risk assessment and the second deals with the subject closer to the title of the book; assessment of people at risk.

Although a few chapters, especially the introductory ones, deal with topics that one would find elsewhere, there are several that stand out because they are unique to this compilation. Cultural issues in suicide risk assessment (Colucci, Chapter 6) and Suicidal ideation and behaviour among Asian adolescents (Leung *et al.*, Chapter 15) are two such chapters. The first includes recent cross cultural data, including a sample from India, and the second cites studies done in India, although its focus is on research from the South East Asian region. Both, however, provide the reader with a good socio-cultural orientation for working in the area of suicide, especially with adolescents. A useful chapter for new researchers in the field and for academicians is the one on Suicide: Its assessment and prediction (Mukhopadhyay, Chapter 10), which exhaustively lists the scales for the assessment of suicidal risk along with their psychometric properties. However, it does not provide any information on how these tools, developed in the West, fare in Indian or Asian populations.

An extremely relevant topic of how suicides are reported by the media, their role in mitigating or escalating the problem and how the media can be used to play a more proactive and responsible role is dealt with in the chapter on Reporting suicide: impact on suicidal behaviour (Kidwai, Chapter 9). The suicidal soldier (Mehlum and Nrugham, Chapter 14) is another interesting chapter dealing with suicide in the defence forces. There has been increasing concern in India with regard to the escalation in suicide rates among security personnel and this chapter throws light on the subject.

The fact that the contributing authors in the book are from the West and from India is both the strength and weakness of the book. While, on the one hand, it gives a strong cross-cultural perspective, at the same time it makes for rather uneven reading in terms of writing style and quality. One would have hoped that a book edited from India would have had a greater focus on the issues regarding suicide risk in India. In fact, one of the authors in the book (Colucci, Chapter 6, p. 123) states that many countries, including India, have developed their own suicide risk assessment scales. However,

the book does not throw any light on this subject.

After the compilation of articles on *Suicide Prevention* edited by Vijayakumar, Orient Longman Limited, Chennai, 2003, this is to my knowledge the first to appear with a strong Asian focus. It is in this context, that the efforts made by the editors Updesh Kumar and Manas Mandal are to be appreciated. The book will be of interest to a broad readership, including students of behavioural and social sciences, medical and mental health professionals and researchers in the area of suicide. It is, therefore, a welcome addition for any library.

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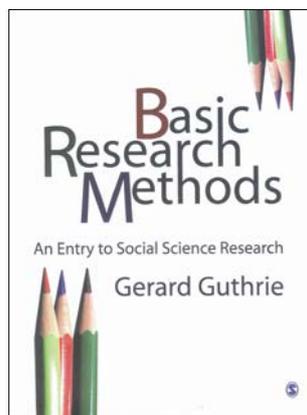
Basic Research Methods: An Entry to Social Science Research. Gerard Guthrie. SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, B1/I-1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044. 2010. xix + 221 pp. Price: Rs 395.

It is easy to agree with the author, as described in the preface, that this book is intended for novice researchers. It focuses on the fundamental practices to be followed when doing research in Social Sciences. The author uses language that is clear and lucid in describing research methodologies and how to go about being a researcher who is ethical and having a clear proposal. The

author provides knowledge on how to go about executing a research project, distilled from 40 years of experience in various research projects (academic, government and industrial consultancy), he has associated with.

It is a handy book for young researchers. Apart from the standard topics of Social Science research methods, within its 221 pages it briefly introduces the student reader to complex themes like philosophical approaches such as positivism and ethical deviations such as plagiarism. It also describes terms like commonsense, triangulation, social science English, researcher persistence and researcher power, and influence when it comes to dissemination and sharing of results, although very briefly. Additionally, this book provides step by step pointers to avoid the pitfalls that cost the time and energy of any research student. The book has a glossary and provides information like names of journals that focus on Asia-Pacific, South and Southeast Asia regions. Other appreciative features of this book include the list of topics to be covered given at the beginning of the chapter, examples provided in boxes throughout the chapters, summary and annotated references at the end of each chapter, making it learner friendly.

Looking at this book from the research methods knowledge it imparts, it is true that most books on research methods are either generic or discipline/subject-specific. The book under review belongs to the first category. It adopts an 'inductive' and 'how to' approach. It brings together knowledge of currently prevalent research methods commonly used in Social Sciences. Although its title indicates it as a book on research methods additionally, it has adopted a holistic and unified approach, and at times a project management approach.

