

MEDIA RESEARCH

LESSON STRUCTURE:-

This lesson shall provide an introduction to research in general. We shall discuss about the need, role and importance of research. Finally, we shall focus on various aspects of research. The lesson structure shall be as follows:

MEDIA RESEARCH Lesson: 1

- Objectives 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Presentation of Content
 - 1.2.1 Research: An Introduction
 - 1.2.2 Need, Role, and Importance of Research
 - 1.2.3 Major Aspects of Research
- 1.3 Summary
- 1.4 Key Words
- 1.5 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs)

MEDIA RESEARCH Lesson: 2

MEDIA RESEARCH - ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

LESSON STRUCTURE: This lesson shall provide an introduction to media research. We shall start with the differences between social research and media research. Then we shall concentrate on feedback and feed forward studies. Finally, we shall try to learn the importance of media research as a tool of reporting. The lesson structure shall be as follows:-

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Presentation of Content
 - 2.2.1 Media Research: An Introduction
 - 2.2.2 Social Research and Media Research Differentiated
 - 2.2.3 Feedback and Feed Forward Studies
 - 2.2.4 Media Research as a Tool of Reporting
- 2.3 Summary
- 2.4 Key Words
- 2.5 Self-Assessment-Questions (SAQs)

1.0 OBJECTIVES:-

In this lesson we shall discuss about research in general. The specific objectives of this lesson are:

- To Have an Introduction to Research
- To Know About the Need, Role, and Importance of Research
- To Understand the Major Aspects of Research

INTRODUCTION:

- Curiosity is the basic motivation for research. It is said that ever since Adam tasted the forbidden fruit of knowledge out of curiosity, he became the first researcher. Since then, the human quest for knowledge has continued. From the beginning of time, curious people have been trying to unveil the mysteries of nature, life and the cosmos.

- Man has looked upon the stars, skies and seas with a sense of awe and wonder. From the age of 'stones and spear' to the age of electricity and relativity; and now to the present days of information technologies, man has been discovering new frontiers of knowledge at a terrific speed. He has been cutting across the physical confines of the globe. Rockets and space ships are the new vehicles for travel. Super computers are new means of working and expanding our knowledge of the universe and beyond. With the human spirit of enquiry, man has ventured into realms of science and research where angels fear to tread.
- In this lesson, we shall try to get an introduction to research. In addition, we shall discuss about some major aspects of research.

1.2 PRESENTATION OF CONTENT:

The content of this lesson shall be presented as follows:

- Research: An Introduction
- Need, Role, and Importance of Research
- Major Aspects of Research

1.2.1 RESEARCH- AN INTRODUCTION:- All research is a quest for ordered or systematic knowledge. It may be an observational study of natural phenomena or a rational study of the relations between the concepts in which these phenomena are expressed. Knowledge is gathered, organized and systematized. It is then tested and validated with the help of research tools.

Research often starts with observation. Observation is an intelligent way to making use of our sensory apparatus. It provides an insight to know and understand facts, relations and events. If the observation is precise, the results will be more reliable. In addition to observation, many other research tools and methods are used.

The term research, to some means an attitude of enquiry. It is an honest, intelligent and exhaustive quest for facts. It is the quest for the unknown, and also about the known. Research is done to reveal the secrets of this universe.

Research is the process of arriving at dependable solutions of problems through planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Research sometimes tries to find out the conditions under which certain phenomenon occurs. Research is an aspect of scientific quest and now has become a major discipline.

- It is a systematic way of collecting, classifying and analyzing information, either quantitative or qualitative. According to Rusk, "Research is a point of view, an attitude of enquiry or a frame of mind." It is an attempt to elicit facts and analyze them once they have been collected to get solutions for a variety of problems.

1.2.2 NEED, ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH:

Rummel considered research as "an endeavour to discover, develop and verify knowledge". Its main aim is the discovery of the truth. Research means a systematic and refined technique of thinking. It involves "employing of specialized tools, instruments and procedures to obtain more adequate solutions of problems than would be possible with ordinary means." This way research implies a systematic and objective analysis. It is a recording of controlled observations with an aim to develop generalizations, principles and theories.

Some of the equipments of a researcher are as follows:

- Developed scholastics,
- Accurate observation,

- Integrity,
- Willingness to spend long hours,
- Rational thinking.

Long hours are required to collect and study all forms of acts, data and evidence before arriving at conclusion.

The first four aspects are important. But above all, the researcher must cultivate the ability think rationally. This is the ability to recognize causal relationships. Researchers must also have originality and objectivity in thinking.

