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## UNIT 2 THEORY AND RESEARCH\*

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this Unit, you should be able to understand:

- Detailed description of theory,
- Purpose and procedures in research, and
- Relationship between theory and research.

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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Theory has an important role in research and it is indispensable for research. In the course of research theories are used by researchers in different manner. Different researchers need different theories. However, some theoretical underpinnings are always present in most social research. The influence of theory is found to be more profound in explanatory than in descriptive research. The relationship between theory and research becomes pertinent as it determines the framework and rationale for the research undertaken. Research plays an important role in advancing the theoretical knowledge either by adding to the existing knowledge or by falsifying the existing knowledge on a particular topic or by bringing into existence new knowledge on unexplored domains. Development of theory depends on research and research relies upon theories, as latter guides

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the former in terms of the data required. Therefore, research is the means for progress of theory and is the method used to gather data required for the theory.

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## 2.2 WHAT IS A THEORY?

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A social theory is defined as a system of interconnected ideas that compresses and organises knowledge about the social world (*Neuman, 2007*). People are always creating new theories to talk about how the world works. People often use theories without making them explicit or labelling them as such. When an individual claim that lack of education causes poverty or that a decline in traditional moral values causes higher crime rates are expressing theories. Such theories of layman are less systematic, not formulated and hard to test with empirical evidence. Social theories are complicated when compared to layman's theory.

A theory is generally confused with speculation/hypothesis and thus remains speculation/hypothesis until it is proved. When the proof is made, theory becomes fact. Facts are thought to be definite, certain without questions and their meaning to be self evident. Theory refers to the relationships between facts or to the ordering of them in some meaningful way (*Goode & Hatt, 2006*). Theory serves to order and give meaning to facts. When facts are ordered, assembled and seen in a relationship they constitute a theory. Facts help to build theories, therefore theories are not speculation. The facts in a theory may be analysed logically and relationships other than those stated in a theory can be deduced. However, we cannot be sure of the correctness of such deduction. Such deduction can be termed as hypothesis. Hypothesis needs to be verified, when it is successfully verified it becomes part of a future theoretical construction. A theory and a hypothesis enjoys a very close relationship.

Almost all research involves some theory. However, the question is not about using theory rather how you should use it. Being explicit about the theory makes it easier to read someone else's work or to conduct the research. An awareness of how theory fits into the research process produces better designed, easier to understand and better conducted studies. Any research devoid of theoretical basis and based completely on empiricism is most of the time not accepted completely.

### 2.2.1 The Elements of Theory

The basic elements of building a theory are : 1) concepts 2) variables 3) statements, and 4) formats. Although there are diverse claims about what makes a theory these four elements are common to all of them.

#### a) Concepts

Theories are build from concepts. Concepts denotes phenomena. Concepts helps in isolating the feature of the world that are considered important at that instance. Concepts are structured form definitions. Definitions allows us to visualise the phenomenon that is denoted by the concept. It enables the researcher to see the same thing and to understand what it is that is being studied. Therefore, concepts used in building a theory tries to communicate the same meaning to all those who use them. In sociology, unlike in sciences, special symbols cannot be used to denote a concept, therefore the concept is defined as precisely as possible so

that it communicates the same meaning to all. Concepts of theory reveal abstractness.

### **b) Variables**

The concept of scientific theory should denote the variable features of the world. To understand events requires that we visualise how variation in one phenomenon is related to variation in another. In the physical sciences, variables are the characteristics of things which are physically manipulated. In social sciences it refers to attributes which are fixed for each thing but which are observed to be at different levels, amount or strength across samples and other aggregate groups. Variable measures a social construct like age, class etc in a way which renders it amenable to numerical analysis. The important feature of a variable is that it is capable of reflecting variations within population and is not a constant.

### **c) Statement and Formats**

The concepts of a theory must be connected to each other and this connection between concepts makes theoretical statements. These statements specify the way in which events represented by concepts are interrelated and at the same time, they provide an interpretation of how and why events should be connected to each other. When these theoretical statements are grouped together they constitute the theoretical formats<sup>1</sup>.

