative data is highly usable. FGDs usually generate a lot of qualitative data. The data, information and insights developed are useful to explain and understand certain empirical phenomenon. The information generated through FGD is often used to supplement, complement, or strengthen the arguments made using quantitative data.

David L Morgan (1998) points out a three part process of communication in FGDs. (i) The research team members decide what they need to hear about from the participants.

(ii) The focus groups create a conversation among the participants around these chosen topics.

(iii) Members of the research team summarise what they have learnt from the discussion.

When it comes to the use of FGD based data: first, they are used as a 'self-contained' method in studies in which they serve as the principal source of data. Second, they are used as a supplementary source of data in studies that rely on some other method such as survey. Last, they are used in multi-method studies that combine two or more means of gathering data, in which no one primary method determines the use of the others. One important use of FGD is that a poorly understood survey's results can be explained clearly. In multi-method studies FGDs are used so as not to miss some qualitative dimension that might not get covered in other methods. However, as in any other research, it is the rigour of enquiry, credibility of the results, and relevance of the findings to the requirements that usually determine the quality of the focus group research.

2.5.1 Where to use and where not to use Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)?

a. Appropriate Uses

- When investigating complex behaviour and motivations.
- When the research problem requires to be understood and demand diversity of analysis.
- When there is a gap between providers of service and recipients of service.

- When gathering data is not sufficient and getting closer to people is required.
- When quantitative data is not sufficient to draw conclusions and arrive at findings.

b. Inappropriate Uses

- If the FGD carried out would not lead to useful developmental action, avoid using it.
- Avoid FGDs if the participants who will provide information are not comfortable sitting together or talking to one another.
- Where the topic of discussion or the problem to be discussed is not relevant to the group, the FGD result may not be insightful.
- Where the requirement is more statistical or quantitative data, and the method of analysis to be used is mostly quantitative, FGD may not help.

2.5.2 Steps in Conducting Focus Group Discussion

The following steps are usually used for the conduct of FDGs.

(a) Planning: Focus groups are usually semi-structured, allowing discussions to develop while being moderated. Therefore, careful planning is very important. The complexity that might arise due to being optimally prepared could be faced without much difficulty if we have our focus group plan properly prepared. During the planning stage, care needs to be taken on the points that follow

- conceptualising the study
- developing discussion topics
- determining the time required
- the composition of the interviewers' team
- the type of informants we need to form as focus groups
- the venue for the FGD
- logistical arrangements

Writing down the checklist and selecting the participants and key informants are vital, and the ability comes with experience.

(b) Enlisting or selection of the group itself: A typical focus group has seven or eight participants. Having the right kind of informants in the focus group will determine the quality of discussion and the results of the research. You need to have enough of the right informants to conduct the focus group discussion. If the informants recruited are people who experience or have experienced the phenomenon to be discussed, the results would be enriching, realistic, and practical.

(c) Moderating the focus group: This is a skill that can be developed with every successive focus group. Talented or experienced focus group moderators know how to clarify the problem, word the questions, sequence questions, categorise questions, probe answers for validity. A skilled moderator can trace the entire route of questioning and response. The moderator must have a good idea of how to open the

discussion, the introduction, the transition from easy to difficult questions, simple to key questions, and the ending questions for the conversation. As a principle, good moderators use mostly open ended questions, and avoid close-ended questions.

- (d) **Analysing and Reporting:** This is a challenge for many researchers and even for talented practitioners. This requires objectivity, and one need to make sure personal biases and subjectivity do not find place in the report. The descriptive nature of information collected poses a challenge in analysing, and conceptualising the results. The data and information may be in the form of field notes, charts, recorded cassettes or digitally recorded, photographs, video graphs, etc.

One needs to plan how they are going to be reported. It is good to have them all typed out in a computer first with crude segmentation and category systems. Identifying themes, sub-themes, patterns and semantic relations can take place gradually in the subsequent stages. If the data is amenable, construction of charts, graphs, bar and pie-diagrams may be attempted. We can corroborate and validate the results by presenting the results to the same or similar group, from where the data sets were collected. They may confirm it, or would want revision of some of the ideas that the researchers' team did not understand properly or misunderstood. Then, it becomes the report of the focus group.

Analysing and reporting require objectivity and skills of high order. The process of analysis requires several skills. These include: the use of words, the context, internal consistency, frequency of comments made, extensiveness of the comments, specificity of responses, and what was not said and why. These could be some of the items to consider while analysing and reporting FGDs. Finally, the report may be prepared taking into consideration the purpose of the report and the type of readers it is meant for.

2.6 CASE STUDY

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidences are used. A dictionary of sociological terms defines a case study as: a method of studying social phenomena through the analysis of an individual case. The case may be a person, a group, an episode, a process, a community, a society, or any other unit of social life. All data relevant to the case are gathered, and all available data are organised in terms of the case. The case study method gives a unitary character to the data being studied by interrelating a variety of facts to a single case. It also provides an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details that are often overlooked with other methods.

We need to understand that the case is a bounded system – it has boundaries. We need to identify and describe the boundaries of the case as clearly as possible. Therefore, specific focus is required even within a case. Research questions help to define this focus. Multiple sources of data and multiple data collection methods are likely to be used, typically in a natural setting. We may use observations, interviews, and narratives reports and so on.

