

**SOS POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION
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SUBJECT NAME:METHODS AND TECHNIQUES
OF RESEARCH & STATISTICS
UNIT-III
TOPIC:OBSERVATION**

INTRODUCTION

- The observation method is most commonly used method in behavioral science.
- Observation becomes a scientific tool and the method of data collection for the researcher, when it serves a formulated research purpose, is systematically planned and recorded and is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability.
- It is also a process of recording the behavior patterns of people, objects, and occurrences without questioning or communicating with them

MEANING

Observation means viewing or seeing. We go on observing some thing or other while we are awake. Most of such observations are just casual and have no specific purpose. But observation as a method of data collection is different from such casual viewing

OBSERVATION DEFINITION

As a means of gathering information for research, may be defined as perceiving data through the senses, sight, hearing, tastes, touch and smell.

PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION

1. To enable the researcher to gather empirical data which are difficult to obtain by other means.
2. To enable the researcher to gather sufficient data to supplement or verify information gathered by other means.
3. To enable the researcher to gather information or data needed to describe the aspect of a variable being studied which cannot be described accurately without observation.
4. To enable the researcher to gather directly primary data or first-hand information for his study for a more accurate description and interpretation. Purpose of Observation
5. To enable the researcher to gather data from the laboratory or elsewhere through experimentation. Purpose of Observation

CHARACTERISTICS OF OBSERVATION

Scientific observation is systematic, Observation is specific,
Scientific observation is objective, Observation is recorded
immediately, Observation is expert, Observation is verifiable

CHARACTERISTICS OF OBSERVATION

- *It is both a physical and a mental activity. The observation eye 'catches' many things which are sighted, but attention is focused on data that are pertinent to the given study.
- * Observation is selective. A researcher does not observe anything and everything, but select the range of things to be observed on the basis of the nature, scope and objectives of his study.
- * Observation is purposive and not casual. It is made for the specific purpose of nothing things relevant to the study.
- * It captures the natural social context in which persons' behavior occurs

TYPES OF OBSERVATION

- *Participant Observation
- *Non-participant Observation
- *Direct Observation
- *Indirect Observation
- *Controlled Observation
- *Uncontrolled Observation

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION :

In this observation, the observer is a part of the phenomenon or group which observed and he acts as both an observer and a participant. Example, a study of tribal customs by an anthropologist by taking part in tribal activities like folk dance. The person who are observed should not be aware of the researcher's purpose. Then only their behavior will be `natural.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION MERITS

- The observer is personally involved in group activities and shares their feelings and prejudices.
- He participate himself and get insight into the behavior of the group.
- It motivates and stimulates mutual relationship b/w the observer and observe.
- He can get more information's with accuracy and precision.
- The information's are recorded in front of the group people.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION DEMERITS

- The observer may develop emotional attachment to his group which will lose the objectivity of the study.
- Cannot observe a certain phenomenon in a short time available to him.
- Cannot cover a wide area through this method. Types of Observation

NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

- The non-participant observation has a lack of participation of the observer in his group activities.
- He either watch the phenomena from a distance or participate in the group but never in its activities.
- He only sit in the group but do not interest in the process.

NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION MERITS

- Although observer himself never attach to the group but the objectivity maintained.
- Less emotional involvement of the observer leads to accuracy and greater objectivity.
- Through non-participant observation the research remains very smooth.

NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION DEMERITS

- Do not have full knowledge about the group activities.
- Cannot understand the whole phenomena.
- Cannot get real and deep insight into the phenomena.

CONTROLLED OBSERVATION

- Here observer and observe or subject both are controlled.
- When observation is pre-planned and definite, then it is termed as controlled observation.
- In control observation, mechanical devices are used for precision and standardized. Types of Observation
- So, control increase accuracy, reduce bias, ensure reliability and standardization. Some of the devices are as under.
- Observational plan
- Observational schedule
- Mechanical appliances like, camera, maps, films, video, tape recorder etc
- Team of observers
- Socio Metric Scale

UN-CONTROLLED OBSERVATION

- Uncontrolled observation takes place in natural setting without the influence of external or outside control.
- The observer does not plan in advance but this is related to day-to-day happenings and socio-cultural problems. It studies some of our life situations.

DIRECT OBSERVATION

This means observation of an event personally by the observer when it takes place. This method is flexible and allows the observer to see and record subtle aspects of events and behavior as they occur. He is also free to shift places, change the focus of the observation. Example: Observer is physically present to monitor

Indirect Observation : This does not involve the physical presence of the observer, and the recording is done by mechanical, photographic or electronic devices. Example : Recording customer and employee movements by a special motion picture camera mounted in a department of large store.

ADVANTAGES OF OBSERVATION METHOD

- * Reliable and objective
- * Natural setting
- * Useful for young and shy children
- * No need of equipment or tool
- * Useful for individuals as well as groups
- * Immediate detection of problems
- * Most direct measure of behavior
- * Provides direct information
- * Easy to complete, saves time
- * can be used in natural or experimental settings

DISADVANTAGES OF OBSERVATION METHOD

- * Subjectivity
- * Less accuracy
- * Interference
- * Objective recording
- * Lack of competency
- * Unnatural situation
- * Expensive
- * Slow and laborious
- * Biased
- * Lack of cooperation from peoples
- * Favoritism

- * May require training
- * Observer's presence may create artificial situation
Potential to overlook meaningful aspects Difficult to analyze
- * In some cases, the use of observational methods may be unethical, as in observing people without their knowledge or consent

OBSERVATION TOOLS AND RECORDING DEVICES

- *Observation guides
- *Recording sheets or checklist
- *Schedule
- *Field observation log
- *Mechanical devices

CONCLUSION

Under the observation method, the information is sought by way of investigator's own direct observation without asking from the respondent. For instance, in a study relating to consumer behavior, the investigator instead of asking the brand of wrist watch used by the respondent, may himself look at the watch. The main advantage of this method is that subjective bias is eliminated, as such is relatively less demanding of active cooperation on the part of respondents as happens to be the case in the interview or the questionnaire method. This method is particularly suitable in studies (i.e. respondents) who are not capable of giving verbal reports of their feelings for one reason or the other.