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**THE NATURE OF RESEARCH: EXPLORING ITS MEANING, SCOPE
AND OBJECTIVES**

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Keywords	Abstract
<i>Research, Scientific inquiry, Doubt, Problem, Integrity, Teaching, Interpretation, Symposia, Idea of university</i>	Research adds to the existing knowledge and understanding of any subject. On the one hand, just as it enriches and even verifies one's ideas and opinions, on the other hand it may question or even reshape them. Therefore research is exclusively about seeking new information, which is at once realizable only after reviewing developments already made on the subject concerned. In other words, a work of research if undertaken, ideally, will not only sanction ideas and perspectives but will also help to bring about novel techniques for application on even newer subjects for understanding.

Introduction: The Meaning of Research

The word 'research' has come from the Latin word 'circare', which means to go about. The prefix 're' means to 'reunite', 'reorganize', etc. The word 'research' is now used as a technical term to mean a systematic investigation in a field of knowledge to discover or establish facts or principles.



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According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “Research is a search or investigation directed to the discovery of some fact by careful consideration or study of a subject, a course of critical or scientific inquiry” (Murray 507).

The Significance of Research

According to Hudson, “all progress is born of inquiry. Doubt is often better than overconfidence, for it leads to inquiry, and inquiry leads to invention” (qtd. in Kothari 5). It is in this context that the significance of research can well be understood:

- First, research is a systematic and critical investigation: as for example, if a researcher finds that Hopkins is a purely modern poet and yet he is Victorian in his attitude and ideas, he must not ignore the latter fact and must revise his hypothesis.
- Second, research is the discovery of new facts and correct information: for example, we all know, Shakespeare has to his authentic credit a total of thirty-seven plays. Now if someone comes with a manuscript and systematically proves to be the playwright’s thirty-eighth play, he will be said to have discovered a new fact and hence he will make a genuine contribution to knowledge.
- Third, research is the revision of accepted laws or theories: for example, Sir William Jones’ discovery of the fact that Sanskrit language is the oldest revises the seventeenth century linguists’ notion of Latin and Greek being the oldest.
- And fourth, research becomes significant with the practical application of new theories: for examples, Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity is applied in space research and in scientific literature; Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis is applied in the analysis of a literary text; and Chomsky’s transformational generative grammar is applied in computers.

The Characteristics of Research

According to C.C. Crawford of the University of Southern California, there can be as many as nine characteristics of research:

- It centres on a problem.
- It involves original work.
- It rests upon an attitude of curiosity.
- It requires an open mind.
- It rests on the assumption that everything is subject to law and order.
- Its object is to discover laws and generalization.
- It is a study of cause and effect.
- It is based on measurement.



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- It involves a conscious technique.
- It is a never-ending process.

However, the implication of these characteristics is that research is always supposed to be concerned with the continuity and integrity of the thought process irrespective of whether it is science or humanities.

The Aims and Objectives of Research

The aims of research can be found in the functions of the university education system which are interdependent, and which precisely are:

- Teaching: Because by closing the educational institutions for a hundred years will lead to the return of prehistoric age or civilization.
- Research: Because only by treasuring knowledge without research would be like losing the utility of teaching.
- Extension: Because a teacher must not limit himself to repeating the old things in the classroom every year.

There are four objectives of literary research:

- Advancement of knowledge: The researcher should have a thorough knowledge of what has been done in the past. As for example, A.C. Bradley, after perusing several critics' works of Hamlet's delay, came up with his novel idea of 'melancholy' to be the cause.
- In other words, the researcher should have a fresh interpretation of the known facts: as an example, earlier it was believed that heavier things fell on the earth with greater velocity than the lighter ones. Further experiments proved that all things fall with the same velocity. The fresh interpretation here being that which went unnoticed by the previous scientists: The slowing-down effect of the resistance of air.
- Broadening the mind and sharpening the critical insight of the researcher: Unlike the ordinary reader who goes through a novel or a poem either for morals or entertainment, a researcher compares and contrasts the author's view with his / her critical insight. Critical insight may be developed by attending seminars, symposia and having a wide reading in different branches. As for example, Eliot's *The Wasteland* can be justifiably researched upon by having accesses to at least Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*, Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*; from the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagwad Gita*, and, not to mention, the authentic text itself.
- Regarding reading materials, it's very pertinent to recall here what Bacon has said somewhere: "Read not to contradict and confute, not to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider" (129).
- Creation of a genuine and intelligent interest in literature: Because research is something more than earning a qualification or fame. It is an activity which is a reward in itself.
- Research creates a sense of belongingness to a collaborative community: That is research is not limited by time. Every generation carries on the task which was not completed by the previous generation. As for example, some of the problems that were left by Copernicus were completed by Galileo.



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Conclusion

We can conclude in the words of Dr. F.R. Leavis: “Research should be able to generate in the university a centre of human consciousness, perception, knowledge, judgment and responsibility. Research has to be thought of in relation to the whole idea of university. It must aim at establishing a creative front and doing creative work on the contemporary intellectual frontier” (22).

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The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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