In keeping with other approaches in development research, the case study aims at understanding the case in depth, and in its natural setting,

recognising its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aims to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. Case study is a way of organising social data to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied. This strategy for understanding provides an interesting comparison with the reductionist approach of some quantitative research.

The basic idea is that one case (or perhaps, a small number of cases) will be studied in detail. While there may be a variety of specific purposes and research questions, the general objective is to develop as full an understanding of that case as possible.

2.6.1 Type of Cases

We must understand that almost anything can serve as a case, and the case may be simple or complex. A case is a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. Thus, the case may be an individual, or a role, or a small group, or an organisation, or a community, or a nation. It could also be a decision, or a policy, or a process, or an incident or event of some sort, and there are other possibilities as well. Generally, there are six different type of units referred to in social science research. They are

- (a) Individuals
- (b) Attributes of individuals
- (c) Actions and interactions
- (d) Residues and artefacts of behaviour, settings
- (e) Incidents and events
- (f) Collectives

Any of these may be the focus of case study research. Case studies usually confine the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at the time.

2.6.2 Type of Case Studies

There are also different types of case studies. The three main types follow.

- **The Intrinsic Case Study**, where the study is undertaken because the researcher wants a better understanding of a particular case.
- **The Instrumental Case Study**, where a particular case is examined to give insight into an issue, or to refine a theory.
- **The Collective Case Study**, where the instrumental case study is extended to cover several cases, to learn more about the phenomenon, population or general condition.

The first two are single case studies, where the focus is within the case. The third involves multiple cases, where the focus is both within and across cases. It is also called a multiple case study, or a comparative case study.

2.6.3 Preparing a Case Study

A case study would need to

- be clear on what the case is, including identification of its boundaries
- be clear on the need for the study of this case, and on the general purpose(s) of this case study

- translate that general purpose into specific purposes and research questions (these may emerge during the early empirical work)
- identify the overall strategy of the case study, especially whether it is one case or multiple cases
- show what data will be collected, from whom, and how
- how the data will be analysed

Case studies can make an important contribution in combination with other research approaches. Discovering the important features, developing an understanding of them, and conceptualising them for further study, is often best achieved through the case study method.

2.6.4 Criticism and Response

A very common criticism of the study concerns generalization of results: The first point is to ask if we would want to generalise from a particular case study. There are two types of case study situations where generalization would not be the objective. First, the case may be so important, interesting, current, or misunderstood that it deserves study in its own right or it may be unique in some very important respects, and therefore worthy of study. These are actually examples of intrinsic case study. It is not the intention of such a study to generalise, but rather, to understand this case in its complexity and its entirety, as well as in its context. Therefore, whether a case study should even seek to generalise, and claim to be representative, depends on the context and purposes of the particular development project in question.

Whether the study takes a conceptual approach or descriptive approach is another question. If it has takes conceptual approach, most probably it could be generalised. If it merely takes a descriptive approach it may not offer possibilities for generalisation. Generalization should not necessarily be the objective of all research projects, whether case studies or not. The first is what we can learn from the study of a particular case, in its own right. As noted, the case being studied might be unusual, unique or not yet understood, so that beautiful and in-depth understanding of the case is valuable. This might cover all three types of case studies described above.

In this section, we discussed another two widely used methods of development research, which are the focus group discussion and the case study. Now, answer the questions in *Check Your Progress-2*.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

(b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What is a focus group discussion?

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2. What is a case study?

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2.7 PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Research process is vital in any kind of research. It is all the more important when it comes to development research because it relies greatly on qualitative methods of data generation in field situations. A well done process builds the confidence of the community and takes the researcher closer to the community; whereas, a poorly executed process, provides the researcher with data and information that are of inferior quality, rendering the results of the study either false or as figments of imagination. Most often a well-done research process leads to better knowledge and awareness of the conditions in which the community lives, and what needs to be done to ameliorate the conditions. How best the community is prepared to put their best step forward, if they get the support of the researcher or development organisation involved in researching the conditions of life of the community.

This change does not occur immediately. It occurs as the groups pass through different stages of development. The development process researcher must have special skills to note the changes in the knowledge and behaviour of the community towards themselves and the outsiders in successive visits and interactions. There are five stages through which a well-facilitated group passes, namely

- (i) rapport building
- (ii) confidence gaining
- (iii) self appreciation
- (iv) capacity building
- (v) empowerment and action.

A development researcher needs to note and record the changes in the participants in each of the stages. The guiding questions to note changes in each stage are presented here.

(i) Rapport building

- Is there transparency in the relationship between the participants from inside and the outside team?

(ii) Confidence gaining

- Has the participating group gained adequate confidence on the motives and purposes expressed by the outside team?

(iii) Self appreciation

- Has the process of research paved the way for self appreciation by the participating group of their own analysis and interpretation of situation and events?

(iv) Capacity building

- Does the process enable capacity building and empowerment?
- Is it superficial?
- Has the power centre changed place from outsiders to insiders, because of the reversal of learning process?

(v) Empowerment and Action

- Does the research process tend to initiate action?
- Has the outside team raised the expectations and exceed the scope of development research, or have they empowered the people to facilitate their own change?

The process cited above would largely help us wherever we have failed to adhere to the basic tenets of development research. A continuous and critical reflection on the process would enable us to handle various methods of development research appropriately, as required by the research questions in hand, or the problem required to be studied.