The book has four sections that deal with the four major tasks in the research process. The first section entitled 'the problem' includes four chapters that explain succinctly, points to be cognizant of while selecting a research problem. The first chapter describes briefly the approaches to research. It includes the pure applied policy and action model (PAPA) of research, the stages of research and some actual research projects the author was involved with as examples. School and education systems and crime rate analytics examples from Papua New Guinea run through the book.

The second chapter highlights the ethical principles to be adopted while conducting research in Social Sciences. In this chapter the various principles are illustrated by giving research examples for each of them. Taking permission from samples before they are surveyed is nicely illustrated in Box 2.1 under the heading 'informed consent', and it describes how to introduce a questionnaire from a study by Fien *et al.* (2002). Tips on research proposal writing and literature review (use of libraries, internet and specially the feature on 'narrowing down') are given in chapter 3. Bloom's revised taxonomy as described in this book appears a bit vague for a student reader. The author emphasizes that literature review is not merely citing or summarizing the earlier research in the area. It involves reconstructing and synthesizing earlier research leading to a conceptual framework after critical analysis of existing literature. The concept and method that can be adopted to eliminate risk of plagiarism is explained in this chapter.

Chapter four is weak and confusing for a novice reader, although for an advanced reader it describes important topics between 4.3 and 4.6. This chapter starts off perfectly with the nuances of framing a research hypothesis. This chapter is often the title of many textbooks in this area. The chapters that follow are often described as 'research methodology' in most textbooks and not exactly what is described in this chapter. The term 'research design' is abruptly introduced in section 4.6. Research design is an important term in research execution and needs elaboration for a novice reader.

Section two of the book under the heading of data collection includes 13 chapters and constitutes the heart of the book. This section starts with a chapter on sampling, followed by three chapters (6–8) on different methods of research like case study, survey and experimental methods. There are four chapters (10–13) that describe various techniques like observation, interviews, questionnaires and tests associated with the different methods. Chapter 9 provides details on effective and efficient utilization of available data. All the chapters provide a systematic overview. Each chapter starts by providing the basic principles of a particular method, followed by sub-types within that particular method, the data type that can be used in a particular method and ends by stating their limitations. The techniques in the chapters clearly explain the role of the observers while adopting the particular technique, reliability and validity issues, role of theory and basic presentation of the data.

Section three of the book, titled data analysis, has three chapters. Chapter 14 describes measurement principles. It includes a brief overview on fundamental information like measurement scales, hypothesis testing, type-1 error, type-2 error, sampling errors and the principle of randomness involved in dealing with measurements. Chapter 15 presents qualitative data. The chapter begins with key principles, based on Bloom's taxonomy that can be used to present qualitative data clearly. Suggestions on presentation of three types of qualitative data, namely, available data, observational data and open-ended interview data, along with illustrations and explanations on computer analysis of written text data, forms the rest of the chapter. Chapter 16 is a sketchy chapter on quantitative methods. It includes brief insights into quantitative data principles, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Keys considerations to be kept in mind while choosing the significance test and functions that can be used with excel to calculate the required inferential statistics form the remaining part of this chapter.

The section four entitled 'action' describes the report writing stage. It includes three chapters. Chapter 17 emphasizes the importance of appropriate use of words, sentences and paragraphs. It also highlights the importance of good writing style and gives tips on how to develop a good writing style. Chapter 18 describes steps on improving the quality of one's own work. It gives a list of sections that is usually found in any well-written report. This chapter also includes an evaluation check list that can be used to determine the quality of any report. The last of the chapters, chapter 19, deals with the problem of making a target audience utilize the findings from research that has been concluded by the researcher.

This book has a minor structure issue with its chapters. For example: (a) Measurement must be taught to students well before measurement tools like questionnaires are developed as these tools are built on varied scales. However chapter 14 comes well after chapter 12, and questionnaires are very important in social science research. Questionnaire must measure variables. (b) There is an assumption that variables are relevant only to 'experimental design', however this is not the case in Social Science research, especially survey research where variables are also often measured in field experiments. Although mentioned in section 8.5, it is not clear to a reader whether surveys, case studies also have variables. The use of the terms 'attribute', though common in marketing research, and 'alternative independent variable's distract reading in section 8.1. (c) Although the null hypothesis is an important concept to understand, it is not dealt with in chapter 4, but dealt in chapter 14.

This book is suitable for anyone looking to read an introductory book on research methods. The book is concise and yet motivating, in that it provides the right amount of detail to appreciate the subject of research methods for the beginner and also provides sources leading them to more comprehensive information and advanced learning in the area of research methods.

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