

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

LECTURE-22

COLLECTION OF DATA THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRES

This method of data collection is quite popular, particularly in case of big enquiries. It is being adopted by private individuals, research workers, private and public organisations and even by governments.

In this method a questionnaire is sent (usually by post) to the persons concerned with a request to answer the questions and return the questionnaire. A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms. The questionnaire is mailed to respondents

who are expected to read and understand the questions and write down the reply in the space meant for the purpose in the questionnaire itself. The respondents have to answer the questions on their own.

The method of collecting data by mailing the questionnaires to respondents is most extensively employed in various economic and business surveys. The merits claimed on behalf of this method are as follows:

1. There is low cost even when the universe is large and is widely spread geographically.
2. It is free from the bias of the interviewer; answers are in respondents' own words.
3. Respondents have adequate time to give well thought out answers.
4. Respondents, who are not easily approachable, can also be reached conveniently.
- 5 Large samples can be made use of and thus the results can be made more dependable and reliable.

The main demerits of this system can also be listed here:

1. Low rate of return of the duly filled in questionnaires; bias due to no-response is often indeterminate.
2. It can be used only when respondents are educated and cooperating.
3. The control over questionnaire may be lost once it is sent.
4. There is inbuilt inflexibility because of the difficulty of amending the

approach once questionnaires have been despatched.

5. There is also the possibility of ambiguous replies or omission of replies altogether to certain questions; interpretation of omissions is difficult.

6. It is difficult to know whether willing respondents are truly representative.

7. This method is likely to be the slowest of all.

Before using this method, it is always advisable to conduct 'pilot study' (Pilot Survey) for testing the questionnaires.