Any research should be based on a unifying theory or a conceptual system. A series of often loosely connected observations lead to a more systematic programme of research. The maturity of judgement comes after a wide experience of the field. Research can be:

- Basic Research,
- Applied Research, and
- Action Research.

BASIC RESEARCH:

It is designed to add organized knowledge to the body of scientific knowledge. It does not necessarily produce results of immediate practical value. It is either concerned with the formulation of theory or contributes to the existing body of knowledge. It is also termed as fundamental or pure research. Its chief concern is to discover knowledge for the sake of knowledge and not for the sake of application of the findings or even for their social usefulness. Simply put, basic research is generally done for academic purposes.

APPLIED RESEARCH:

Applied research aims at improving a theory, product or process. It is testing of theoretical concepts in specific problem situations. Its concern is generally with the solution for problems.

ACTION RESEARCH: Action research is not much concerned with the development of theory or its general application. It concerns itself with an immediate problem in a specific setting. Action research aims at improving the social reality. It's finding can be carried into effect by the administrator and sometimes, even the layman. Its emphasis, therefore, is on experience in which the administrator and the layman can participate creatively in the research process.

While pure research is done by outside specialists, action research is done by those who are taken to evaluate their own work situation.

1.2.3 MAJOR ASPECTS OF RESEARCH:

From the above, it is clear that research involves carefully designed procedures. It is thus, a systematic process of study. And all research studies have the following characteristics:

- Research is objective and verifiable. The data collected can be tested and validated.
- Research involves an empirical process. It is based upon empirical evidence or observable experiences. It focuses on such problems as can be verified through empirical observation.

Research calls for rigorous and valid data gathering procedures. These may include mechanical, electronic, clinical or psychometric devices together with observation, description and analysis of data. To ensure precise description and explanation, it can take the help of quantitative measuring devices also.

Research can be replicative and transmitted in different settings and in different times. In trying to replicate, the existing concepts and processes can be confirmed or it may lead to questions about the conclusions of previous studies.

Research has a specific purpose of finding solutions to some problems. It seeks to develop generalizations, principles, and theories. Some times, it even tries to predict future occurrences. Research, however, is always goal-oriented.

Research requires diligent observation at the stage of collection of facts. It involves time, energy, efforts, manpower, and money. The information so gathered has to be recorded as precisely as possible with a view to paving the way for furthering research.

The procedures, methods and approaches to be adopted for research have to be carefully chosen. They have to be both vigorous and rigorous involving deep analysis.

Research calls for patience and diligence. An impatient mind is not fit for research. Hurry and impatience hamper genuine research. A good researcher needs patience, perseverance and the ability to challenge the established knowledge or the urge to find new things.

Good research must be purposive. It must be carefully planned and timely executed.

The researcher must have foresight. Research also requires an open mind and clarity of purpose. Everything must be planned with utmost precision. Its objectives, hypotheses and methodologies must be made clear before hand.

Objectivity is the chief trait of all good research. Personal biases must be kept out from research studies as far as possible. The emphasis has to be on testing and finding out the ultimate reality.

We accept something as truth only when it is verifiable. Only then it becomes credible. What is true in USA must be true in India under similar conditions. Without verifiability of the processes, procedures and conclusions, research is not significant. procedures and conclusions, research is not significant.

Research is a professional affair involving systematic, accurate and expert handling of the research problem. Data has to be gathered through systematic planning. It has to be done by having control on data collecting procedures. The

collected data as to be subjected to rigorous analysis, Inferences and generalizations have to be stated in clear precise language.

A good research study should have focus on facts. A balance has to be struck between quantitative and qualitative facts. Facts become significant only when interpreted in the light of accepted standards and assumptions, which are normative in character. It is only by interpretation and evaluation methods, as determined by the purpose, facts could be related with each other in the wider context.

All good research presupposes insight and imagination in the researcher. These are needed to interpret, explain and draw inferences. They are equally necessary for planning, data collection and interpretation and report writing, etc. Using insight and foresight can solve many puzzles related to research. Good research should adopt interdisciplinary approach. Most of the disciplines are interconnected in one way or the other.

