

# **The Secondary Data Collection**

**Lesson 4- 09.10.2013**

# Introduction

Secondary data constitute an important place in Geographic studies. They provide a context for primary data (geographical, historical, social and economic). But, consider them as a complementary source rather than some thing to be replaced. Government official data is the main secondary data available in Developing Countries. Among the sources, population and housing census, consumer finance survey are comprehensive and carried out spending much money and energy and also using better enumerators under strict supervision. But it is not the case in all other secondary data sources. Therefore, it is wise to use them with greater care.

This lesson will focus secondary data in general and particular attention to secondary data in developing countries.

# What are Secondary Data

‘Secondary data’ means the information which has already been collected by someone else (researchers, institutions or NGOs), for other purposes than the one currently being considered (Cnossen, 1997) . They include

- Official data collected by public bodies by spending public money.
- Data collected by firms NGOs or individuals.

# Sources of Secondary Data

- By government and their various agencies, bureaus, departments (Census of population, agriculture or industries.
- Administrative Records
- Technical reports: account of work done on research projects
- Diaries
- Planning documents
- Maps
- Areal photographs
- Sound recordings (Radio and TV Programmes)

# National Level Secondary Data

- Demographic data (population, rural/urban, ethnic group)
- Economic data (income, poverty, people getting government subsidies)
- Social data (employment, local institutions,
- Cultural data (religion, ethnicity,
- Infrastructure

Most of such data could be at aggregate level. But you can go to the lowest unit. In Sri Lanka, it is GN level.

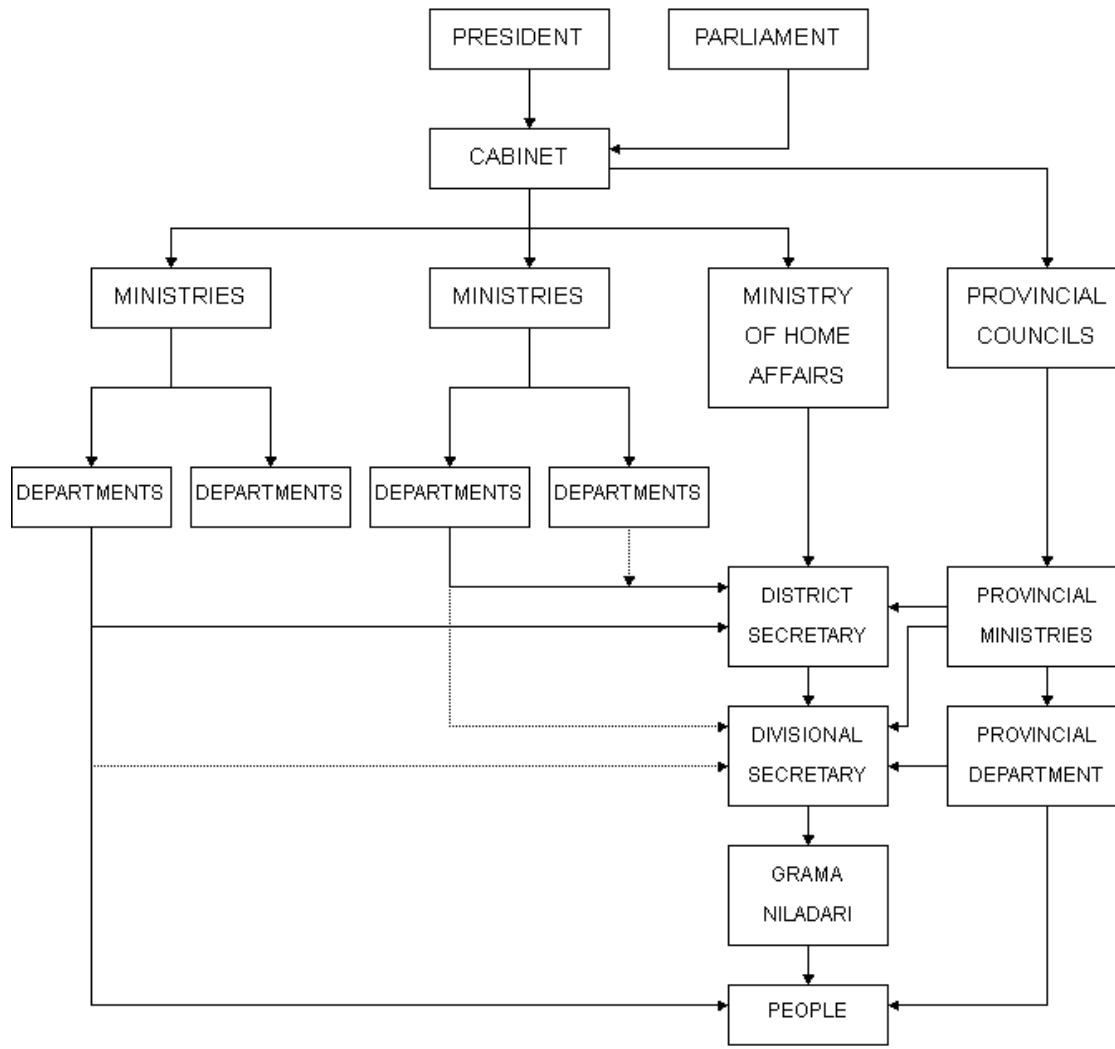
Data could be old, as it is taken once after a regular interval.

