

Unit –III: Tools and Techniques of data collection

Concept of survey, relationship of survey methods with ethnographic methods, construction of questionnaire and interview scheduled, validation and internal consistency of questionnaire, observation-Participant, Non-Participant, Controlled Interview- structure and unstructured, Focused Grouped Discussion, key information, Interview, Case Study and life history. Genealogical- Techniques and application.

Concept of survey:

Social survey is one of the important methods of investigation of social problems. It helps both in identifying as well as solving problems of a group or community as well as of the area covered under survey. One of the common methods of diagnosing and solving of social problems is that of undertaking surveys. According to Festinger and Kat, “Many research problems require systematic collection of data from population through the use of personal interviews or other data gathering devices”. These studies are usually called surveys, especially when they are concerned with large and widely diverse group of people’. According to E.W. Burgess ha said that, “ A social survey is the scientific study of condition and needs of a community for the purpose of presenting a constructive program of social advance.” S.M. Harison says, “A social survey is a process by which quantitative facts are collected about the social aspects of community’s composition and activities.”

Relationship of survey methods with ethnographic methods:

Anthropology is an academic discipline that constructs its intellectual imaginings upon empirical –based knowledge about human worlds. Ethnography is the practice developed in order to bring about that knowledge according to certain methodological principles, the most important of which is or society, usually based on participant – observation and resulting in a written account of a people, place or institution. Generally, anthropological research adopts comparative, historical and ethnographic approach to the study of society and culture. And another method, which has been utilised by various disciplines including anthropology is survey research method. It is a quantitative and qualitative method with two important characteristics. First, the variables of interest are measured using self-reports and second is considerable attention is paid to the issue of sampling. Most of the survey research is non-experiential. It is used to describe single variables and also to assess statistical relationship between variables.

Methods of field work:

The term methods mean way of doing something. Every science has to use, an appropriate way of suitable methods. At first the field workers most have an academic training in anthropology. They should have knowledge on both general and ethnography of the region in which they have to work. If possible, they also have to learn the language of the community to understand their life cycle clearly in where they have to study. To conduct observation scientifically the field worker should study completely the subject matter. They should know the accurate way to put intelligent questions for getting accurate data. The field workers have to cut off from his own culture of field work and to behave intimately with the people of the field work.

The field worker should depend on the people of the field for company, friendship and should have a human understanding. The field workers should think themselves as the member of that particular community on which they have to work. So, the field workers must have sufficient knowledge about the field work, by which they can collect various data systematically.

During the time of field works, the field workers followed the methods mentioned below to collect the various data.

1. Observation methods
2. Interview methods
3. Scheduled methods
4. Case study methods
5. Life history methods
6. Genealogical methods

Observation methods:

An observation method is very important for field workers. The observation method is the most commonly used especially in studies relating to behavioural science. In a way, all observe things around us, but this sort of observation is not scientific observation. Observation becomes a scientific tool and methods of data collection for the research, when it is systematically played and recorded in the terms of

formulated research purpose. The main advantage of the methods is the subjective basis. Secondly the information obtained under their method related to what is currently happened. It is not complicated by either the past behaviours or future intentions or attitudes. Thirdly this method is independent or respondents willingness to respond and as such is relatively less demanding on active co-operation on the part of respondents.

There are two different types of observation methods and they are as follows-

- i. Participant observation methods
- ii. Non-participant observation method

Participant observation method:

This method most widely used in the field of anthropology is participant observation. It is otherwise called control observation. It is generally carried on according to definite prearrangement plans which may include considerable experimental procedure. Applying this method, field worker get valuable data than that of the other method, because field worker himself participants in the some special and cultural functions perform by the community.

Non-Participant Observation method:

The nature of the non participant observation method is a study of social situations from the outside. In early phase of work, non participant observation method is used as it allows the important to discuss freely the things that are interested to him and seemed as important to him and it helps to know a general area of culture. In this method we must not make the people aware that we are observing.