A good research should contribute to the widening of knowledge and to solution of problems confronting human society. Ethical questions relevant and highly import in scientific research, which is concerned with the discovery of truth. There are many reasons why should be undertake any study of human problems with a spirit of scientific enquiry and research. Some of the most common reasons can be enumerated as follows:-

- ❖ Research enables one to think rigorously and critically. It trains researchers to carefully examine research evidence that is advanced for acceptance in variety of popular and scholarly applications. o Research equips one to learn how to find answers to questions facing mankind.
- ❖ Research enables one to acquire skills and techniques to study problems in specific social field situations. Researchers also learn how to find answers through research.
- ❖ As a result of advances in science, technology and other fields, research has become imperative of our times. Without research, the development and discrimination of knowledge is not possible. Research contributes innovative

ideas necessary for professional competence and growth. Here are a few more points about research:

- ❖ Research contributes to new facts and generalizations. It keeps the professional researcher abreast with the latest in their discipline. It helps him to develop, interpret and reinterpret facts and concepts in the light of changing situations.
- ❖ Research creates an urge for taking further strides in one's discipline. It modifies all partial theories and helps dispel myths and antiquated practices by examining them on the anvil of scientific validity. Without research there is no progress, no growth of knowledge.
- ❖ Research requires mastery over such processes as observing events with a clear vision, handling sophisticated research tools or equipment, knowledge of various research methods, treating data statistically, analyzing and interpreting results and writing research reports. These qualities help a lot in cultivating, refining and training the mind of the researcher. All this can be achieved by practice rather than precepts.

1.3 SUMMARY:

- o All research is a quest for ordered or systematic knowledge. It may be an observational study or a rational study.
- o Research is the process of arriving at dependable solutions of problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Research tries to find out the conditions under which certain phenomenon occurs.
- o Research is an aspect of scientific quest and now has become a major discipline. It is a systematic way of collecting, classifying and analyzing information, either quantitative or qualitative.

- o Basic research is designed to add organized knowledge to the body of scientific knowledge. It does not necessarily produce results of immediate practical value. It is either concerned with the formulation of theory or contributes to the existing body of knowledge. It is also termed as fundamental or pure research. Its chief concern is to discover knowledge for the sake of knowledge and not for the sake of application of the findings or even for their social usefulness. Simply put, basic research is generally done for academic purposes.
- o Applied research aims at improving a theory, product or process. It is testing of theoretical concepts in specific problem situations. Its concern is with the solution of immediate problems.
- o Action research is not much concerned with the development of theory or its general application. It concerns itself with an immediate problem in a specific setting. Action research aims at improving the social reality. It's finding can be carried into effect by the administrator and sometimes, even the layman. Its emphasis, therefore, is on experience in which the administrator and the layman can participate creatively in the research process.
- o Research is objective and verifiable. The data collected can be tested and validated. o Research involves an empirical process. It is based upon empirical evidence or observable experiences. It focuses on such problems as can be verified through empirical observation.
- o Research calls for rigorous and valid data gathering procedures. These may include mechanical, electronic, clinical or psychometric devices together with observation, description and analysis of data. To ensure precise description and explanation, it can take the help of quantitative measuring devices also.
- o Research can be replicative and transmitted in different settings and in different times.

- o Research has a specific purpose of findings solutions to some problems. It seeks to develop generalizations, principles, and theories.
- o Research requires diligent observation at the stage of collection of facts. It involves time, energy, efforts, manpower, and money.
- o Research calls for patience and diligence. An impatient mind is not fit for research. Hurry and impatience hamper genuine research.
- o Good research must be purposive. It is carefully planned and timely executed.
- o Researchers need foresight along with an open mind and clarity of purpose.
- o Objectivity is the chief trait of all research. Biases have no place in research.
- o Research is a professional affair involving systematic, accurate and expert handling of the research problem. Data has to be gathered through systematic planning.
- o Good research study should have focus on facts. A balance has to be struck between the quantitative and qualitative facts. Facts become significant only when interpreted in the light of accepted standards and assumptions, which are normative in character. o All good research presupposes insight and imagination in the researcher. These are needed to interpret, explain and draw inferences.
- o Good research should contribute to the widening of knowledge and to solution of problems confronting human society.
- o Research enables one to think rigorously and critically. It trains researchers to carefully examine research evidence that is advanced for acceptance in variety of popular and scholarly applications.

Research enables one to acquire skills and techniques to study problems in specific social field situations.

- o Without research, the development and discrimination of knowledge is not possible. Research contributes to innovative ideas necessary for professional competence and growth. Research contributes to new facts and generalizations. It keeps the professional researcher abreast with the latest in their discipline.
- o Research creates an urge for taking further strides in one's discipline. It modifies all partial theories and helps dispel myths and antiquated practices by examining them on the anvil of scientific validity.
- o Research requires mastery over such processes as observing events with a clear vision, handling sophisticated research tools or equipment, knowledge of various research methods, treating data statistically, analyzing and interpreting results and writing research reports.

