

Researching Families and Children: Culturally Appropriate Methods

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A compilation of accounts of researchers' who have been on the field and personify experience, this book offers a wide and multiple perspective on researching family and children. As one glides through the pages (written in crisp yet simple language) one feels that many questions regarding various aspects of research are getting answered and cleared. One is introduced to each chapter in a rather innovative way—the short witty dialogues between the characters of the *sutradhar* and the *vidushak*, both a prominent part of theater in Indian culture since decades.

The personal experiences of the contributors give a great insight into the challenges that one might face while carrying out research. Whether one should use a qualitative or quantitative approach or an amalgamation of both approaches. Should one carry out research as an insider or outsider to the culture being researched? Is it 'advisable' to advice families as a researcher? The matters that one may not foresee in the initial stages of planning the research are touched upon and well elaborated here.

The major theme around which these essays/articles are presented is the cultural component of a research setting. Just like it is necessary to choose the paints carefully according to the paper, for the painting to turn out to be a fine painting, in our country where culture undeniably permeates our lives it becomes necessary to choose the variables and methods as carefully. Caste, belief systems, language, religion and family systems are to be taken into account. The nitti-gritties of research conduction in a cultural milieu is present in each of the chapters.

The chapter 'Cultural Networks, Social Research and Contact Sampling' by Mila Tuli and Nandita Chaudhary,

mentions that for families in India the social verification provided by the introduction of a known person proves more valuable as compared to a letter from the university departments. In the same chapter it is mentioned how one needs to be creative in structuring one's course of research. 'Lived Experience as Theater, by Lakshmi Krishnamurthy is something that got me intrigued. The possibility of using theater as a research methodology is fascinating. Interviewing, a popular research method is presented here by Shraddha Kapoor. Kapoor covers everything from the role of the interviewer to interpretation in a fine way interspersed with personal anecdotes that are enlightening.

A student embarking upon a journey of research will find a guide and mentor of sorts (in printed form though!) in the pages of this book. Replete with personal account's, each chapter not only offers ways to 'go about' research but will open up the mind to the marvellous possibilities along the way. Research is indeed a journey of discovery!

While certain issues tend to be repeated, they are tackled in a different way by each writer. For established/experienced researchers this book might be a "I know that already" experience but nonetheless useful with "oh! I didn't know that" moments! I think this is how the *vidushak* would end his review!

My congratulations to the editors of the volume which is inspiring and makes for fine reading too.

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