## **2.2.2 Theory and Ideology**

Confusion between theory and ideology arises because both explain similar events in the world and they can overlap in places. Theory is understood as essential for clarifying and building scientific knowledge while ideology is seen as hostile to science. However, both also have similarities. Theory and ideology both contain assumptions about the nature of the social world. They both focus on what is or is not important in it and contain a system of ideas or concepts and specify relations among the concepts (*Neuman, 2006*). Both explain why things are the way they are and what needs to be changed to alter conditions. An ideology is a quasi theory that lacks critical features required to be a true scientific theory. It has fixed, strong, and unquestioned assumptions. It is a belief system closed to contradictory evidence that uses circular reasoning. Ideologies selectively present and interpret empirical evidence. They use personal experience or conviction that fall short of a scientific approach. It is difficult to test ideological principles or confront them with opposing evidence. It cannot acknowledge contradictory evidences.

The difference between ideology and theory is important as it has implications for how an individual conducts research. A researcher can never show an ideology to its followers. On the other hand a researcher is free to test a theory or its parts and show them to be false. Theory can be tested with empirical evidences and look at relevant evidences both that support and oppose the theory. Theories are always growing or developing to higher levels. Theories that fail to develop are replaced by other theories. Theories do not claim to have all the answers. A theory is composed of an assumption and concepts. Concepts vary from one another by their level of abstraction.

### 2.2.3 The Way of Theorising

Theorising can take place in two ways deductive and inductive. Theories can be tested and build from two directions. First from abstract thinking, connecting ideas and empirical evidences in a logical manner. Since it moves from the theoretical proposition to the concrete evidences it is also called the 'waterfall' approach. Second on the basis of empirical evidences, which is used to generalise and used to generate abstract ideas. Since this approach moves in the direction of abstract from the concrete it is also called the 'climbing the hill' approach.

### 2.2.4 Focus of Theory

Researchers construct, elaborate and test and verify substantive and formal theories. Substantive theory focuses on a particular content or topic area in social reality. For example it can be about family relations, delinquent behaviour or racial ethnic relations. Formal theory focuses on general processes or structures that operate across multiple topic areas. For example a formal theory might be about forming a social identity, engaging in conflict, or exercising power. The two focuses can intersect.

Each theoretical focus has its own strength. Substantive theory offers powerful explanations for a topic area because it is tailored to it and incorporates rich details from specific settings, process or events. Nonetheless, substantive theory is often difficult to generalize to different topic areas. Compared to formal theory substantive theory employs concepts at lower levels of abstraction and narrower scope, which makes it harder to connect across diverse topics and build general knowledge. Formal theory's strength is its ability to operate and build bridges across multiple topics, which advances more general knowledge. Its weakness is that it is less attached to specific settings and may require adjustments to be applied a particular issue or topic. Formal theories help researchers recognise and explain similar features that operate across several researchers find them easier to elaborate into more complex forms, compare and connect ideas from several theories and express the theory in a very logical or purely analytical form.

### 2.2.5 Range of Theorising

Theorising can be done in two ways, the deductive and the inductive technique. However, the theoretical statements vary by range. Range of theorising can be understood with the help of empirical generalisation, middle range theory and theoretical frameworks or systems. Empirical generalization is one such which is a narrow statement that mostly relies on concrete concepts and fits into a substantive theory. It is a descriptive statement about the relationship of facts that are believed to operate empirically. It is a narrow quasi-theoretical statement that expresses empirical patterns or describe empirical regularities using concepts that are not very abstract.

On the other hand, 'middle range theory' has a broader theoretical range and uses more abstract concepts in a substantive or formal theory. It is the range most frequently used to guide research studies. It is a social theory between general frameworks and empirical generalisation that has limited abstraction/range and is in the form of empirically verifiable statements capable of being connected to observable phenomenon. Studies may elaborate or test parts of the

middle range theory, and accumulate empirical support for the theory and over time help the theory to advance as an explanation.

Theoretical Frameworks or Systems are the widest range and are at the opposite end of empirical generalization. It is more than a formal or substantive theory. It includes many specific formal and substantive theories that may share basic assumptions and general concepts in common. It is a very general theoretical system with assumptions, concepts and specific social theories. They are orientations to see and think about the social world. They provide assumptions, concepts and forms of explanations. Some frameworks are more oriented toward the micro (symbolic interactionism) level of analysis whereas others toward the macro (functionalism) level analysis. Studies rarely test or contrast entire frameworks.

### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What are the basic elements of theory?

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- 2) How does theory differ from ideology and what is its focus?

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## 2.3 WHAT IS RESEARCH?