1.4 KEY WORDS:

- Research: The term research, to some means an attitude of enquiry. It is an honest, intelligent and exhaustive quest for facts. It is the quest for the unknown and also about the known. Research is done to reveal the secrets of this universe. Research is the process of arriving at dependable solutions of problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Research tries to find out the conditions under which certain phenomenon occurs. Research is an aspect of scientific quest and now has become a major discipline. It is a systematic way of collecting, classifying and analyzing information, either quantitative or qualitative.
- Requirements for Research: Research is the recording of controlled observations with an aim to develop generalizations, principles and

theories. Some of the equipments of a researcher are as follows: developed scholastics, accurate observation, integrity, willingness to spend long hours, and rational thinking.

- **Basic Research:** It is designed to add organized knowledge to the body of scientific knowledge. It does, not necessarily produce results of immediate practical value. It is either concerned with the formulation of theory or contributes to the existing body of knowledge. It is also termed as fundamental or pure research. Its chief concern is to discover knowledge for the sake of knowledge and not for the sake of application of the findings or even for their social usefulness. Simply put, basic research is generally done for academic purposes. **Applied Research:**
- **Applied research** aims at improving a theory, product or process. It is testing of theoretical concepts in specific problem situations. Its concern is with the solution of immediate problems. **Action Research:** Action research is not much concerned with the development of theory or its general application. It concerns itself with an immediate problem in a specific setting. Action research aims at improving the social reality. It's finding can be carried into effect by the administrator and sometimes, even the layman. Its emphasis, therefore, is on experience in which the administrator and the layman can participate creatively in the research process.
- **Characteristics of Research:** Research is objective and verifiable. The data collected can be tested and validated. Research involves an empirical process. It is based upon empirical evidence or observable experiences. It focuses on such problems as can be verified through empirical observation.
- **Research and Researcher:** Research enables one to think rigorously and critically. It trains researchers to carefully examine research evidence that is advanced for acceptance in variety of popular and scholarly applications. Research enables one to acquire skills and

techniques to study problems in specific social field situations. Without research, the development and discrimination of knowledge is not possible. Research contributes to innovative ideas necessary for professional competence.

- Benefits of Research: Research contributes to new facts and generalizations. It keeps the professional researcher abreast with the latest in their discipline. Research creates an urge for taking further strides in one's discipline. It modifies all partial theories and helps dispel myths and antiquated practices by examining them on the anvil of scientific validity.

1.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs):

- ❖ 1. What do you mean by media research? Discuss the role and importance of media research.
- ❖ 2. Discuss the various types of media research in detail.
- ❖ 3. Why is media research required? Discuss.

MEDIA RESEARCH Lesson: 2

MEDIA RESEARCH - ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

- ❖ 2.0 Objectives
- ❖ 2.1 Introduction
- ❖ 2.2 Presentation of Content
 - ❖ 2.2.1 Media Research: An Introduction
 - ❖ 2.2.2 Social Research and Media Research Differentiated
 - ❖ 2.2.3 Feedback and Feed Forward Studies

❖ 2.2.4 Media Research as a Tool of Reporting

❖ 2.3 Summary

❖ 2.4 Key Words

❖ 2.5 Self-Assessment-Questions (SAQs)

➤ **2.0 OBJECTIVES:** In this lesson we shall broadly discuss about media research. The specific objectives of this lesson are:

- To Get An Introduction to Media Research o To Differentiate Between Social Research and Media Research
- To understand Feedback and Feed Forward Studies
- o To Know How to Use Media Research as a Tool of Reporting

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

- Media research is the study of the social, psychological and physical aspects and effects of the different mass media. For example, how much time do people spend with a particular medium? Whether it has the effect of bringing about changes in the perspectives of people? Does the use of medium have any harmful effects? Whether these effects are because of technology or the programme contents. What the media users want and expect to hear or read or see and experience?
- In this connection it is also researched whether a medium can provide information and entertainment to more and different types of people. In what way, new technology can be used to improve or enhance the sight or sound of the medium? How is it possible to change the content or programming to make it more valuable effective and entertaining?

- In this lesson, we shall discuss about various aspects of media research.

