

Study Materials for 4th SEM (Paper-ANTACOR10T)

Unit - III - Tools and Technique of Data Collection

Interview Method

This is a very simple anthropological method which is applied by the researcher to collect data. Interview may be defined as face-to face meeting of persons on some particular points. Normally, it involves putting of relevant questions to the interviewee and recording his response. Set questions are asked and answers are recorded in a standardized form. An Interview, without any purpose, is not an interview at all but an idle conversation.

In Social-Cultural Anthropology, an investigator is mostly a stranger in the native situation, so he has to ask various things which he does not know.

Rules of the Interview: Primary conditions for a Key Informant

The success of the Interview depends on the selection of suitable informants. An informant does not suit for all kinds of information. The age and sex of the informants are also taken into account. For instance, in the questions regarding the history of village settlements, young would never be the good informers, elderly persons of the village call tell a lot about this topic. But, the young informants are more reliable than the old persons for providing information on play activities. Therefore, it is a question of decision that whom to be selected to get information with greatest reliability. The informants should be selected without trial and error.

Several factors may affect an interview. The conditions for this successful operations are:

- i. The place of interview should be free from any disturbance and distraction. All places are not favourable for putting all types of questions.
- ii. Privacy should be maintained if the informant desires for it. Because, most of the informants do not want to disclose the personal matters of their life in presence of others. So, all places are not congenial for interview.
- iii. Questions should be short, interesting and clear to hear. Answers should not be limited to " Yes" or "No".
- iv. There should not be any language barrier for the informant. The interview must be conducted in the language of the informant and the questions must be framed with simple words so that the informant may follow them easily.
- v. The investigator must not be impatient or frustrated. He/she should keep in mind that his/her valuable time and efforts are the keys to success.

vi. The time and place of the interview must be pre-planned. It is always better to make a prior appointment with the informant.

vii. The convenience of informants must not be forgotten and the investigator should be very punctual.

viii. Informant's personality is to be respected and his viewpoint must be appreciated.

ix. The investigator should cultivate the qualities like honesty, politeness, sensitivity and good sense of humour.

x. In every step, the confidence of the informant needs to be generated. The investigator must show his interest in everything that an interviewee wishes to tell him. He/she should have the expertise to note the reactions of the informant that is expressed through his talk, gestures and facial expressions.

Interview Method is of different types :

1. Individual Interview

2. Group Interview

3. Structured Interview

4. Non-Structured Interview

5. Formal Interview

6. Informal Interview

7. Interview cum Schedule

8. Interview without any Schedule

According to the length of time, it can be divided into two parts :

Short-term Interview and Prolonged Interview or Depth Interview.

Individual Interview: In this Interview, a single person is called upon for the discussion. Such an interview is generally held collecting personal as well as confidential information.

Group Interview: In this interview, two or more individuals are interviewed at a time. Its utility lies in accumulating information on group-life. But, the advantage is that, the procedure is less expensive and less time-consuming.

Structured Interview: This involves the use of pre-determined questions and highly standardized techniques of recording. Standardization ensures that all informants should reply the same

questions; the questions bear the same meaning to all informants. The interviewer may repeat the questions if the reply is not to the point. The use of open-ended questions is mostly found in Structured Interview. This means that available answers are not limited with short expressions like yes or no as found in closed questionnaire. Such questions also offer a scope of free discussion so that the informants can present their ideas and feelings very clearly. On the other hand, the structured pattern does not allow the informants to go out of the tract, while in discussion. This type of interview is known as "Controlled Interview", "Guided Interview" and "Directed Interview".

The Unstructured (Uncontrolled, Unguided or Undirected) Interview: This is the less systematic way of interview. It involves relatively lesser standardization of relevant techniques and operations. It does not follow a system of pre-determined questions, rather it is informal way of talking. The informants are urged to describe different incidents of their life, the interviewer picks up the necessary materials from their narration. This type of interview furnishes a free-flowing account on the personal or social context of beliefs and feelings.

Focused Interview: The interview, which focuses on a typical incident, is called the "focused interview". The central theme of this interview revolves round a particular situation and the questions are common to all people selected for the interview. It involves an interrogation to illuminate the factors or stimulus acting upon informants ,the results of which are reflected on their behaviour.Usually,the subjects of focused interview are adult education, dowry system, family planning, reading of newspaper, listening to radio etc. The aim is to study the repercussion of a particular situation in depth and to analyze the effects of communication.