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Research can be understood in various manners. It can be understood to refer to a specialised pursuit of knowledge and also to a general everyday problem solving situation. All such uses of the word however, is characterized by logical approach to investigation to know more about something. However, there is a difference between research and non-research activity. Writers have defined research in various ways. Here are some examples:

Research is a systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical proposition about the presumed relations among natural phenomena (*Kerlinger, 1996*).

Research is a procedure by which we attempt to find systematically and with the support of demonstrable facts, the answer to a question or the resolution of a problem (*Leedy, 1989*).

Research is a systematic and objective analysis and recording of observations that may lead to the development of a theory (*Best, 1992*).

These definitions of research reveal the nature of research and highlights two important aspects. First research investigation requiring solutions to a problem as in natural science or creation of new knowledge. Second they explicitly recognise the systematic nature of the research process in which data are gathered recorded analysed and interpreted in an organised and systematic manner. Research must ultimately meet the norms of scientific methods; immediately, the task is so to express requirements that they may have more direct bearing on the analytical work which is capable of being done (*Merton, 1972*). Research activities therefore aims to be planned, systematic and reliable ways of finding out or deepening understanding. Research is a knowledge building process. It generates new knowledge, which can be used for different purposes. It is used to build theories, develop policies, support decisions making and solving problems. Social science research can be thus divided into two fundamental types related to its purpose. They are basic and applied research.

Basic research advances the fundamental knowledge about the social reality. it focuses on disproving or proving theories that explain how the social reality functions, what makes thing happen, why social relations exist the way they are existing and why society changes. Basic research is the source of new scientific information and perception about the world. Its most important audience is the scientific community. Basic research do not produce knowledge that has the capacity to solve practical problem for which it is criticised by many. The questions asked by basic research are impractical. It seldom helps practitioners directly with their everyday concerns. But it produces knowledge which affects the thinking and understanding due to which it is the source of most of the tools that applied researchers use.

Applied Research or action-oriented research addresses a specific concerns or offer solutions to a problem. It does not connect to a larger theory, develop a long-term general understanding or carry out a large scale investigation that might span years. Applied researchers rely on a quick small scale study that provides practical results that people can use in the short-term. Business organisation, government offices, political organisation and many others conduct applied research to use the results to make decisions. Therefore, applied researchers need to be careful to translate finding from scientific technical knowledge into aa language used by non-specialist decision makers. Applied research may adopt different orientation towards research methodology. Applied research may compromise on scientific rigor to get quick usable results.

### Box 2.1: Types of Research

There are many specific types of applied research but the most important are of three types: the evaluation, action and social impact assessment.

- 1) **Evaluation Research:** It is the most widely used among the applied research. It is widely used in bureaucratic organisations, to find out whether a programme, a new way of doing something like a marketing campaign, a policy and so forth is effective or not. It uses several research techniques. If it can be used, the experimental technique is usually the most effective. Practitioners involved with a policy or programme may conduct evaluation

research for their own information or at the request of outside decision makers, who sometimes place limits on researchers by settings boundaries on what can be studied and determining the outcome of interest. Ethical and political conflict often arises in evaluation research. Two types of evaluative research are formative and summative. Formative evaluation is built in monitoring or continuous feedback on a programme used for programme management. Summative evaluation looks at final programme outcomes. Both are usually necessary.

- 2) **Action Research:** There are many forms of action research but most share common characteristics. Those who are being studied participate in the research process. It focuses on power with the aim of empowerment. It seeks to raise consciousness and awareness and is tied directly to political action. Action researchers try to equalise power relations between themselves and the subjects of research. They are value loaded and not value neutral. Action researchers assume that knowledge develops from experience, particularly the experience of socio-political action. They also assume that ordinary people can become aware of conditions and learn to take actions that can bring about improvement.
- 3) **Social Impact Assessment Research:** Its purpose is to estimate the likely consequences of a planned change. Such an assessment can be used for planning and making choices among alternative policies. Researchers conducting social impact assessment examine many outcomes and often work in an interdisciplinary research team. The impact on several areas can be measured or assessed.