2.2 PRESENTATION OF CONTENT:

The content of this lesson shall be presented as follows:

- Media Research: An Introduction
- Social Research and Media Research Differentiated
 - o Feedback and Feed Forward Studies
 - o Media Research as a Tool of Reporting

2.2.1 MEDIA RESEARCH- AN INTRODUCTION:

Media research includes a whole range of study about the development of media, their achievements and effects. It includes the methods used in collecting and analyzing information with regard to newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, Cinema or other mass media. It also concerns with an expanded discussion of the scientific methods of research. While studying any medium of communication we may ask series of questions.

- What is the nature of the medium?
 - o How does it work?
 - o What technology does it involve? o How is it different or similar to any other media in any ways?
 - o What function and/or services does it provide?
 - o How much does it cost?
 - o Who will have access to the new medium?

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- Is this medium effective? o Can its performance be improved?

We have been discussing about too many questions. Well, that is what research is all about. A researcher has to have a highly inquisitive mind full of questions as he or she tries to find valid answers to these questions. Research is a never-ending process. A research project, which is originally designed to answer one series of questions, may finally give rise to a new set of questions no one had thought of before.

If we take radio, there can be several studies this medium

- ◆ On the uses of radio: What specific moods radio listening generates?
- ◆ o Effect of radio,
- ◆ o Improvement in the broadcasting technologies.

During World War I, Harold Lasswell studied the nature of propaganda from a stimulusresponse point of view. He thought that media could exert very powerful influence over their audiences. Some experts were of the opinion that mass communication, to be effective, need only transmit messages to an audience. By doing so they would produce preplanned and almost universal effect. This concept was later named as the Hypodermic Needle Model of Communication. The model is deficient in one very significant respect that it did not take into account the individual differences among people. A lot of media related research is done for practical application purposes. From the fifties and sixties, advertisers have

been using media research to devise ways to persuade potential customers to buy products and services. As a result, a large number of media studies were conducted on message effectiveness. Demography, and size of audience, role of advertising in achieving higher degree of acceptance and sell, frequencies of message to persuade potential customers and selection of media that best suited to reach the target audience were some of the advertising related media research areas. In the seventies and eighties, a new trend in media research set in. Several studies focused on the effects of the media on the public, including the effects on children. Many investigations relating to violence and sexual content in television programmes come in this category. Researchers also studied the positive and pro-social as well as the negative and antisocial effects of television. The competition among different media for audience-share and advertising revenue has led to the growth of research. Now media research has grown to be highly sophisticated. It utilizes long-range plans. Research is, in a way, a tool in the management-by-objective process. There is an increasing dependency on data to support the decision-making process. Even programme producers also seek relevant research data to develop the creative side of their programmes. Mass media are now heading towards audience fragmentation and massive demassification has set in. To survive, the media requires information about the consumer's changing tastes and values, about shifts in demographic pattern. Finally, media need to understand the various trends in life styles of target audiences: As a result of audience fragmentation in the mass media there is a keener focus on trend studies concerning new behaviour patterns. Besides, there is also a trend towards image studies, which investigate how people perceive media and their environment. Then there is also a shift towards segmentation studies, which provide explanation of types or groups of people. Now in the area of media research, these types of researches are conducted which were previously considered the sole preserve of marketing, psychology and

sociology. In recent years, mass media research included the various psychological and sociological aspects of mass media. For example, many studies are conducted on the psychological and emotional responses to television programmes and music played and broadcast by radio and television. Today in media research, computer modeling and other sophisticated computer analysis including multimedia applications have become commonplace.

2.2.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEDIA RESEARCH AND SOCIAL RESEARCH:

The difference between media research and social science research are in fact one way of looking at two related phenomena, namely, society and media. Both rely on the careful systematic collection and analysis of data. Both strive for objectivity while recognizing the importance of personal interpretation by experienced professionals in the respective fields. Most often they employ the same methods for data gathering and analysis. The real difference lies in the purpose. The media research aims at keeping the public informed about the events deemed important by them. On the contrary, social scientists are interested in understanding and explaining human social behaviour. Their focus is on grasping how social institutions including mass media institutions functions in actual terms. Some social scientists are more concerned with practical problems rather than developing abstract, theoretical understanding. While both are interested in generating knowledge, the primary goal of media research is communicate it. Many studies conducted by media expert and social scientists are complementary to each other. They help us to understand modern societies. They tell us a lot about what is happening in the society and in the media. They also inform us about the effect of the news media on public opinion and politics. Media research can help us understand the ways in which media can meet the needs of the audience. The answer to the above question can help us manage media organizations much better from a business