2.8 LET US SUM UP

Development researchers may use a wide range of methods which are normally borrowed from conventional as well as participatory methods of research. We have described four most popular and widely used methods of development research such as direct observation, interviewing, focus group discussion, and case study. Observation is a planned, systematic and methodical viewing with a definite purpose. Observation is of different types. Based on the investigator's role, it may be subsumed into participant observation and non-participant observation. With reference to the mode of observation it can be classified into direct observation and indirect observation. We need to adopt a step-by-step procedure to improve the quality of observation. Observation as a method of development research has certain limitations. Prominent among them is its susceptibility to observer bias.

Interviewing is yet another method of development research. It is a sort of dialogue. It is a two way systematic conversation between an investigator and an informant to obtain information. Interviews can be structured, unstructured, or semi-structured. Whatever might be the type of interview, one should cultivate the art of interviewing for better output. An interviewer should avoid leading questions, loaded questions, vague questions, multiple questions and insensitive questions.

Focus group discussion is basically a group interview. It is a qualitative research method. The groups which conduct the focus group discussion should be familiar with where to use and where not to use it. FGD involves a process which includes four main phases, viz., planning, selection of the group, moderating the focus group, and analysing and reporting.

A case study is an empirical inquiry. It is everything about something. It is an in depth and a comprehensive study about something - a person, a group, an episode, a phenomenon, a process, etc. A case study is of three types, viz., intrinsic case study, instrumental case study, and collective case study. The researcher has to prepare well for a case study for better results.

The development researcher has to adopt a definite process in employing methods of research which include rapport building, confidence gaining, self appreciation, capacity building, empowerment and action.

2.9 KEY WORDS

Qualitative Research	: a flexible approach of building up an in depth picture of a situation, community, etc., often combining a variety of methods, observation, discussion, open ended and semi structured interviews, mapping, and other participatory approaches and tools.
Quantitative Research	: used to collect data which can be analysed in numerical form. Often makes use of survey questionnaire.
Monitoring	: a continuous function that uses systematic collection and analysis of data on specified indicators, to provide information on the management of an ongoing development intervention so as to indicate the extent of progress and achievements of objectives.
Evaluation	: a systematic examination of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation, and results.

2.10 REFERENCES AND SELECTED READINGS

Morgan, D. (1998), *The Focus Group Guidebook*, Sage Publications.

Narayanasamy, N. (2009), *Participatory Rural Appraisal: Principles, Methods and Applications*”, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

Laws, S., Harper, C. and Marcus, R. (2003), *Research for Development: A Practical Guide*, Vistaar Publications New Delhi.

2.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Observation is a method of data collection. Observation is a method that employs vision and an alert mind as the main means of data collection. Observation is defined as ‘a systematic viewing of specific phenomenon in its proper setting for the specific purpose of gathering data for a particular study’. It is ‘planned methodical viewing’.
2. Interview, in a true sense, means dialogue. Dialogue is based on people sharing their own perceptions of a problem, offering their opinions and ideas on the issues or research questions in hand. A series of interviews, or a chain of interview with key informants help us gain more accurate insights into rural situations, problems, customs, practices, systems, values and the way rural people think, act, and perceive things. The types of interviews are

- (a) structured or directive interview

- (b) unstructured or non directive interview
- (c) semi-structured interview (SSI).

Check Your Progress 2

1. Focus groups are basically group interviews. A moderator guides the interview while a small group discusses the topics that the interviewer raises. What the participants in the group say during their discussions is the essential data in focus groups. Typically, there are six to eight participants who come from similar backgrounds, and the moderator is a well trained development professional who raises his questions from a predetermined set of discussion topics, otherwise known as focus group discussion (FGD) checklist.
2. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidences are used. There are also different types of case studies : (i) The Intrinsic Case Study (ii) The Instrumental Case Study (iii) The Collective Case Study.

UNIT 3 DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH APPLICATIONS

Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Application of Development Research
- 3.3 Appraisal of Existing Situation
- 3.4 Formulation and Implementation of Development Research Project
- 3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Research Project
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 References and Selected Readings
- 3.8 Check Your Progress - Possible Answers

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The most common application of research that many development professionals put to use in their work is to know about the planning and implementation of their programme. They may want to get to grips with issues that are perceived to be important by local people or to understand in-depth about why things are the way they are. Sometimes this will mean a broad look at a wide range of issues affecting a community, and sometimes research will be targeted at a particular issue.

Increasingly, development professionals engage communities directly in the research process of deciding priorities for their work, rather than regarding it as primarily a technical exercise. Research for development has kept spreading, from rural development projects to a wide set of other issues. The applications include analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation in many areas of development.

The current application of participatory development approaches goes beyond projects to application of participation in connection with programme strategies and policies, national policy reforms like poverty reduction plans, and strategies for decentralization. Development research methods can be practised with a cross section of a wide variety of audience as they are flexible, interactive, semi-structured, visual and user-friendly. The strength of development research lies in its methodological pluralism. It is the combination of flexible and innovative use of these methods that enrich both the process and the outcome of the research process.