# Sources of selected official statistical data in Developing Countries

Country	Source	
India	<a href="http://www.censusindia.net">http://www.censusindia.net</a>	Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India
Sri Lanka	<a href="http://www.statistics.gov.lk">www.statistics.gov.lk</a>	Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka
Nepal	<a href="http://cbs.gov.np">cbs.gov.np</a>	Government of Nepal Central bureau of Statistics
Bangladesh	<a href="http://www.bbs.gov.bd">www.bbs.gov.bd</a>	Bangladesh bureau of Statistics

# General Administrative Structure: Secondary Data Collection Point

## ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE IN SRI LANKA







# Data from local offices in Sri Lanka

Grama Niladari Division is the lowest Administrative Division



A Grama Niladari



Grama Niladhari Office





-Lists pasted on the walls of the office



# Resource profile

# Household name list

-Agricultural land use in the GN division

# Advantages of Secondary Data

- Easy to build up the background of the research area. This is very important particularly for an outside researcher
- Easy to collect
- Researcher can save time and money
- Can easily be used for trend analysis as long term data is available

# Disadvantages of Secondary Data

- It is not often possible to judge on quality of secondary data
- Sources may conflict with each other
- Secondary data can not reveal individual or group values, beliefs or reasons that may be underlining the currant trends (Beaulieu, 1992)
- Unit of secondary data collection (income you can have gross income, if you want disposable income, you can not get



# Quality of Secondary Data in Developing Countries

- Government official data- comprehensive, available for a long term, and generally trustable

But, at certain occasions they may characterize following problems owing to under-skilled enumerators used and lack of supervision

- Unreliability
- Data gaps
- Inaccuracies
- Mutual inconsistencies (Gill, 1993)

# Evaluation of secondary data

1. Availability
2. Relevance (units of measurement and concepts used must be the same)
3. Accuracy
4. Sufficiency

# Towards resolving problems

- Make use of local Experts: regarding quality of data seek advice from sector specialists, country offices, colleagues in the universities and research stations
- Yourself determine the original purpose of the data collected (Novak, 1996)
- Attempt to ascertain the credentials of the source or author (education backgrounds, past works
- Pay skeptical attention of employment data. “It is very difficult to count on the employment data accurately, especially in developing countries” (Katherine, 2005)- Informal or unrecorded activities, such as seasonal agricultural workers, women’s agricultural labor, Child labor, primary employment, secondary or other