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# **End of Methods in Social Research : Some Reflections**

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## **End of Methods in Social Research : Some Reflections**

**1.1** Research in Social Science is conducted mostly through pre-determined steps together described as method. While methodical research obviously has its own merits, there are limitations to it as well. More particularly any idea level initiatives are almost unthinkable in social research. In social research through methodical approach. While initiating a discussion on post method, the first question that comes to our mind is what a method is? Simply speaking a method is a framework within which there are step by step processes for the attainment of the research objectives. Both quantitative as well as qualitative methods are being adopted in social research so as to achieve the research objectives by way of testing the hypothesis. It is in this context, one could obviously see that methodical research bear certain uniformity through which the entire process of research could be carried forward. Reference could be made to that of the research process with a quick glance starting with formulation of a research problem, conceptualization of a research design, construction of an instrument for data collection, selection of sample, collection of data, processing data and finally writing a research report. It shows that methodical research is scientific with step by step forward movement leading

to the ultimate realization of the research objectives. However, at the same time we could see certain limitation of the methodical research particularly in throwing certain original ideas or simple narration relating to any issue in the public domain. In our analysis idea level research initiatives that may not comply with existing methodological discourse are difficult to be taken up for research. In the process value research is the victim of the entire focus of the methodical approach the need for which was highlighted by the post behaviouralists. It may be noted that when the behavioural movement surfaced in USA in an around the sixties of the previous century, the use of the mathematical and social research was the glamour of the research endeavours in the process value research was marginalized which was later on sort to be emphasized by the post-behaviouralist. Here is a plea, for the use of post method in the social research. It is in this context that we will like to discuss the whole concept of post methodology as a useful method in social research taking a step forward from the working paper 1 submitted on post methodology on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018. In this working paper I have tried to conceptualize post methodology and would also like to throw certain reflections as to how this approach could be used for meaningful research in social science.

- 1.2 It may be stated here that the concept of post-methodology is not to be understood as just a critique of the traditional methodological discourse. It is an alternative thinking. It is not here to contest methodology. It is a kind of independent reaction to a situation in which there is a need to float certain ideas relevant to a particular syndrome or situation in the society. It is believed that there is a higher possibility of original ideas being floated and explained in

research investigation rather than making the ideas tailor made in accordance with the provision of the traditional methodology prescriptions. Therefore, one of my proposition relating to post-methodology is that it is not to be treated as a critique of the traditional methodology discourse. But as an original premise for reserch. For example we may place here the case of Lee Xiao Bo, the Chinese Literary critic, human right activist, political essayist and the Nobel laureate who was in Chinese prison for a long period of time and finally died of critical illness while in prison itself. He was not allowed by the chinese authorities to visit abroad for medical treatment and had to contend with the limited medical facilities available in China. As a political essayist he wrote a few political essays challenging the edifice of the Chinese regime and the brutality of the suppression of pro-democracy movement in China could be meaningful substance on which research could be initiated for in the post methodology approach. These are certain areas where we do believe that there are ample scopes for the use of post methodology in order to make the research authentic, efficient and reliable. Similarly the anti-imperialist movement launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi as well as the anti-apartheid movement launched by Nelson Mandela in South Africa could also be instances where research would be more effective in with the application of post-methodology.

1.3 In the post-methodology approach the value constitutes an important component of research. Here value refers to the individual belief and faith of the researcher which was utterly ignored in scientific methodology discourse in social research. In the ancient

period, value was always considered to be a very important component. But it was ignored when the methodology was widely used for the purpose of social research in the modern period. For example in the philosophical and historical approaches to the study of social sciences, value was always considered to be of crucial importance. It was primarily because of the emergence of the behavioral approach that increasing importance was given to facts and facts only rather than values. The whole approach was criticized as "Mad craze for scientism". The social researchers in order to enhance the prestige and the glamour of their respective studies emphasized on facts only. However, the emergence of the Post Behavioral Approach significantly paved the way for the recognition of the values in social research. It substantially widened the scope of scientific social research that may be regarded as the beginning of a post method era in social research.

- 1.4 In the evolution of the concept of post method we must recognize the contribution of David Easton who was infact the pioneer of methodical research in political science. It was David Easton who first initiated the concept of "Intellectual foundation of Behaviouralism" where eight steps were identified for research. But being a realist he gradually realized that the intellectual foundation of Behaviouralism has substantially reduced the scope of social research. It is in this context that David Easton developed "Credo of Relevance" of social research as the essential of what is known as Post Behaviorlism. In post behavioral research, emphasis was given on values where the role of the individual researcher was recognized in the process of social research. However, it would be wrong if we equate post methodology with

that of the post behavioral approach. The post methodology is a much wider premise which takes into account many of the other components from that of the Post Behavioural Approach.

1.5 To my understanding post methodology provides the largest possible freedom to the researcher. Here, the researcher will throw ideas and may deviate from the methodological discourse. The "grammar" and the "format" identified by the modern and scientific research is not always resorted to in the Post Methodology. But at the same time it must be admitted that the individual researcher while exercising his freedom and autonomy as a researcher must adhere to the component of rationality. What is rationality as such? Can it be equated to reality? Is reality always rational? The wisdom of the researcher is obviously important in formulation of this rationality-reality doctrine in the context of Post Methodology. Thus while exercising freedom and autonomy the researcher must be careful to see to it that he does not deviate from the rationality-reality considerations in the entire research process.

1.6 In the post methodology the researcher may even put certain raw ideas. Such raw ideas may not be bound by any research format. It could be a simple proposition but a new idea. In the existing research framework the researcher has no option to play with ideas that may prove to be crucial in the process of research. For example Plato, the great philosopher once said that the philosopher could be king in the Greek city state and that the philosopher king should be without any family or property. In such a situation it was kind of pure observation on the part of Plato that ultimately became two important theories of his philosophy namely The

Theory of Philosopher King and The Theory of Communism of Family and Property. Thus sometime even raw ideas could turn to be meaningful component of research. These aspects have been taken into account by that of simple and straight ideas. Narratives which are adopted in modern scientific research could also be adopted in Post Methodology and the researcher would be at liberty to explain and analyse the narratives in the way convenient to him.