

It rationale of  
questions: the  
originating question



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

It is the difficulty or problem which guides our search for some order among the facts in terms of which the difficulty is to be removed. In fact, the formulation of a research problem is more important than its solution.

However, every problem is not a research problem.

R. L. Merton has discussed the following three principal components of a research problem: 1. Originating the questions 2. Rationale of questions 3. Specifying questions.

### **1. The Originating Question:**

The questions represent the beginning of certain difficulties which formulate in such specific terms so as to indicate where exactly the answers to them can be searched for in a research problem.

The originating questions are based on the fundamental objectives of the present research. These questions are the first problem in the formulation of research. They discover new and more decisive facts giving rise to the problem at hand. Some social facts explain the problem that exists but these facts may be superficial and not real.

The originating questions differ in their scope as well as in their degree of specificity. There is no uniformity in the originating questions. They are of different kinds and emanate from different sources.

Some are of descriptive facts, some are of certain concepts, some are about observed empirical generalizations, some enquire into the sources of the observed patterns of social organization and others in to their consequences, etc.

**2. Rationale of Questions:**

The originating question is just one component of the research problem. Another one is the rationale of the question. It is also necessary to know the reasons behind the questions which are raised. The rationale states what will happen to other parts of knowledge if the question raised is answered. It is rightly said, some problems are worth more attention than others because by their solution the conceptual structure of science is put at risk". In short, the rationale states the case question in the court of scientific opinion.

The practical rationale of question is that its answers may be helpful in achieving certain practical values like health, comfort and productivity. It is evident that a particular question may have importance both for systematic knowledge and practical uses. Another aspect is theoretical rationale of the question which indicate that the answer to such a question would enlarge and add to the scope of existing theories and conceptual framework. A question may also be considered worth asking because its answer bridges the gaps between the existing theories and concepts. A question may be raised about the assumption that, Group equilibrium is a function of the extent to which group members conform to each other's expectations.

**3. Specifying Questions:**

The question which has originated the research must be specifically and very clearly stated. The objective of transforming the originating question into a series of observations in a particular situation requires a search for empirical materials through which the problem is to be investigated. No concrete situation or observation is strategic in itself.

It is the insight the researcher brings to the situation that makes it strategic. Specific questions can be precisely and successfully answered for the benefit of the society as a whole. In the final stage of the formulation of the research problem, the general question can be transformed into a series of specific questions. It indicates the types of situations that can afford the strategic observations to answer these questions.

If the question is nonspecific ambiguous, no solution or answer can be found out. Thus the question should be simple, precise, specific, clear and empirically verifiable. The more specific, the questions, the more will be the possibility of finding out a solution to a research problem.