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Law



It will be in order to begin by defining a research problem. A research problem is not the same thing as a social problem. A research problem is defined by intellectual curiosity while a social problem is defined by the values of a group.

A situation may be problematic for one group but it may not be so for another, depending on their differing value systems. Increase in incidence of crime may be a problem for social workers, but it may not be so for the underworld of criminals. For a researcher, on the other hand, it is not only the crime but also the law-abiding behaviour which constitutes a problem.

It is as important, and from an intellectual vantage point even more important, to ask why people adhere to law-abiding behaviour. In no sense is law-abiding behaviour a social problem. But it may be an important research problem. Thus a research problem is a cognitive phenomenon while a social problem is an evaluative one. This does not imply that a social problem cannot turn into a research problem. A social problem may turn into a research problem once it is so formulated by a researcher. What are some of the sources of finding a research problem? Taking a cue from the existing practices, one can immediately mention the following: (1) Research supervisor.

(2) Research literature. (3) Research funding agencies. It is well known that students desirous of pursuing research for a degree generally leave it to the supervisor to find and suggest a problem for them. This is so partly because they do not want to strain their mind and partly because they begin with a sense of total dependence on the supervisor. Whatever the reason, the fact

remains that most research students look up to the supervisor to get a research problem assigned to them. They seem to have hardly any interest of their own in the problem, let alone a sense of involvement in it.

The students who come up with a research problem on their own are more of an exception than a rule.