

presupposes a face to face interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. When the questions are self-administered and require the respondent to answer all items. When the questions are self-administered and require the respondent to answer all questions by himself it is called mailed questionnaire. Such questions are often sent by mail/post to the respondent. Sometimes they are distributed to a group of people who may have come to attend a conference, with the request that they may fill it up and return the same.

Usually a schedule contains structured items. By structured is meant that questions have fixed wording. They are also typed or printed in a definite order. Thus a particular set of questions having exactly the same wording and sequence is administered to all the respondents.

#### Important considerations in the construction of a schedule

A schedule should contain a limited number of questions. Only such questions as are extremely important to fulfill the requirements of a study should be included. Questions which may elicit some already known or obvious information should be deleted. Generally, respondents do not like to devote sufficient time and energy for a long schedule.

A schedule is usually divided into several sections. Each section must contain a set of questions related to a particular item or theme. In the light of requirement of the research problem, some rationale must be developed to include each item or theme. Questions relating to the same general theme must be placed together. Questions placed at the beginning of a schedule should be such that they are able to draw the respondents complete attention. They should be able to evoke his interest. However the opening question should be neutral. In other words, the beginning should not contain any controversial issue as the respondents may develop a negative orientation towards the whole questionnaire. This may lead to tardy responses or even outright refusals.

The researcher should carefully determine the sequence of the different themes covered in a schedule. A gradation of themes starting from simpler ones and gradually leading to complex questions ones should be made. There should be logical sequence of themes as well as questions. The transition from one theme to the other should not be abrupt. Complex questions requiring serious thinking are preferably placed somewhere in the middle of the schedule as the respondent may develop fatigue towards the end and may not give to such questions the attention they deserve.

A crucial aspect of a schedule relates to the formulation of questions. These should be framed in such a way that the researcher may logically expect the answers to be significant for his research problem. A good schedule grows from sound study of the problem and review of literature on the subject. Every item included in the schedule must be related to the objectives of the study. A tentative list of areas on which questions are to be asked is drawn up. It is useful to consult knowledgeable people and conduct interviews to arrive at greater clarity. In the beginning efforts should be made to cover as many items as possible. Gradually the researcher may detect omissions, gaps or ambiguities. Also, he may determine which items are most important and which are not. Any research venture can adequately cover only a limited number of themes directly related to the research objectives. Most of the questions should focus sharply on such important themes. The actual process of formulating questions requires great skill and expertise. A detailed discussion on this aspect runs beyond the scope of this unit.

The amount of space needed for answering open ended questions has to be determined. For example, suddenly the researcher may find that an open ended question needs more space for the answer than has been provided in the printed schedule. Some sort of preliminary exercise helps in assessing this requirement as well.

#### Telephone interviewing

Telephone interviewing is non-personal method of data collection. It may be used as a major method or supplementary method.

It will be useful in the following situations:

1. When the universe is composed of those persons whose names are listed in telephone directories, e.g., business houses, business executive, doctors, other professionals.
2. When make the respondents are widely scattered and when there are many call backs to make.
3. When the subject is interesting or important to respondents.
4. When the survey must be conducted in a very short period of time, provided the units of study are listed in telephone directory.

The advantages of telephone interview are:

1. The survey can be completed at very low cost, because telephone survey does not involve travel time and cost and all calls can be made from a single location.
2. Information can be collected in a short period of time. 5 to 10 interviews can be conducted per hour.
3. Quality of response is good, because interviewer bias is reduced as there is no face to face contact between the interviewer and the respondent.
4. It has higher response rate.
5. It has greater sample control.

Telephone interview has several limitations.

1. There is a limit to the length of interview. Usually, a call cannot last over five minutes. Only five or six simple questions can be asked. Hence, telephone cannot be used for a longer questionnaire.
2. The type of information to be collected is limited to what can be given in simple, short answers of a few words. Hence, telephone is not suitable for complex surveys, and there is no possibility of obtaining detailed information.
3. If the questions cover personal matters, most respondent will not cooperate with the interviewer.