After studying this unit, you should be able to

- examine the areas of application of development research
- define project proposal and discuss the process of project formulation
- describe the contents of the project proposal
- develop a system for monitoring and evaluating a development project
- distinguish between process monitoring and progress monitoring

3.2 APPLICATION OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Among many development issues that students and development researchers address, there are five areas where this research can be particularly interesting, relevant, and rewarding. These include

- (i) research on development policy
- (ii) working with civil society or Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
- (iii) interpreting the imagery of development
- (iv) understanding the historical construction of development
- (v) using the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to contribute to development practices.

The three key components of development research application which are discussed in this unit are

- (i) Appraisal of Existing Situation
- (ii) Research Project Formulation and Implementation
- (iii) Monitoring and Evaluation

3.3 APPRAISAL OF EXISTING SITUATION

The first step to development research application is appraisal of existing situation. We present below, a few popular ways or methods used for the appraisal of existing situation that development researchers generally consider handy.

- Needs Assessment
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Social Assessment
- Beneficiary Assessment
- Social Audit
- Participatory Poverty Assessment
- Sustainable Livelihood Analysis
- Analysis of Hunger
- Vulnerability Analysis
- Institutional Analysis
- Participatory Evaluation

3.3.1 Needs Assessment

It is not actually possible to read off from a broad assessment of people's situation what interventions are needed and possible. There are a number of reasons for this. One is about the nature of need. It may be useful to distinguish felt or expressed need (which people themselves put forward) from normative need (based on standard, which is socially and culturally accepted as necessary for a decent life).

It is important for needs assessment work to take account of these differences in choosing appropriate methods to use. The question to ask is – whose view of needs is important here? In an ideal world, perhaps, the potential beneficiary's view would be paramount, but in real life it may not be so central to the argument of a case. Participatory research methods will naturally produce an account of needs which depends largely on people's own perceptions. This will, therefore, be limited by people's experience, knowledge, and expectations. A conventional survey may not provide us with knowledge of how to go about addressing the identified needs. Questions will only be asked in the area of life that the researchers have identified as important, and may completely miss key issues as perceived by the community. Group processes, where people grapple together with analysing their problems and looking at potential solutions, are likely to generate more helpful responses.

All communities have strengths and resources as well as needs, opportunities and problems. It is important to take these into consideration in the needs assessment processes.

Different organisations have different traditions and expectations in terms of needs assessment requirements. Obviously some systematic assessment of need is important to justify the direction of resources to one purpose rather than another. But, the fact is that we all know that there is plenty of 'need' out there – it can be as important to identify opportunities and to assess ideas about ways of meeting needs, as to identify needs themselves. Needs assessment must include work on the organisation's own strategy, and those of surrounding agencies, as well as on collecting information about the potential beneficiaries of any programme.

3.3.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder analysis is part of any programme planning. Stakeholders are people, groups, or institutions with interests in a programme. It is helpful to distinguish between primary stakeholders, who are those directly affected (either positively or negatively), and secondary stakeholders, who are intermediaries in the process / or those not directly affected. The uses of stakeholder analysis in development research are to

- identify various groups that have an interest in a project or proposed project
- better understand client or beneficiary interest, needs, and capabilities
- understand the interests, needs, and capabilities of other groups and identify opportunities and threats to implementation
- assess which groups should be consulted or directly involved in programme planning and implementation.

The process that is followed is essentially one of analysing information about the various stakeholders to assess their likely responses to the project, and, thus, to plan a strategy to win people over or, at least, to reduce their resistance to an innovation. The information you need to base this on could be collected through all the usual methods – interviews, survey data wherever available, institutional appraisals, and observation. Carrying out an analysis like this could at least prove a useful way for a team to share its knowledge of the different groups involved. The analysis can lead into

an inclusive planning process. The process followed can be summarised as follows

- identify and list all stakeholders (divide primary stakeholders into relevant sub-groups; consider the poorest; consider gender issues)
- draw out the stakeholders' interests (what benefits may they gain? What resources may they commit? Do they have other interests which may produce conflict?)
- assess stakeholders' power and influence
- assess which stakeholders are important for the success of the project
- identify the assumptions which must be made about what role each stakeholder group will play for your project to succeed – and consider the risks if there is a negative response
- Check your information carefully, if possible drawing on more than one source.

3.3.3 Social Assessment

Social Assessment provides a framework for beneficiaries to have equitable access to development opportunities. It helps in lending a helping hand to the vulnerable and the poor to voice their concerns during project formulation. Technically, social assessment is done in terms of the following five entry points

- i) social diversity and gender analysis
- ii) institutional rules and behaviour
- iii) stakeholders
- iv) participation
- v) social risk and vulnerability

Of all these, the most important as emphasised by organisations like the World Bank is, institutional rules and behaviour, and participation. Institution's rules and behaviour analyses the role an institution plays in affecting change and ensuring community participation through techniques presented below.

Social assessment, as a process, starts by analysing the institution's rules and behaviour. It helps in appraising the institutional capacity of the project implementing agency. Social analysis focuses on institutional rules and behaviours, both formal and informal, which is likely to affect the project's development objectives. It analyses groups characteristics, relationships (intra group and inter group) with institutions and the community.

3.3.4 Beneficiary Assessment

Beneficiary assessment is defined as a qualitative research tool that is used for improving the impact of development operations by analysing the views of the intended beneficiaries regarding an ongoing reform/process. This process starts as a consultation with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders to help them in designing development activities, and to list down any potential constraints and in obtaining feedback on reactions to intervention during the implementation process.

