

# Social Surveys

A photograph of a rural village scene. In the center is a white, single-story house with a red-tiled roof. A portion of the house's front is covered with corrugated metal sheets. To the right, a large, thick tree trunk is visible. In the foreground, two men are sitting on a large log. One man is wearing a dark blue shirt and jeans, and the other is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background shows lush greenery, including palm trees, and a view of a valley or hills. The text "Social Surveys" is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

# What is a Social Survey

“systematic collection of facts about people living in a specific geographic, cultural, or administrative area”.

*Sociological Dictionary*

# Nature of Social surveys

**Quantitative approach** is more popular in the social surveys, particularly the Applied research. Questionnaires used in such surveys take a structured form. Whereas **qualitative variant** of social surveys are adopted much in academic research they use semi-structured or unstructured questionnaires.

This lecture will focus on quantitative surveys

# Types of Surveys

Main tool used in social surveys to collect data is questionnaire. Based on their nature of administration several types of surveys are identified:

- Surveys based on face to face interviews
- Postal Surveys
- Telephone Surveys
- Online Surveys (social media any other)

# Suitability to Developing Countries

Type	Entire Country	Urban Areas	Segment of Social groups
Face to face interviews	√	√	√
Postal Surveys			√
Telephone Surveys			√
Online Surveys			√

# Steps of a Social Survey

The social survey method has the ultimate goal of seeking social facts:

- Enunciating the object or purpose of the survey;
- Definition of the problem under study;
- Delimitation of the area or scope of study;
- Examination of the available evidences or sources relating to the problem;
- Preparation of questionnaire schedule;
- Preparation of the analytical plan
- Field work to collect data;
- Arrangement, tabulation and statistical analysis of the data; interpretation of results; deduction and

# Successful Survey

Social surveys provide a rich information of society based on individual cases.

However, success of the survey depends largely on:

- Questionnaire should be formulated based on the objectives of the survey and to overcome the field level constraints
- Selection of the representative sample
- Questionnaire Administration: Though it appears to be simple, this is a hard work which take a considerable time.

# Possible Errors in Survey Research

- Sampling Error
- Non-sampling error
  - Response error
  - Non- response error



# Good sources to learn about how to construct questionnaires for developing countries

Paul Glewwe -An overview of questionnaire design for household surveys in developing Countries

UNESCO (1963) Opinion Surveys in Developing Countries

# Construction of a Questionnaire:

- 1. Research Objectives have to be converted to survey objectives and finally to questions:**
  - Can all research objectives transferred in to survey objectives?
  - Should some of them drop in order to keep the questionnaire neat, short ?
  - Should additional information like general information collect?

*( Think moving forward and backward through objectives and questions)*

## 2. Structure of the Questionnaire

- Make it as modules, containing different segment for different components (General Information, Education, Employment, Housing)
- Group similar modules which can be answered at a single a stretch by a single person.(expenditure on food children wife can answer more comfortably)

*Researcher may need to be familiar to the culture of the area to do this*

Box 1: To work as above, a good understanding of the society is essential

“Where we are concerned with cultures that are as varied and as widely differentiated as is the case in the underdeveloped countries, it is clear that no research can be undertaken with any chance of success unless there is previous knowledge of the people of those countries”.

UNESCO 1963. p.8

## 3. Possible Question Styles

1. Filtering questions
2. Open questions
3. Closed questions
4. Rank questions

### 3. Inappropriate Questions

- Not to have any sensitive questions. Particularly questions in the first module requires to be easy)
- Double barrel questions
- Questions indicating habitual behavior
- Leading loaded questions

## 4. Some strategies to enhance the quality

- Cording may reduce the efforts for writing
- Should include skip cord
- Probe question
- Conducting of a pilot survey

# Pilot Survey

Pilot survey provides an opportunity to researcher to pretest the questionnaire designed. As a matter of practical fact about 20 questionnaires get completed. If they are free from problems, they can be printed or otherwise they have to be corrected. Following design aspects of the questionnaire can be checked by this

- Question design and format
- Questionnaires length
- Questionnaire output
- Classification questions
- Serialization and other information

*(Parfitt, 1997)*