

GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), COIMBATORE  
POST GRADUATE AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ECONOMICS- FIRST YEAR- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY  
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Unit:4 Data collection

- Data are facts, and other relevant materials, past and present, serving as bases for study and analyses. The data needed for social science research may be broadly classified into (a) Data pertaining to human beings, (b) Data relating to organizations and (c) Data pertaining to territorial areas.
- Primary data collection methods:  
Observation, questionnaire, interviews are the prime methods
- Construction of a questionnaire

Questionnaire depends upon research objectives. For each objective or research questions, list all the associated questions to be answered through study. Then the information required to answer them is listed, and finally, the questions are listed. A questionnaire consists of a set of questions presented to a respondent for answers. The questionnaire is used during structured surveys or interviews. The respondent read the questions, interpret what is expected, and then write down the answers themselves. It is also called an interview schedule when the researcher asks the questions and records the respondents reply on the interview schedule. Here, the researcher may have to explain questions to the respondents.

There are many options before the researchers adopt this method, but questionnaires should be developed and tested carefully before being administered on a large scale.

Types of questionnaires, closed-ended open ended, and a combination of both.

1. **Closed-ended questionnaire:** closed-ended questionnaires generally include multiple choice questions or scale questions. This type of questionnaire can be administered to a large number of respondents or sample size.
2. **Open-ended questionnaire:** open-ended questionnaires offer the flexibility to respondents to answer in their own words. It may leave a blank section to write an answer.
3. **Combined questionnaire:** The combined questionnaire may begin with a series of closed-end questions, with boxes to tick or scales to rank, and then finish with a section of open-ended questions or a more detailed response.

- Mailed questionnaire method

The mail survey is another method of collecting primary data. This method involves sending questionnaires to the respondents with a request to complete them and return them by post. This can be used in the case of educated respondents only

There are some alternative methods of distributing questionnaires to the respondents. They are: (1) Personal delivery, (2) Attaching questionnaire to product. (3) Attaching questionnaire in a newspaper or magazine and (4) News stand inserts.

## Advantages and limitations

### Advantages

1. They are less costly than personal interviews, as cost of mailing is the same throughout the country, irrespective of distances.
2. They can cover extensive geographical areas.
3. Mailing is useful in contacting persons such as senior business executives who are difficult to reach in any other way.
4. The respondents can complete the questionnaires at their conveniences.
5. Mail surveys, being more impersonal, provide more anonymity than personal interviews.
6. Mail survey is totally free from the interviewer bias, as there is no personal contact between the respondents and the investigator.
7. Certain personal and economic data may be given more accurately in an unsigned mail questionnaire.

### Limitations

1. The scope for mail survey is very limited in a country like India where the percentage of literacy is very low.
  2. The response rate of mail surveys is low. Hence, the resulting sample will not be a representative one.
  3. It is difficult to determine the degree of representativeness of a sample obtained by mail.
  4. The causes for inadequate and non-responses cannot be known, and no probing is possible.
  5. Information on the personal characteristics of the respondent and his environment cannot be secured.
  6. Respondent may not cooperate if the mail questionnaire is long or complex.
  7. Several returned questionnaires may contain unanswered questions and incomplete responses.
- Interviewing techniques
    1. Be positive. You'll be a more attractive.
    2. Choose the best place and time.
    3. Prepare a set of well framed questions.
    4. Conduct a friendly interview
    5. Bring your best attitude and skills
    6. Follow up the interview.
    7. Flexibly put the questions as to suit.
  - Advantages and disadvantages

### Advantages of interview

1. deep and detailed information can be secured.
2. improved percentage of responses and the quality of information.
3. gathering of other supplemental information
4. More accurate and dependable of the answers.
5. flexible and adaptable to individual situations.

### Disadvantages of Interview

1. costly both in money and time.

2. interview results are often adversely affected by interviewer's faulty memory, inability to articulate, biasedness and in-experience.
  3. Refusal of data on personal and financial information.
  4. Faulty methods of data entry.
- Secondary data sources  
Governments, Institutes, organisations, persons with secondary data. And their reports, journals, magazines, annual reports, research articles, published and unpublished theses, dissertations, research reports.
  - Data processing  
Data processing is a series of steps in translating unmeaningful and unorganized data into organized and meaningful data for analysis. There are six involved in the data processing.
    1. Data collection ,
    2. Sifting of data
    3. Data entry
    4. Data analysis
    5. Data output
    6. Data storage.

(Note: kindly refer to the reading materials given to you at your whatsapp number for further preparation)