Beneficiary assessment, like social assessment provides the target population with the opportunity to voice their opinions, needs and concerns regarding

the development process. Thus, it is also a process of (i) listening to the issues and concerns of the poor and disadvantaged beneficiaries, and (ii) obtaining feedback on project interventions. Beneficiary assessment is a qualitative method of investigation that relies primarily on the following three data collection techniques

- i) In-depth Interviews
- ii) Structured and Unstructured Focus Group Discussion
- iii) Direct Observation and Participant Observation

Beneficiary Assessment is usually carried out with individual beneficiaries or with groups with a smaller sample size.

3.3.5 Social Audit

Social Audits are concerned with the social consequences of a particular action. Social audit process enables you to assess and demonstrate the social benefits of a given programme or project. This is also a kind of social reach and effectiveness analysis of a given programme / intervention. Initially, it was considered informal and so it had no structures. But, later on, some sort of commonality has been established across various audits. As part of good governance, and as elements of transparency and accountability, social audit these days come with specific structures also which are generic and can be customised to suite the context. The social audit element of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) can be one of the best examples to put it across.

In 1981, an organisation known as TSO (Third System Organisation) developed the concept of social audit. TSO has also developed some toolkits for social audit across programmes. Social audit is based on three key elements: social targets, internal view, and external view as a process of auditing, though social audit in its various forms and adaptations are used in developing countries.

The social audit process is defined as the way in which a social audit is planned and carried out. It encompasses various steps related to preparation for managing the social audit, that is, setting the criteria and target, monitoring progress, and finally evaluating the flow of benefits. At the end of each of the elements, audit teams use internal verifiable indicators to monitor the project's activities and actions. Social audit teams use social target sheets as a series of planning tools to set targets, which ultimately helps in promoting good practice. These social targets together provide the planned and actual framework for measurement.

3.3.6 Baseline Studies

Baseline studies should take place before a programme starts. It is aimed at understanding the nature and extent of a problem so as to have a well informed planning. Baseline would also be very helpful to compare the changes that have taken place from the conditions with which things started at square one. A baseline study aims at providing a reference point against which changes can be measured so that the impact of the programme or of external factors can be measured.

The collection of data pertaining to an existing situation, a systematic look at what is at present being done to address the problem, and some minor

field work to get basic information about how the issue is experienced in the community, should be undertaken. For large scale programmes, which are seen as demonstration projects, a more rigorous study will be needed. Points that need to be considered include: which key factors should be the planned intervention impact? What can be used as observable, quantifiable indicators? Evidence of effectiveness is important, therefore, baseline research is very important as well.

3.3.7 Community Consultation

These are deliberative processes, meaning that the people involved discuss and deliberate over an issue, and reach a decision. This is, obviously, different from individual-focused research methods such as questionnaires as it involves group discussion. But, it is also very different from a focus group, for example, where people are asked to draw on their specific experience and put forward their views, but are specifically briefed that they need not reach agreement with the other members in the group. This might look almost like a public hearing taking place in several places of a region.

3.3.8 Participatory Poverty Assessment

In 1999, the World Bank undertook a global research study called 'Consultations with the Poor'. The purpose of the study was to enable a wide range of poor people in diverse countries and conditions to share their views in such a way that they can inform and contribute to the concept and content of the World Development Report, 2000-01. It was also expected to provide a micro level perspective of the poor people's own experience of poverty and responses to it, illuminating the nature of risk and vulnerability. The following were the four main themes for the analysis of the study

- exploring wellbeing
- priorities of the poor
- institutional analysis
- gender relations.

This requires a checklist of issues and the methods of development research (or participatory research) employed in the study. The checklist along with a research plan should include: themes, data requirements, and methods. The researcher must constantly bear in mind if the method employed would produce the data he or she is looking for, under each theme.

3.3.9 Sustainable Livelihood Analysis

The Department for International Development UK has developed a framework known as the sustainable livelihood framework, which presents a comprehensive analysis of the main factors that affect people's livelihoods, and typical relationship between these. The framework can be meaningfully used to assess the contribution of the existing activities for livelihood sustainability and to plan new development activities for sustainable livelihood. The core issues presented in the framework are

- livelihood assets, which include human capital, social capital, physical capital, natural capital and financial capital, having a strong influence on the livelihood of the people

- structures and processes which represent organisations, institutions, policies and legislation that shape livelihood
- livelihood strategies which denote the range and combination of activities and choices that people make in order to achieve their livelihood goals
- vulnerability context which speaks about shocks (drought, flood, storm, civil conflicts and epidemics), trends, seasonal shifts in prices, employment opportunities, food availability which affect peoples' livelihoods
- livelihood outcomes which are the achievement or outputs of livelihood strategies.

The framework is quite comprehensive and provides a vivid picture of appraising various issues. The framework does suggest various participatory research methods and other conventional methods that are to be judiciously used to appraise and analyse various issues connected with sustainable livelihood.

3.3.10 Analysis of Hunger

Hunger is the starkest form of human deprivation. It is the inability to secure food needed to support a healthy life. More pervasive in impact are malnutrition and undernourishment. Although acute hunger or famine receives more attention, it should be remembered that the great majority of hunger deaths comes not from starvation but from nutrition related sickness and diseases.