point of view. It can make the media more socially responsible, particularly if communication professionals and media consumers become more aware about the problems the society is facing at present. This will help them make better decisions not only to manage and regulate the media effectively, but also to insightfully deal with social and political issues. Since social sciences deal with issues more generally by using, social scientific approaches, it will not answer most of the immediate questions. However, it can provide important insights about the goings on in the society. Media research both reflects and helps shape our perceptions of the appropriate roles of media professionals, media institutions, groups and public figures. It helps teach us what issues are important. It provides us with adequate information to form opinions. The influence of media on modern societies is very powerful but it is not a oneway. Social sciences research also affects the mass media and media organizations, particularly in contexts like- social values and cultural legacies. Social sciences research can also help us understand how different government are influencing media. The other important areas covered are how the media influence our thinking, what role they play in everyday life and how media institutions vary from society to society. These are all important and meaningful areas of research. The methods to study the media have been borrowed from social sciences like Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology, etc. Empirical methods, widely used in Economics, are very much in use in today's media research. Media research, like social science research, uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. It uses qualitative and interpretative methods to summarize findings in words. It uses quantitative or statistical methods to summarize findings in numbers. The impact of communication research as in case of the role of the electronic media on problem of intercultural communication including that between subcultures in modern multi ethnic societies have been extended to a great extent as a result of the use of social scientific methods. Media technologies like computers have also

contributed a lot to changes in the society. At a functional level, these technologies are used to produce desktop published materials, as a new commercial mass medium in the form of videotext, and are direct links between individuals in the form of electronic mail. The electronic networks are creating communities that are physically dispersed across a country or around the world, but are connected through machines. These computer and Internet-linked virtual societies with new kinds of experiences have created an important area of research. This is what a growing number of today's social scientists and media researchers are exploring. There is an increasing use of computers and other technologies for communication research. From research design preparation, to data collection, to tabulation, to data analysis, these modern technologies are being increasingly used. Other areas in which both social scientists and media researchers are interested pertain to the relationships among gender and ethnic stereotypes. They are concerned with the portrayals of these groups in the mass media. Also they study this issue with a focus on the impacts of media across national and cultural boundaries. Both media researchers and social scientists are focusing on the ways to increase the diversity and representativeness with a view to enriching the context of democracy itself. Media and social sciences research are also concerned with the ever-growing relationship between media and society as a result of the introduction of new technologies. How the both disciplines will respond to this new challenge and in what areas they both will develop to achieve a higher understanding of the human self and society is a pivotal question.

2.2.3 FEEDBACK AND FEEDFORWARD STUDIES:

Communication, by definition, is a two-way process. It is a co-operative and a joint effort. It is a mutual experience. It is an

exchange between two parties- a sender and receiver. For the communication experience to become complete, what we need is a response to the message of the communicator. That response, when it reaches back the sender, is called feedback. In interpersonal Communication, the sender and receiver interact naturally, directly and immediately. They constantly interchange roles- as sender and receiver. But in mass communication, the situation is different. The response of the audience becomes meaningful only if it reaches the sender. The different means of feedback include writing a letter, making a phone-call or sending an e-mail or SMS, canceling a subscription, etc. Turning of the TV set is a reaction. But it does not reach the sender. In view of the distance, time and space between the communicator and the audience, mass communication feedback is indirect, delayed, often cumulative and rarely representative. Thus media organizations try to collect feedback on their own. But the process of collecting feedback is immensely time consuming, and involves enormous expenses. The audiences of the mass media are usually very large. Any feedback to be worthwhile has to come from a representative sample of the total population. It must be statistically represent the feelings and actions of the total audience. Sampling (borrowed from the social sciences) is a statistically valid technique; this is used extensively in mass communication survey research. Sampling represents a portion of the population and is used to collect detailed responses. The telephone provides immediate feedback because it can tell what an individual is doing at the time of phone call. This method is fast simple and inexpensive. Telephone recall is another method, which is used for collecting audience data, primarily for programme viewing on TV. Then there is the diary method. Here respondents keep record of their own or their family's use of media. It gives detailed information about viewers' habits and consumers' behaviour. Also there is the mechanical device called the audiometer or the people's meter that records the minute-by-minute use of the TV sets. It supplies the information whether the set is on and the

station or channel to which it is tuned. However, it does not provide data about who the viewers are, or how many of them are watching.

