

E – Content Semester 2nd (C.C. 5)

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Topic: Methods of Data collection-Primary and secondary Data

There are two types of data: 1. Primary Data and 2. Secondary Data

1. Primary Data: It is a term for data collected at source. This type of information is obtained directly from first hand sources by means of surveys, observations and experimentation and not subjected to any processing or manipulation and also called primary data. Primary data means original data that has been collected specially for the purpose in mind. It means someone collected the data from the original source first hand.

Primary data has not been published yet and is more reliable, authentic and objective. For example population census conducted by the government of India after every 10 years.

2. Secondary data: It refers to the data collected by someone other than the user i.e. the data is already available and analysed by someone else. Common sources of secondary data include various published or unpublished data, books, magazines, newspaper, trade journals etc.

COLLECTION OF PRIMARY DATA

Primary data is collected in the course of doing experimental or descriptive research by doing experiments, performing surveys or by observation or direct communication with respondents. Several methods for collecting primary data are given below-

1. Observation Method

It is commonly used in studies relating to behavioural science. Under this method observation becomes scientific tool and the method of data collection for the researcher, when it serves a formulated research purpose and is systematically planned and subjected to checks and controls.

(a) Structured (descriptive) and unstructured (exploratory) observation- When a observation is characterized by careful definition of units to be observed, style of observer, conditions of observation and selection of pertinent data of observation it is a structured observation. When there characteristics are not thought of in advance or not present. it is a unstructured observation.

(b) Participant, Non-participant and disguised observation- When the observer observes by making himself more or less, the member of the group he is observing, it is participant observation but when the observer observes by detaching himself from the group under observation it is non participant observation. If the observer observes in such manner that his presence is unknown to the people he is observing it is disguised observation.

(c) Controlled (laboratory) and uncontrolled(exploratory) observation- If the observation takes place in the natural setting it is a uncontrolled observation but when observation takes place according to some pre-arranged plans ,involving experimental procedure it is a controlled observation.

Advantages-

- Subjective bias is eliminated.
- Data is not affected by past behaviour or future intentions.
- Natural behaviour of the group can be recorded.

Limitations-

- Expensive methodology.
- Information provided is limited.
- Unforeseen factors may interfere with the observational task

2. INTERVIEW METHOD

This method of collecting data involves presentation of oral verbal stimuli and deeply in terms of oral- verbal responses. It can be achieved by two ways:-

(A) **Personal interview-** It requires a person known as interviewer to ask questions generally in a face to face contact to the other person. It can be –

Direct personal investigation- The interviewer has to collect the information personally from the services concerned.

Indirect oral examination- The interviewer has to cross examine other persons who are suppose to have a knowledge about the problem.

Structured interviews- Interviews involving the use of pre-determined questions and of highly standard techniques of recording

Unstructured interviews- It does not follow a system of pre-determined questions and is characterised by flexibility of approach to questioning.

Focussed interview- It is meant to focus attention on the given experience of the respondent and its effect. The interviewer may ask questions in any manner or sequence with the aim to explore reasons and motives of the respondent.

Clinical interviews- It is concerned with broad underlying feeling and motives or individuals life experience which are used as method to collect information under this method at the interviewer direction.

Non directive interview- The interviewer's function is to encourage the respondent to talk about the given topic with a bare minimum of direct questioning.

Advantages-

- More information and in depth can be obtained.
- Samples can be controlled.
- There is greater flexibility under this method
- Personal information can as well be obtained.
- Mis-interpretation can be avoided by unstructured interview.

Limitations

- It is an expensive method.
- More time consuming.
- Possibility of imaginary info and less frank responses.
- High skilled interviewer is required

(B) **Telephonic interviews-** It requires the interviewer to collect information by contacting respondents on telephone and asking questions or opinions orally.

2. QUESTIONNAIRE

In this method a questionnaire is sent (mailed) to the concerned respondents who are expected to read, understand and reply on their own and return the questionnaire. It consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms.

It is advisable to conduct a 'pilot study' which is the rehearsal of the main survey by experts for testing the questionnaire for weaknesses of the questions and techniques used.

Essential of a good questionnaire-

- It should be short and simple.
- Questions should processed in a logical sequence.

- Technical terms and vague expressions must be avoided.
- Control questions to check the reliability of the respondent must be present.
- Adequate space for answers must be provided.
- Brief directions with regard to filling up of questionnaire must be provided.
- The physical appearance-quality of paper, colour etc must be good to attract the attention of the respondent

Advantages

- Free from bias of interviewer.
- Respondents have adequate time to give answers
- Respondents are easily and conveniently approachable
- Large samples can be used to be more reliable.

LIMITATIONS

- Low rate of return of duly filled questionnaire.
- Control over questions is lost once it is sent.
- It is inflexible once it is sent.
- Possibility of ambiguous omission of replies.
- Time taking and slow process.

3. SCHEDULES

This method of data collection is similar to questionnaire method with difference that schedule are being filled by the enumerations specially appointed for the purpose. Enumerations explain the aims and objects of the investigation and may remove any misunderstanding and help the respondents to record answer. Enumerations should be well trained to perform their job, he/she should be honest hardworking and patient. This type of data is helpful in extensive enquiries however it is very expensive.

Collection of secondary data

A researcher can obtain secondary data from various sources. Secondary data may either be published data or unpublished data.

Published data are available in:

- a. Publications of government.
- b. Technical and trade journals.

- c. Reports of various businesses, banks etc.
- d. Public records.
- e. Statistical or historical documents.

Unpublished data may be found in letters, diaries, unpublished biographies or work. Before using secondary data it must be checked for the following characteristics-

1. Reliability of data- Who collected the data? From what source? Which method? Time? Possibility of bias? Accuracy?
2. Suitability of data- The object scope and nature of the original enquiry must be studied and then carefully scrutinize the data for suitability.
3. Adequacy- The data is considered inadequate if the level of accuracy achieved in data is found inadequate or if they are related to an area which may be either narrower or wider than the area of the present enquiry.