Availability of food is a necessary condition to end hunger. But it is not a sufficient condition to ensure security of food for all. Nutrition security requires physical and economic access to a balanced diet and a conducive environment for its effective biological utilization. Freedom from hunger is the first step in the alteration of poverty and is a prerequisite for active participation of the people in the economic activity. Hunger depletes strength and reduces the immune competence of the people and makes them vulnerable to infectious diseases, aggravating further the problems of hunger. Non food factors play an important role in determining both access and effective biological utilization. This is why food security involves attention to sustainable livelihoods, safe drinking water, environmental sanitation, primary health care and basic education. Any analysis on hunger should take care of all these factors. Development research methods, along with conventional methods of research can be meaningfully employed to assess hunger and hunger related issues.

The themes generally included are

- identification of hunger prone families
- targeting the poor
- livelihood sources and opportunities of the needy families
- local factors responsible for well-being and ill-being
- the cyclical and seasonal nature of hunger
- availability of facilities and services
- effectiveness of institutions

- allocation and reach of various schemes
- assessment and prioritization of possible option for development activities
- nutritional status assessment.

3.3.11 Vulnerability Analysis

Vulnerability is defined as an exposure to risks, which the people are not able to cope up with. In other words, the people especially the poor, the marginalised, the deprived, and the powerless, do not have the wherewithal to effectively face risks to which they are exposed. Vulnerability analysis assumes importance in the context of sustainable livelihood analysis and poverty assessment. Rapid assessment of vulnerability can be attempted using participatory research methods. The focus of research pertaining to vulnerability can have the following standpoints

- identification of vulnerable groups
- focusing
- identification of causes
- trends in vulnerability
- institutional analysis (including governmental and non-governmental)
- resource analysis (including common and private property resources)
- gender analysis
- future vision.

3.3.12 Institutional Analysis

Institutional analysis studies how institutions behave and function according to both empirical rules and theoretical rules. Participatory research methods can be effectively used to assess the functioning of any formal or informal grassroot level organisation. There was a study undertaken by the Rural Extension Wing of the Gandhigram Rural University in Tamil Nadu using participatory research methods. The idea was to find out the causes for the dormancy of a milk producers' cooperative society and to ascertain the feasibility of reviving the society. After reviewing the secondary sources of data, a battery of participatory research methods was used to analyse the various issues related to the dormancy of the society. The issues that were analysed include

- milk production and productivity
- historical profile of the dairy cooperative society
- change in the production and marketing of milk
- season-wise problems and prospects
- persons behind the rise and fall of the society
- circumstances that led to the closure
- the consequences of closure
- revival possibilities of the society
- decision on the sources of marketing
- community/milk producers options / and decisions on the options.

Thus institutional analysis can be used to assess the capacity and behaviour of organizations that carry out reforms.

3.3.13 Action Research

Action research recognises explicitly that it is concerned about change, and that the people who need to implement the change should be directly involved in investigating the issues surrounding it. Action research views data collection, analysis, and reflection on it as part of a cycle, of which action is a key element. It is recognised that research questions arise originally from the experience of people working in the field and reflecting on their work. Action research usually involves introducing new practice, and then testing how well it goes. It is seen as a kind of experiment, in a real life setting, and, in action research, implementation is the real test. Action research is about finding local solutions to local problems – solutions which are fully owned by the key participants. The people most directly concerned with the issue have been seen as the people most important to involve in action research process.

In many ways development work could be seen as action research. There is, perhaps, more concern for systematic recording in action research. Analysing problem from the perspective of those who experience the problem and, trying to find a solution from among them for joint implementation is what action research is all about. This is being widely used. Any research commencing from baseline to designing an intervention, and implementing the same could be viewed as action research.

In this section, you studied the application of development research and appraisal of existing situation. Now, answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress-1*.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

(b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What are the methods used for the appraisal of existing situation?

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2. How is application of development research useful?

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3.4 FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PROJECT

The concepts involved in the research project proposal formulation and implementation are as follows

3.4.1 Meaning of a Project Proposal

A proposal is 'a statement of purpose and plan' that is presented for someone's acceptance. It intends to persuade that person or agency to fund your project.

- It states the problem, or analyses the situation.
- It offers a plan with clearly stated goals, objectives, and strategies for solving the problem.
- It makes a request for the resources needed to accomplish the plan.
- It demonstrates probable success, that is, it shows that you are capable of doing what you say you will.
- It offers a commitment that you will show by certain specified measures that you have accomplished what you said you would.

3.4.2 Types of Project Proposals

Types can be explained at two levels, based on time and nature. Projects based on time are at the pilot or experimental level, and at full length project level. Pilot projects are usually meant for experimentation. It can be for understanding a specific situation or for testing the validity of a solution at the micro level before it is scaled up at full length project level. Projects based on nature are

- (i) research project proposals
- (ii) action project proposals
- (iii) business project proposals.

- (i) Research Project Proposals:** these are usually research studies that aim at understanding a situation. These studies try to understand certain problems or to record the social realities, and to try to find ways to go about solving a problem, or to come out with certain policy recommendations, or to develop a specific conceptual package for implementation. Universities and research departments of the government usually undertake research studies. These require sound academic knowledge about research methodology and its application.
- (ii) Action Project Proposals:** these are project ideas that give description of a problem, and a plan for solving that problem. The ideas contained in this type of projects are meant for action, meaning that these ideas translate into action for the benefit of a target population who are experiencing the stated problem.
- (iii) Business Project Proposals:** There are proposals meant for identifying business prospects in terms of raw materials availability, capacity for converting raw materials into finished products, the financial viability and market prospects of the project idea. The small business and micro entrepreneurial ventures of SHGs can be stated as examples of this type of proposal.

