**QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD: SOCIAL SURVEY**

##### Social Survey Method

Social survey technique is very popular in sociology. Survey research is the systematic gathering of information about individuals and collectivities. The purpose of surveying may be description or casual analysis. Large scale descriptive surveys have long history in social research. National census is the biggest form of social survey in which surveys, the whole nation regarding its population, their economic condition including their earning, birth, death etc.

Definition

In general social surveys are concerned with (a) the formation of constructive programme of social reform and (b) amelioration of current or immediate conditions of social pathological nature, which have definite social significance.

Duncan Mitchell’s Dictionary of sociology defines social survey as follows, “the social survey is a systematic collection of facts about people living in a specific geographic, cultural or administrative area”.

Bogardus says “A social survey is the collection of data concerning the living and working

conditions, broadly speaking of the people in a given community”.

E.W. Burgess defined “A social; survey of a community is the scientific study of its conditions and needs for the purpose of presenting a constructive programme of social advance”.

Social surveys are usually for dealing with many related aspects of social problem. They provide the data for administration, rather than for the illustrative or descriptive material. They are generally quantitative and the history of the social survey is intimately bound up with the development of statistics.

Surveys vary greatly in their scope, their design and their content. The specific characteristics of any survey will determined by the basic objectives, which conducting survey there must be a specific pattern or design to follow to collect data. The research follows a scientific step by step procedure.

##### Procedural ways of social survey

The step by step tasks involved in carrying out a survey from the first state off planning to the preparation of the final report in as follows;

###### Statement of the problem or general objectives

The problem which make survey necessary and the general objectives of the survey are stated. The statement is generally expressed the area and scope of the study.

###### Specific objectives of the survey

Although the general objectives, usually few in number are formulated with out regarding to the requirements of the survey technique; these general objectives are broken down in to numerous specific objectives. The specification of data to be gathered and the hypotheses to be tested by the survey is accomplished at this stage.

###### Sample

Two major divisions in the survey sample are (a) the universe of the survey (b) the size and design of the sample. After there two are made the actual selection of the sample units take place.

###### Questionnaire

After the selection of sample units a questionnaire is prepared, to collect facts from the sample. The questionnaire must be carefully designed with in limits of the problem. The preparation of questions, degree of probing, the sequence of questions and the establishment of rapport, a specific pattern and a skill to be applied. The questionnaire is pre-tested in the field for proper application.

###### Field work

The next important step is field work. Gathering facts from sample through personal interview and observation. The interviewers are usually provided with an instruction manual which explain the objectives of the study and the meaning of each question.

###### Data coding and tabulation

After careful coding and editing of the data collected through survey may transcribed into tables. This may be done by preparing a code, a numbered list of major items such summing all the responses received to each question.

###### Data analysis and reporting

The data are analysed and a report is written which embodying the survey findings. The survey process is a highly interconnected chain of events so the above steps are independent of one another.

##### Limitation of survey method

Even though the survey method is applicable to wide range problems, it has evident limitations. The major limitations are;

1. Sample error: survey method is subjected to the selection of sample,
2. Errors of measurement: A scone representing a person’s attitude, abilities traits or

behaviours may not match with reality.

1. Limitations of questionnaire: the imitations on length of the questions, that can be asked in a survey an there are limits to the number of topics that can be covered.
2. Limitations of population: A sample survey designed to represent a population over a wide geographical area is likely not to given adequate representation to any population which highly localized in its character.