*Source: Neuman, 2007*

### 2.3.1 The Nature and Purpose of Research

The purpose of research is to investigate about a particular subject that has significance for the researcher in order to discover a new subject or to verify the existing knowledge. The basic purpose of research is therefore to generate new knowledge. Research aims not only at merely describing a phenomenon and provide an explanation for them but goes beyond. Therefore the nature and purpose of research can be categorise as the following:

**Exploration:** Research explores the reality. By exploring we try to be familiar with the social issue or phenomenon. Exploration provides us with the insights into and an understanding of the problem confronting the researcher. If no one has written anything about a topic and you begin to work on it, then it is called an exploratory research. The goal of exploratory research is to formulate precise questions that future research can answer. It can be the first step in a sequence of studies. Exploratory research is also conducted to gather information to design and conduct more systematic and extensive study. Exploratory research should be creative open minded, and flexible and explore all sources of information. Exploratory research frequently use qualitative techniques for gathering data and they are less wedded to a specific theory or research questions.

**Description:** Descriptive research describes a situation or social settings. It begins with a well defined subject and conducts research to describe it accurately. Descriptive research focuses on how and who questions rather than explaining why something happens.

**Explanation:** Explanatory research tries to explain why something happened unlike the descriptive research. Some explanatory research develops a novel explanation and then provide empirical evidences to support the arguments. It is a research in which the primary purpose is to explain why events occur and to build elaborate, extend or test theory.

### 2.3.2 Procedures in a Research

There are a variety of ways to conduct a social science research. Each particular research will be unique in some ways because of the particular time and place in which it is conducted. However, the commonality is that all share the basic steps of conducting a research. They will all have a clearly stated research problem or the aim stated in terms of hypothesis. It will further have a research design to indicate how the data will be collected and analysed. Each project requires data collection, analysing data and interpreting data therefore the following stages in research can be discerned.

- 1) Choosing the research problem and stating the hypothesis
- 2) Formulating the research design
- 3) Collection of data
- 4) Coding and analysing data
- 5) Interpreting the results so as to be able to test the hypothesis

Each of these steps in research is dependent upon the others. you cannot analyse data without collecting it first. Research can therefore, be seen as a system of interdependent stages. The research process is best conceived as a circle. After completion of the study if the researcher feels that the study has been unsuccessful the researcher must return to the early stages of research to fulfil promise of the study. Analysis of data provides the researcher with knowledge useful for revising the hypothesis. Therefore, the researcher can reformulate the hypothesis but if he thinks that the hypothesis is well formulated then the researcher must do some more literature review and repeat the research.

When the research is completed it is advised to repeat the study exactly so as to demonstrate that the findings are not an accident or coincidence. When the study after repetition with different sample confirms the findings then it will support the contention that the hypothesis cannot be rejected. The exact repetition of a study is called replication. Therefore it becomes important to design the study in a manner that it can be replicated. However, very few studies in social sciences are replicated.

#### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) What is research? Discuss.

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## 2.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY AND RESEARCH

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### 2.4.1 The Bearing of Theory on Research

The term sociological theory has been used to refer to the products of several related but distinct activities. The varieties of activities have significantly different bearings on empirical social research. Merton characterises six different types of activities which have been together said to comprise a theory. They are : 1) methodology, 2) general sociological orientations, 3) analysis of sociological concepts, 4) post factum sociological interpretations, 5) empirical generalisations in sociology, and 6) sociological theory.

### 2.4.2 Methodology

It is important to differentiate between sociological theory and methodology. Theories are substantive while methodology is the logic of scientific procedures. Methodology is not particularly bound up with sociological problems, therefore they are not sociological in character. Researchers must be well versed with the use of methodology. They must be aware of the research design of the investigation, the nature of deduction and the requirements of a theoretical system. They must be aware of the difference between knowing how to test a hypothesis and to know from where to formulate the hypothesis ( the knowledge of theory to deduct the hypothesis). The focus has been on testing hypotheses therefore theory building has not been the primary task of sociologists (*Merton, 1972*). Since the focus has been on methodology, its purpose has been to guide and assess theoretical and empirical inquiries.

### 2.4.3 General Sociological Orientations

Such orientations only mention the types of variables which have been taken into consideration rather than specifying the causal relationships between the variables they provide the framework for empirical examination. The function of these orientation is to provide a general context for investigation and facilitate the process of arriving at hypothesis.