3.4.3 The Process of Project Formulation

This is also known as the 'Phases of Project Planning' or 'Phases of Project Formulation', or 'Project Planning Cycle'.

Project planning can be presented in the following five distinct phases

- (i) **Situational Appraisal (Base line Study):** a good initial situation analysis is necessary for good project planning and implementation. Goals, activities, and resource mobilization as inputs are all meaningless without understanding the context of the target group, the environment, local institutions, social values, and the relationships. All planning must, therefore, be based on knowledge of the real situation, and of the various factors which have formed it. On the basis of these data a community profile can be developed.
- (ii) **Needs Assessment:** needs assessment deals with the question: who needs what, as defined by whom? This is an essential consultation process which lets the project writer identify all the needs, then develop a community prioritization of needs, and levelling of needs. No one project can address all the identified needs, hence, the need for prioritization. The negotiating process should bring consensus on which priorities should be first addressed.
- (iii) **Project Designing:** determining goals, objectives, activities, strategies based on prioritized needs are essential for successful project planning. This is called project designing. They set the direction of the project and are the terms of reference for monitoring progress. While designing the project, it is important to consider the actual needs, practical constraints, and likely possibilities. This means that we need to reconsider the needs, and how to go about fulfilling the needs despite the external conditions which are beyond the control of the project.
- (iv) **Developing Detailed Implementation Plan:** based on the project design usually a detailed implementation plan is prepared with a time frame. This is identifying individual activities and sequencing them with a timeframe. This is done either as a Gantt chart or simply as a Quarterly Forward Plan (broken down from the Annual Operating Plan). This process also determines the allocation of human, financial, and material resources on various activities. This serves as an indicator to measure progress fortnightly through an internal project review.
- (v) **Developing Indicators for Evaluation:** this is done especially to understand periodical project outcome or long term project impact on the target population. This can also serve as monitoring indicators later on for external evaluators. This is formulated, taking cues from the project goal, objectives, activities, and the desired outcome of the project.

3.4.4 Project Implementation

In this step, a detailed implementation plan should be presented. Basically, this is the section of the project where you will describe how you are going to carry out the project to achieve your outputs and project objectives. It can be presented in a step-by-step presentation of activities. Some points to consider are

- (a) how you intend to involve the local people and their contribution to the project
- (b) the number and kind of personnel needed
- (c) administrative and supervisory responsibilities

(d) the method of implementation

(e) quantified resources would be required at each step

In this section, we discussed the formulation and implementation of a development project. Now answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress-2*.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

(b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What do you mean by project proposal? What are its components?

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2. What are the types of project proposals?

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3.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PROJECT

Monitoring is a management tool for tracking progress of ongoing projects. The basic idea is to compare actual performance with plans and to measure actual results against expected results. It means, checking the progress, watching, tracking, finding relative position of a project as to where the project stands, compared to where it should be as per plan.

3.5.1 Monitoring

Monitoring comprises

- measuring the ongoing project activities (where we are)
- monitoring the project variables (cost, effort, scope, etc.) against the project management plan and the project performance baseline (where we should be)
- identifying corrective actions to address issues and risks properly (How can we get on track again)
- influencing the factors that could circumvent integrated change control so only approved changes are implemented

(i) **Answers questions such as**

- What progress have we made?
- What are the problems?
- How far have we gone?

- How much more to go, do we need to change our strategies and approaches?

When done: ongoing, at regular intervals (once in three months/ six months)

For whom: it is usually internal, especially meant for the project director and project staff. It is needed for the donor who funded the project as well.

(ii) What to monitor and evaluate?

Inputs: money, materials, human resources.

Activities: what has been done, when, how much.

Processes: how activities are being implemented; how milestones are reached.

Outputs: direct results of activities, what results have been achieved immediately.

Outcomes / effects (Impact): what is achieved in the short to medium term?

3.5.2 Issues Surrounding Monitoring and Evaluation

- Input monitoring
- Activity monitoring
- Process monitoring
- Output evaluation
- Impact evaluation

Illustration from Monitoring and Evaluation of a Watershed Project is given below. These are

- **Inputs monitoring:** money, materials, human resources
- **Activities monitoring:** a set of tasks performed (e.g. area survey, transect walk plus mapping, SHG group formation, SHG meeting, plan for watershed development)
- **Process monitoring:** a set of activities, towards a common purpose (group formation, watershed committee, engineering survey)
- **Outcomes evaluation:** series of effects of some action and activities (e.g., reduced run off, increased recharging, increased water table).
- **Impact evaluation:** changes in people's lives and livelihoods (e.g., increased income, reduced morbidity, increased capacity to negotiate, and remunerative cropping pattern)
- **Outputs evaluation:** the number of groups formed, number of check dams constructed, number of percolation ponds desilted or created, trees planted, soil moisture increased)

Type of Indicator Recommended frequency of measurement

Input	Continuously
Process	Quarterly, Semi-annually, or annually
Output	Quarterly, Semi-annually, or annually
Outcome	1 to 3 years
Impact	2 to 5 years

The steps involved in participatory monitoring and evaluation are

- review objectives and activities
- review reasons for evaluation
- why are we doing evaluation
- what do we want to know
- develop evaluation questions
- decide who will do the evaluation
- identify the direct indicators and indirect indicators
- identify the information sources for evaluation questions
- determine the skills and labour that are required to obtain information
- determine when information gathering and analysis can be done
- determine who will gather information
- analyse and present the results.