FEED FORWARD:

___Another important aspect of media research is feed forward. This involves collection and interpretation of information about media contents before they are published or broadcast. One technique used for this is preview theatre. Here random samples of people are shown various TV programmes and advertisements, etc., in a theatre. They are made to respond to the messages by pushing buttons or turning dials signaling like or dislike feelings. This method provides data that show how people react at different stages of the message, not simply at the end. This method is also used in motion picture "previews." The methods also employed in sophisticated ways involving detailed audience questionnaires and follow up interviews with selected audiences. While the diary method and the mechanical device (people meter) provide delayed feedback, personal interviews and telephone surveys are used as a speedy method of having broadcast audience information.

2.2.4 MEDIA RESEARCH AS A TOOL OF REPORTING:

Media research makes use of scientific methods of research. It aims at providing an objective, unbiased evaluation of data. First the research problem is identified, and then a prescribed set of procedures of research is followed to investigate the problem. Only thereafter comes report of the findings. Viewed thus, media research is an objective and systematic way of collecting information. News reporting on the other hand, tries to collect information and present them in an objective and fair manner. The objectives of both media research and news reporting are the same. The difference lies in the processes involved. Media research uses more stringent and severe data collection and data analysis methods. So media research is often used as a tool of reporting. Major examples of this include news

reporting based on surveys, opinion polls, pre-poll surveys, exit polls, etc. When media research methodology and related tools are used for news reporting, it is called precision journalism. Researchers after identifying and developing a problem or topic for investigation may give their attention to several potential sources for data. This may include a critical analysis of everyday situations and background material already available. This is done to achieve a clear perspective and make a concise presentation of results. One needs select an appropriate method of analysis. They have to be wary of potential sources of error that may creep into the findings. They need to consider, like a good investigative reporter, every plausible alternatives and explanations. Only after making a thorough evaluation of all the data and hypotheses that these may be reported. The media researcher may be a detached observer, or a participant in the process under study. He may undertake field observation, focus groups, intensive interviews or case studies. All these methods and tools help the researcher to gather necessary data concerning the research questions. These methods provide the researcher in-depth information. Even extremely detailed information can be obtained from a small set of respondents by following in the method of intensive interviewing. Due to the advances in computer technology, computers have come to play a useful role in mass media research. Computers have become a significant tool of research. Computers play multiple roles in gathering and evaluating of data, and also in preparing sophisticated graphic presentations and preparation of models. Both writing a research report and news reporting follow almost the same process. The only difference is in the analysis in research. Writings in the media are important for scientific research. This is because the news reports place research studies in the public domain for perusal and validation. No research is complete with only information. It is essential to have facts and also in-depth interpretation of facts. This necessitates the adoption and application of various steps of media

research that are highly reliable. News reporting, particularly, investigative reporting is almost like research. For even the so-called fair and objective account of occurrences may be misleading, if not carefully investigated and analyzed. Sometimes it is not enough to report facts truthfully. It has become now necessary to report the interpretation of the facts. That is because mere straight reporting of the facts, while essential, may not always be sufficient. This is because data is sometimes doctored or manipulated by vested interests. Many tactics are adopted to divert the attention of the reporters, even though pictures and sound bytes from cameras and microphones from the real story support them. Those who wish to express their particular point of view manipulate the news media to communicate their own ideas or ideologies. To balance the use and abuse of views, the media people must also use analysis and interpretation as is done in media research. By doing so, facts can be put into proper perspective in order to tell what it mean, to explain, to assure, and to persuade the target audience. Now the new trend among journalists is to bring their interpretation in to the new stories they report. This trend is a departure from the traditional practice that news and opinion should be kept separate. The reporters, in the early days, were not expected to editorialize, or to express ideas, opinion and feelings about what happened. Rather, reporters were expected to tell simply what happened. But now blurring of facts and opinion in mass media reporting has become very common. Radio and TV face a special problem in being used for interpretation and analysis, Earlier, it was held that broadcasting was such a powerful medium that it should only report facts and should not be allowed to influence the opinion. This situation no longer exists. Now, the editorial function of broadcasting is regulated through the so-called fairness doctrine. This requires that when a station presents one side of a controversial issue of public importance, the opposing view must also get a reasonable coverage. Media research as a tool of reporting can also be used in a variety of others ways in which mass media are

used to provide interpretation and analysis of the world in which we live in. Now while reporting there has to be a greater emphasis on telling the audience more about an occurrence than the mere fact it has happened. Historical background and perspective has also to be given. Many facts need further explanation, amplification and clarification. The mass media are increasingly having their own specialists among their reporting staff. They are the people who are expected to know as much about their subjects and also analyze and interpret. In reporting about a complex or controversial matter they can add their own expert opinion to enable the audience to have a fuller understanding of the situation. Even the wire services, which once depended on straight objective news reporting, are now making more use of background and interpretative reports. Most of the news agencies and syndicates have many special reporters to carry out in-depth investigations of complicated and vital issues and concerns of the people. They are under no deadline pressures forcing them to write a quick and superficial report of the facts. They have to get behind the facts in order to explore the various ramifications and meanings of the facts. Their chief concern is to reveal the truth about events, etc. This is how media research has become an important tool of reporting.