### 2.4.4 Analysis of Sociological Concepts

Concepts are definitions of what is to be observed, they are the variables between which empirical relationships are to be sought. The selections of correct concepts is very important for empirical inquiry. Research will not be fruitful if concepts which do not have relationships are selected. Therefore, conceptual clarification should clearly state the character of data that is included in the concept. Further, conceptual analysis resolve the contradiction in empirical findings and also maximises the comparability of the data to be included in research. Concepts define the situation and conceptual analysis helps to recognised to what the research is responding and which elements are being ignored. Similarly, the function of conceptual analysis is to organise observable categories of the social data with which empirical research is concerned.

### 2.4.5 Post Factum Sociological Interpretations

In social research the data are collected initially and then subjected to interpretations. In doing this interpretations happen only after the data is collected and the empirical testing of a pre-designated hypothesis does not happen, which a research should be doing. The explanations are consistent with the given set of observations and only those post factum hypotheses are selected which agree with these observations. This procedure is very flexible which obstructs nullification. Whatever the observation, new interpretation is always found to fit the facts.

### 2.4.6 Empirical Generalisation in Sociology

The objective of sociological theory is to arrive at social uniformities. However, there are two types of statements of sociological uniformities which differ significantly in their bearing on theory. The first is the isolated proposition summarising observed uniformities of relationship between two or more variables. The second is the scientific laws. The theoretical task and the orientation of empirical research toward theory, first begins when the bearing of former uniformities on a set of interrelated propositions is tentatively established. The notion of directed research implies that in part empirical inquiry is so organised that if and when empirical uniformities are discovered, they have direct consequences for theoretical system. In so far as the research is directed the rationale of findings is set forth before the findings are obtained.

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## 2.5 SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

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As has been mentioned above the second type of sociological generalisation is the scientific laws, and it is a statement of invariance derivable from a theory. The lack of such laws in sociology is the sign of the existing division of theory and empirical research. Despite sociology being rich in sociological theories and empirical research, there is still the absence of logical criteria of sociological theories. Drawing from Merton, to show the relations of empirical generalisations to theory and to view the functions of theory, it may be suitable to consider the example of Durkheim's study of suicide. It has been established that in a variety of population the Catholics have lower rate of suicide than the Protestants. This poses a theoretical problem, according to Merton, as this is only an empirical regularity which would become significant for theory only if it could be derived from a set of other propositions. If we restate this like:

- 1) Social cohesion provides psychic support to group members subjected to acute stresses and anxieties.
- 2) Suicide rates are functions of unrelieved anxieties and stresses to which persons are subjected.
- 3) Catholics have greater social cohesion than Protestants.
- 4) Therefore, lower suicide rates should be anticipated among Catholics than among Protestants (*Merton, 1972*).

This serves to locate the place of empirical generalisation in relation to theory and to illustrate the several functions of theory:

- 1) The theoretical importance is not present or absent in empirical generalisation but appears when the generalisation is conceptualised in abstraction of higher order which are embodied in more general statements of relationships.
- 2) The difference in suicide rate uniformities add confirmation to the set of proposition from which they are derived.
- 3) Reformulation of the empirical uniformities give rise to various consequences in the field of conduct quite different from that of suicidal behaviour. The conversion of empirical uniformities into theoretical statements increases the fruitfulness of research through the successive exploration of implications.
- 4) Theory provides a ground for predictions which is more valid than mere empirical extrapolation form previously observed trends.
- 5) If theory is to be productive, it must be sufficiently precise to be determinate. Precision is an integral element of the criterion of testability. Precision enhances the likelihood of approximating a crucial observation or experiment.

There is therefore a need for connecting theory and empirical research. The well thought-out empirical generalisation and post factum interpretations show the pattern of research which lacks theoretical orientations. The continuity between theory and empirical research can be achieved if empirical researches are theoretically oriented and theories are empirically confirmable. Therefore, in both the design and reporting of a research theoretical grounding of any hypothesis needs to be explicitly set forth. Attention should also be paid to the intervening variables which are not entailed in the formulation of the hypothesis and the bearing of these on the theory should be mentioned.

Post factum interpretation arises when new and unexpected relationships are discovered should be stated in a manner that the direction of future research becomes evident. This helps to control the introduction of unrelated interpretations.

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## **2.6 THE BEARING OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY**

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Sociologists have been working with theory and fact. This has led to the belief that theory and fact must interact and they do interact. This interaction between theory and empirical research is a two way process and theories influence empirical research. Theory helps in initiating designs and presenting of empirical research. Empirical Research on the other hand helps in the development of social theories.