2. Interview methods:

The interview method involves preservation of question and answer or reply that may be said oral. This method can be used through personal interviews and if possible through telephone. Personal interview method includes some questions. According to this method field workers ask some questions to informants generally by which they can collect different data from the particular community. At any time informants also asked certain question and field workers should respond to them quietly, but sometimes some field workers some information for which they become unable to collect actual information. Interview may be classified the different divisions according to their function, number of persons and type of approach. There are two types of interview and these are—

1. Un-structured interview

2. Structured interview

Un-structured interview:

This type of interview is also designated as in controlled or unstructured. In this type of interview investigation don't follow a system of list of predetermined questions. It is necessary to asked detailed question about custom and traditions that might have been mentioned only briefly in non directive interview. Interview methods has both its advantages and disadvantage. The some questions have different meaning to different people. It is a method which can bring faithful results only when the investigations are intelligent teachful and sincere to their jobs and conscious for their responsibility.

Structured interview:

This type of interview uses a highly standard techniques and a set of predetermined questions. To know broadly about a specific area of culture or general aspects of culture, field workers put some prepared question systematically to their informant.

3. Scheduled method.

Scheduled is much used in gathering variety of data. In this method a scheduled is prepared including different items on which information is required. The scheduled is generally fill up by the research worker and before going to do this investigation fill to assure him about the purpose for which the information is gatherer than informant may not give the desired information at all.

4. Case study method

The case study method is very popular form of a quantitative analysis and involves a careful and observation of a social unit that unit be a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group or even the entire community. The case study method more emphasis on the analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their batter relationship. Case study is essential for intensive investigation of the particular unit under consideration. The objects of the case study method are to locate the factors that among it for the behavior pattern of the given unit as an integrated totality. In brief we can say that case study method is a form of individual or an institution. P. V. Young has defined case study method by saying that, "Case study is a method of exploring and analyzing the life of a social unit."

5. Life history method:

Life history is one of the important methods of quantitative research. It is the account of life completed or ongoing. In this method combines both written and oral evidence. This information gathered offer basic evidence about social interaction and process. There are many problems involved in the use of life history approach such as reliability, validity, and interpretation of information. It has certain advantages for studies of social change, as documentation on rocks, demonstration of socialization. Thomas and Znaniecki used the life histories as well as other materials to trace the life experiences of Polish countrymen. A life history is essentially telling or recounting of a string of events. The life history approach which works with personal narratives is the unfolding history of one person's experiences.

6. Genealogical method

The genealogical method was originally developed by W.H.R. Rivers during the Torres Straits expedition of 1898-99. Genealogy is the study of one's ancestor- parents, grandparents, great grandparents and so on. The genealogical method has proved of such value in anthropological research that it is now considered as essential techniques of general investigation. It is commonly found that genealogically people ancestor are often traced back and several generations and a larger of collection is known by name genealogical data is used in the reflection of marriage, inheritance of property, succession to kinship etc. it seems that the investigator must understood a principle which is in constant used in his own field of study. So that is not surprising that they should bind themselves of the techniques, a formal list, a catalogue or inventory and it may be added that is a counting device used informal and standardized enquired the sole purpose of which is aiding in the collection quantitative cross section data.

Key Informants:

The anthropologists have to attempt to identify and interview those most knowledgeable about the particular subject or subjects being studied. Individuals whom the local community considers to be expert in some particular area are known as key informant. An individual who supplies the ethnographer with information is called a informant. Field research involves the help of many consultations who sometimes are paid for their services.

Usually, the cultural anthropologist learns about the society through trusted key informants who give the cultural anthropologists insight into the culture's patterns. The long term collaboration with key informants is an integral part of quality ethnographic research. The cultural anthropologists tries to choose

key informant who have a deep knowledge of community. These informants are usually native cultural anthropologists who are interested in their own society. They may serve as tourist or guides answering general questions or identifying topics that could be interest to the cultural anthropology. They often help the cultural anthropologist established rapport with the people in the community. The key information can help explain in cultural anthropologist's role. In some cases the key informant may become involved in interviewing people in the community to assist the cultural anthropologist in collecting data.

Dr. Mahananda Das

J.N. College, Boko, Kamrup