SUMMARY

SIMPLE WORDS ABOUT RESEARCH DESIGN

by Yanee Sooksmiti

This is an article concerning Research Methodology in an epistolary form from a graduate student at our Institute of Public Administration to his brother.

At the outset, the writer says, a student must acquaint himself with certain facts inherent in the conducting of Research, namely that it is both a science and an art and that the terminology employed must be clearly grasped before any attempt is made to delve deeply into the subject components. This is true because "common sense" interpretations and "technical or scientific" interpretations may be poles apart. The term "concept", for example, may well illustrate this point. In all probability, a layman's interpretation of this word is more vague and consequently more simple than that of a research analyst. "Democracy" and "social structure" are other terms which pose similar problems.

The writer then goes on to discuss "problematic situations". Related to problematic situations is of course problem-solving. To solve a problem, one must first seek its relationships with the pertinent variables and conditional factors. Incidentally, the word "variable" is one of the most common, as well as one of the most important, in the domain of research. "Variables" might be independent, predictable, explanatory, dependent, resultant, etc., each of which elaborates or clarifies the problem in question.

In "research operations", one must also familiarise oneself with the meanings and significance of certain terms involved. "unit of analysis", "sample" and "population" are among those that warrant close scrutiny.

Before embarking upon any research programme, one must determine first and foremost its objectives and these should be set out most clearly. Then follows the quest for facts and figures of the subject matter. To acquire such data demands not only appropriate statistical techniques but also experience and skills.

"Property" is another research term widely used, for it deals with the matter which is at the base of any research project. A subject matter in research possesses "properties" not dissimilar to those of matter in the field of chemistry. On them are based relevant "hypotheses". In research, immense significance is attached to hypotheses. Hypotheses that do not reflect, or emanate from, an authentic situation may render a research project not only futile as a fact-finding instrument but also harmful as a means of remedying certain undesirable situations or of solving problems. Hypotheses in turn are influenced by "variables"–a term mentioned earlier in this article.

The writer then introduces another aspect of research, namely a "research design". This is a measure which determines plans, methods or techniques to be employed in the execution of a research project. It takes into consideration related surveys and data, and insures that the integral parts of the project are being co-ordinated and made use of effectively and economically. A research design takes innumerable forms. They may be historical or documentary, descriptive, experimental, survey, explanatory, ex post-facto, etc.

Mention is also being made of the indispensability of libraries in the conduct of research programmes.

Summarized by **Patom Jarnson**