One of the important function of empirical research is to test and verify hypothesis, by confirming or refuting it. However, empirical research goes much beyond testing and verifying theory, it performs four major functions it initiates, it reformulates, it deflects and it clarifies theory. These functions helps in shaping and development of a theory.

- 1) Under certain conditions research findings give rise to theory. This may be called the serendipity component of the research. It is by chance getting a result which was not sought during the course of the research. Serendipity pattern refers to unanticipated, unexpected anomalous and strategic datum which leads to developing a new theory or for extending an existing theory. It is unanticipated because it occurs by chance while testing one hypothesis and has bearing on the theory. It is anomalous because it seems inconsistent with the existing theory or with other established facts. Therefore it pushes forward the research further. It is strategic because it has a bearing on the generalised theory. The serendipity pattern then involves the unanticipated, anomalous and strategic datum which exerts pressure upon the investigator for a new direction of inquiry which extends theory.
- 2) Empirical research invites the extension of theory when neglected facts are repeatedly observed. It therefore leads to the reformulation of the research as the new variable which till now had not been included in the conceptual framework is introduced in the scheme of analysis. These data are important but had not been included in the conceptual framework, and when it occurs frequently it necessitates its inclusion in the conceptual framework which requires the reformulation of the research. Empirical research therefore pressurises theory to be re-casted.
- 3) Empirical research also affects, not just a particular theory but also more general trends in the development of theory. This happens when new ways of doing research are invented which in turn tends to change the foci of theoretical interests to the growing points of research. A good theory relies on good facts and newly invented methods helps us to provide good facts. When new methods provides us with new data and facts it can encourage new hypothesis and other hypotheses may also be put to test with the help of these new research techniques. The creation of sociological statistics can be seen as the most direct impact of research procedures on theory. Early statistical data were not sociological and it was pre collected and not set in sociological categories important for theoretical system. Therefore sociologists had to do with makeshift data which had high chances of error, due to which theories could not make much progress.
- 4) Theorising deals with clarifying concepts. Research activated by interest in methodology pays attention to design research in a manner that it establishes a causal relationship between variables without actually analysing the variables. This is what characterises large part of theories today. When researches does not analyse the empirical variable in terms of conceptual elements then it does not add to the stock of social sciences theory. Research should not ignore conceptual as this enters into research in the form of indices of the variables under consideration. Index is the correlated pair of variables. The development of valid and observable indices becomes central to the use of concepts for the conduct of a research.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Discuss the interdependence of theory and research.

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## 2.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this Unit You have been introduced to the understanding of theory and research. Further the elements of theory has also been discussed and the difference between theory and ideology has been clarified. The unit further deals with the nature and purpose of research and also highlights the procedures of research. In order to clarify the inter-dependence of theory and empirical research the bearing of each on the other is also discussed in details. Further a glossary of key words is also added to clarify the terms.

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## GLOSSARY

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**Ideology:** A non-scientific quasi-theory, often based on political values or faith with assumptions, concepts relationships among concepts and explanations. it is a closed system that resists change, cannot be directly falsified with empirical data and makes normative claims.

**Assumption:** An untested starting point or belief in a theory that is necessary to build a theoretical explanation.

**Concepts:** An idea that is thought through, carefully defined and made explicit in a theory. It is a term derived from the reality and can be both concrete and abstract.

**Deductive Theorising:** An approach to developing or confirming a theory that begins with abstract concepts and theoretical relationships and works towards more concrete empirical evidence.

**Inductive Theorising:** An approach to developing or confirming a theory that begins with concrete empirical evidence and works towards more abstract concepts and theoretical relationships.

**Empirical Generalisation:** It is a narrow quasi-theoretical statement that expresses empirical patterns or describe empirical regularities using concepts that are not very abstract.

**Middle Range Theory:** It is a social theory between general frameworks and empirical generalisation that has limited abstraction/ range and is in the form of empirically verifiable statements capable of being connected to observable phenomenon.

**Theoretical Framework:** It is a very general theoretical system with assumptions, concepts and specific social theories.

**Basic Research:** It is a research designed to advance essential knowledge about how the world functions and build or test theoretical explanations.

**Applied Research:** It is a research designed to offer practical solutions to a concrete problem or address the immediate and specific needs of individuals.

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## FURTHER READINGS

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