2.3 SUMMARY:

- Media research is the study of the social, psychological and physical aspects and effects of the medium. In this connection it is researched whether a medium can provide information and entertainment to more and different types of people. In what way, new technology can be used to improve or enhance the sight or sound of the medium?
- o In media research, we ask different questions including the following: What is the nature of the medium? How does it work? What technology does it involve? How is it different or similar to any other media in any ways? What function and/or services does it

provide? How much does it cost? Who will have access to the new medium? Is this medium effective? Can its performance be improved?

- o Harold Lasswell studied the nature of propaganda from a stimulus-response point of view, during World War I. He thought that media could exert very powerful influence over their audiences. Some experts thought to be effective mass communicators need only transmit messages at an audience. By doing so they would produce preplanned and almost universal effect.
- o The competition among different media for audience and advertising-revenue has led to the growth of research. Now media research has grown to be highly sophisticated. It utilizes long-range plans. It is in a way management the objectives. There is an increasing dependency on data to support the decision process. Even programme producers also seek relevant research data to develop the creative side of their programmes.
- o There are many similarities between media research and social science research. Both rely on the careful systematic collection and analysis of data. Both strive for objectivity while recognizing the importance of personal interpretation by experienced professionals in the respective fields. Most often both media research and social science research employ the same methods for data gathering and analysis. Many studies conducted by media expert and social scientists are complementary to each other. o There are some differences between media research and social science research. The real difference lies in the purpose. The media research aims at keeping the public informed about the events deemed important by them. On the contrary, social scientists are interested in understanding and explaining human social behaviour.
- o Media research, like social science research, uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. It uses qualitative and interpretative

methods to summarize findings in words. It uses quantitative or statistical methods to summarize findings in numbers.

- o Media research as a tool of reporting can also be understood in a variety of others ways in which mass media are used to provide interpretation and analysis of the world in which we live in. Now while reporting there has to be a greater emphasis on telling the audience more about an occurrence than the mere fact it has happened. Historical background and perspective has also to be given. Many facts need further explanation, amplification and clarification. The mass media are increasingly having their own specialists among their reporting staff. They are the people who are expected to know as much about their subjects and also analyze and interpret.

2.4 KEY WORDS:

Media Research: Media research includes a whole range of study about the development of media, their achievements and effects. It includes the methods used in collecting and analyzing information with regard to newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, Cinema or other modern and traditional media of communication. Research in

Advertising: From the fifties and sixties, advertisers have been using media research to devise ways to persuade potential customers to buy products and services. As a result, a large number of media studies were concerned with message effectiveness. Demography, and size of audience, role of advertising in achieving higher degree of acceptance and sell, frequencies of message to persuade potential customers and selection of media that best suited to reach the target audience were some of the major media research areas. Technology in Media Research: Media technologies have also contributed a lot to

media research. There is an increasing use of computers for communications. They are used to produce desktop published materials, as a new commercial mass medium in the form of videotext, and are direct links between individuals in the form of electronic mail. Feedback Research: The audiences of the mass media are usually very large. Any feedback to be worthwhile has to come from a representative sample of the total population. A common method is the survey. The telephone provides immediate feedback because it can tell what an individual is doing at the time of phone call. This method is fast simple and inexpensive. Feed-forward Research: Feed-forward research involves collection and interpretation of information about media contents before they are published or broadcast. This method is provides data that show how people would react to the message when it finally reaches them. This method also employed in sophisticated ways involving detailed audience questionnaires and follow up interviews with selected audiences. Researcher in Media Research: The media researcher may be a detached observer, or a participant in the process under study. He may undertake field observation, focus groups, intensive interviews or case studies. All these help to gather necessary data concerning the research questions. These provide the researcher in depth information.

2.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (SAQs):

- ❖ 1. Discuss the role of media research.
- ❖ 2. Discuss the functions of media research.
- ❖ 3. Discuss media research as a tool for reporting.