3.5.3 Project Sustainability

An important aspect that has to be taken into consideration during the project monitoring and evaluation stages is project sustainability. Increasingly, donors want to know how the activity will be continued once their grant is expended. It is a good idea to address this point in every project.

Financial sustainability: meaning the proposal should indicate how the project can continue or be sustained after donor funds are expended

Technical sustainability: meaning the proposal should indicate how the technical requirements of the project can be continued even after the project period is over; **Managerial sustainability:** meaning the proposal should show that the local target group and or applicant will continue to provide organizational or managerial inputs after donor funding closes.

In this section, we discussed monitoring and evaluation of a development project. Now answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress-3*.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: (a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

- (b) Check your answer with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1. What do you mean by monitoring and evaluation?

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2. What are the steps involved in monitoring and evaluation of development project?

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

Development research is applied in a wide spectrum of fields such as agriculture, watershed, forestry, poverty reduction, gender issues, technology assessment, bio diversity, health, nutrition, reproductive health, education, resettlements and rehabilitation of project affected people, and so on. Whatever might be the broad areas of application, development research needs to start with the appraisal of the existing situation. Then comes project formulation and implementation.

The project formulation goes through five phases, viz., situation appraisal, needs assessment, project designing, project implementation plan, and developing indicators for evaluation.

While formulating the project, we need to be clear about the monitoring system we are going to adopt. Monitoring should encompass issues related to inputs, activities, process, outputs and impacts. It is essential that we need to develop indicators related to above issues. While we develop indicators we should be able to differentiate between process monitoring and progress monitoring. Process monitoring is basically concerned with key processes for project success whereas progress monitoring is primary concerned with physical inputs and outputs. We should also decide in advance what type of evaluation system we are going to adopt for the project. The Participatory Evaluation System is quite essential for development project because it eliminates many of the shortcomings that we find in conventional forms of evaluation.

3.7 REFERENCES AND SELECTED READINGS

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3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. The methods used for the appraisal of situation are Needs Assessment, Stakeholder Analysis, Social Assessment, Beneficiary Assessment, Social Audit, Participatory Poverty Assessment, Sustainable Livelihood Analysis, Analysis of Hunger, Vulnerability Analysis, Institutional Analysis, and Participatory Evaluation.
2. There are five areas where this research can be particularly interesting, relevant, and rewarding. These include
 - (i) research on development policy
 - (ii) working with civil society or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
 - (iii) interpreting the imagery of development
 - (iv) understanding the historical construction of development
 - (v) using the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to contribute to development practices.

Check Your Progress 2

1. A proposal is 'a statement of purpose and plan' that is presented for someone's acceptance. It intends to persuade that person / agency to fund your project. Its components are: Title Page, Table of Contents, Project Summary, Introduction, Project Context, Problem Statement, Objectives, Anticipated Outcomes or Results, Implementation Plan (work scope), Project Evaluation, Project Budget, Project Sustainability, Appendices.
2. Types of Project Proposals can be explained at two levels, based on time and nature. Projects based on time are at the pilot or experiment level and at full length project level. Pilot projects are usually meant for experimentation. It can be for understanding a specific situation or for testing the validity of a solution at the micro level before it is scaled up at full length project level. Projects based on nature are
 - (i) Research Project Proposals
 - (ii) Action Project Proposals
 - (iii) Business Project Proposals

Check Your Progress 3

1. Monitoring and evaluation is a management tool for tracking progress of ongoing projects. The basic idea is to compare actual performance with plans and to measure actual results against expected results. It means, checking the progress, watching, tracking, finding the relative position of a project as to where the project stands compared to where it should be as per plan.
2. The steps involved in participatory monitoring and evaluation are review objectives and activities, review reasons for evaluation, why are we doing evaluation, what do we want to know, develop evaluation

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questions, decide who will do the evaluation, identify the direct indicators and indirect indicators, identify the information sources for evaluation questions, determine the skills, and labour that are required to obtain information, determine when information gathering and analysis can be done, determine who will gather information.

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(6 CREDITS)

BLOCK	UNIT NOS	UNIT TITLES
1		Fundamentals of Social Science Research
	1	Social Science Research: An Overview
	2	Components of Social Science Research
	3	Research Designs
	4	Research Project Formulation
2		Development Research
	1	Basics of Development Research
	2	Methods of Development Research
	3	Development Research Applications
3		Measurement and Sampling
	1	Measurement
	2	Scales and Tests
	3	Reliability and Validity
	4	Sampling
4		Data Collection
	1	Quantitative Data Collection Methods and Devises
	2	Qualitative Data Collection Methods and Devises
	3	Data Sources
5		Data Analysis
	1	Overview of Statistical Tools
	2	Use of Computer in Data Analysis
	3	Data Processing and Analysis
	4	Report Writing