

## **IMPORTANCE OF CASE STUDY METHOD IN SOCIAL & HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

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### **Abstract :**

**Case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. Case studies have been used in various investigations, particularly in sociological and historical studies increasingly. The case study method is a widely used systematic field research technique in sociology these days. The purpose for introducing this method is to conduct social investigation. Nowadays, anthropologists, historians, novelists and dramatists were using this method concerning problems pertaining to their areas of interests. Even management experts use case study methods for getting clues to several management problems. Case study method is being used in several disciplines. Not only this, its use is increasing day by day. This research paper deals with the meaning , scope, features and many other aspects of case study method.**

**Keywords:** Methodology, Investigation, Instruction, Anthropologists, Historians.

### **Introduction-**

The case study method takes a situation as given and tries to find out what it particularly means to the participants. Commonly, case studies are associated with qualitative research but often they combine different research techniques they can illuminate quantitative findings and can incorporate quantitative data.

Most social work adheres to quantitative methods. These methods are based on a view of the world called positivism. According to Mark, there is an objective world which exists independent of the observer and that it is governed by universal laws that can be understood by scientists using positivistic methods.

In recent years, social work researchers have criticized this positivistic approach because ‘ quantitative research is not a synonymous with scientific reasoning’ and it was also held that this view distorts and trivializes reality. In applied settings particularly not all problems lend themselves to quantification and computer manipulation. social workers deal with living human beings, therefore human, experience, initiative and emotion need greater attention in our research reports. According to some Scholars, the origins of the idea of case study can be traced to social workers using case history in social case work.

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**Concept of Case study:**

A case is a short description, in words and numbers, of an actual social situation.

A case is a story. Cases recounts objectively and meticulously as possible real (or realistic) events or problems so that students experience the complexities ambiguities and uncertainties confronted by the original participants in the case .

The name case study is a blanked term describing a selection of facts. Either fictitious or drawn from real life, describing a technical or human relation situation usually in an industrial or social setting . It is a segment of history or a piece of reporting and like both history and journalism depends on selection and condensation for its effects.

A case is really distinct from a literary piece. Rather being an example, it has a structure or a series of structure. It has a time structure, and presents sequence of events over the time. Structures may relate to technical. Economic, social, political factors and may present technical, socio-economic. Financial and political details of the organization or the environment .

**Types of Case study research :-**

The term case study is used to identify a specific form of enquiry, notably , which contrasts with two other main stream methods of social research, that is , experimental Research and the social survey. Whether the study is experimental or quasi-experimental, the data collection and analysis methods are known to hide

some details. Case studies, on the other hand, are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data. The term “case study” is often used loosely, as an impressive but redundant synonym for “study”. But the difference between a case study and a study is methodologically significant. Indeed, the distinction helps to clarify the nature of comparative research itself.

According to Lwis, one of the defining features of a case study is its multiplicity of perspectives rooted in a specific contexts. Brewer and Hunter identified six types of units, which can be chosen for doing case study.

**They are:**

1. Individuals
2. Attributes of individuals
3. Actions and interactions
4. Residues and artefacts of behaviour
5. Settings, Incidents and events
6. Collectives

Social science researcher requires theoretical aspect as well as practical aspect. The case method can efficiently improve understanding of the socio-economic and cultural process. It helps to enhance students’ competence by studying, contemplating and discussing actual situation. A case is a short description, in words and numbers, of an actual social situation. Case recounts as objectively and meticulously as possible real (or realistic) events or problems so that students experience the complexities,

ambiguities and uncertainties confronted by the original participants in the case.

**Features of Case Method:**

The rigorous analysis of a case develops the skills of logical thinking, searching for relevant information, analyzing, evaluating facts and drawing conclusions for socio-economic and historic research.

The case study methodology has been subjected to scrutiny and criticism at various times since the 1930's. As a research tool, it has not been a choice that is listed in the major research texts in the social sciences. However, case study is a reliable methodology when executed with due care. The literature, while not extensive, contains specific guidelines for researchers to follow in carrying out case studies. CSR is focused on describing, understanding, predicting, and controlling the individual (i.e. process, animal, person, household, organization, group, industry, culture, or nationality).

**Advantages of case study research:**

1. Being an exhaustive study of a social unit, the case study method enables us to understand fully the behaviour pattern of the concerned unit.

2. Through case study a researcher can obtain a real and enlightened record of personal experiences which would reveal man's inner strivings, tensions and motivations that drive him to action along with the forces that direct him to adopt a certain pattern of behaviour.

3. This method enables the researcher to trace out the natural history

of the social unit and its relationship with the social factors and the forces involved in its surrounding environment.

4. The method facilitates intensive study of social units which is generally not possible if we use either the observation method or the method of collecting information through schedules. This is the reason why case study method is being frequently used, particularly in social researches.

5. This method is a means to well understand the past of a social unit because of its emphasis of historical analysis. Besides, it is also a technique to suggest measures for improvement in the context of the present environment of the concerned social units.

6. Case study method enhances the experience of the researcher and this in turn increases his analysing ability and skill.

7. This method makes possible the study of social changes. On account of the minute study of the different facets of a social unit, the researcher can well understand the social change then and now. This also facilitates the drawing of inferences and helps in maintaining the continuity of the research process. In fact, it may be considered the gateway to and at the same time the final destination of abstract knowledge.

8. Case study techniques are indispensable for therapeutic and administrative purposes. They are also of immense value in taking decisions regarding several socio-economic and cultural problems. Case data are quite useful for

diagnosis, therapy and other practical case problems.

**Limitations of case study research:**

1. Case situations are seldom comparable and as such the information gathered in case studies is often not comparable. Since the subject under case study tells history in his own words, logical concepts and units of scientific classification have to be read into it or out of it by the investigator.

2. Read Bain does not consider the case data as significant scientific data since they do not provide knowledge of the “impersonal, universal, non-ethical, non-practical, repetitive aspects of phenomena.” Real information is often not collected because the subjectivity of the researcher does enter in the collection of information in a case study.

3. The danger of false generalisation is always there in view of the fact that no set rules are followed in collection of the information and only few units are studied.

4. It consumes more time and requires lot of expenditure. More time is needed under case study method since one studies the natural history cycles of social units and that too minutely.

**Concluding Remarks:-**

To sum up, it can be stated that the case study research is gaining popularity among Social Work researchers in spite of the criticism about its limitations for generalization and to establish casual relationships. this is because of the increased recognition of its use of capturing emotive aspects of human behavior ,which is crucial in social work Research and

practices. as a result, case study is assuming greater importance as a method, which could reduce the divide between practice and research.

The method usually involves the examination of one or possibly two or three particular cases in-depth and holistically. A case study can take months or even years to complete, which allows mature consideration of the findings, correction of mis- understandings , feeling of gaps in the data, investigation of new ideas arising from the data and longitudinal view. This last feature can be a considerable advantage over surveys and experiments, which typically are one -off methods. This is a practical and interesting research method that can teach you many different research techniques simultaneously.

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