

# METHODS AND TECHNIQUES IN RESEARCH OF SOCIOLOGY

Lesson No.	Title	Activity
4	Methods and techniques in research of sociology	List out sociologists and their major work in which different methods of research used

## Summary

In Sociology, social scientists have developed methods and techniques for the systematic collection of data. Various processes, principles and strategies have been devised to seek answers to a number of problems. This approach is referred to as method in sociology and each and every method has its own techniques and tools of data collection. These methods and tools of data collection are used based on the nature and the type of problem under study.

## Research Methods

There are various kinds of methods used for doing research.

### Historical Method

- This method engages in the evaluation of sources of information about the past and the analysis of authentic sources for detailed data about the period being studied. It involves the study of origins, development and transformation of social institutions.
- The main approach is to try to get some insights from the past experiences with regard to social behaviour.

### Comparative Method

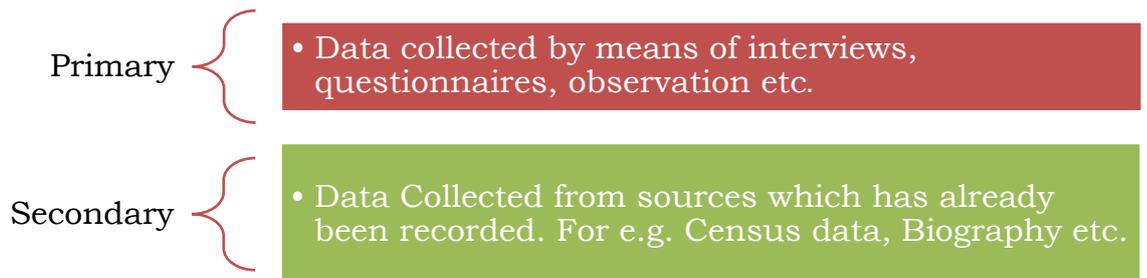
- This method is used to study different kinds of groups and societies and to compare them for differences and similarities.
- Comparative method includes both the historical and the cross-cultural method. This method was first used by Emile Durkheim and has also been used by others like Weber.

**Functionalist Method:** This method holds great significance in sociology and anthropology. This method is mostly employed in examining social and cultural items by locating them in a wider context.

**Empirical Method** This method refers to data collection from the field. The techniques used in this method are observation, survey, case study, questionnaire and interview.

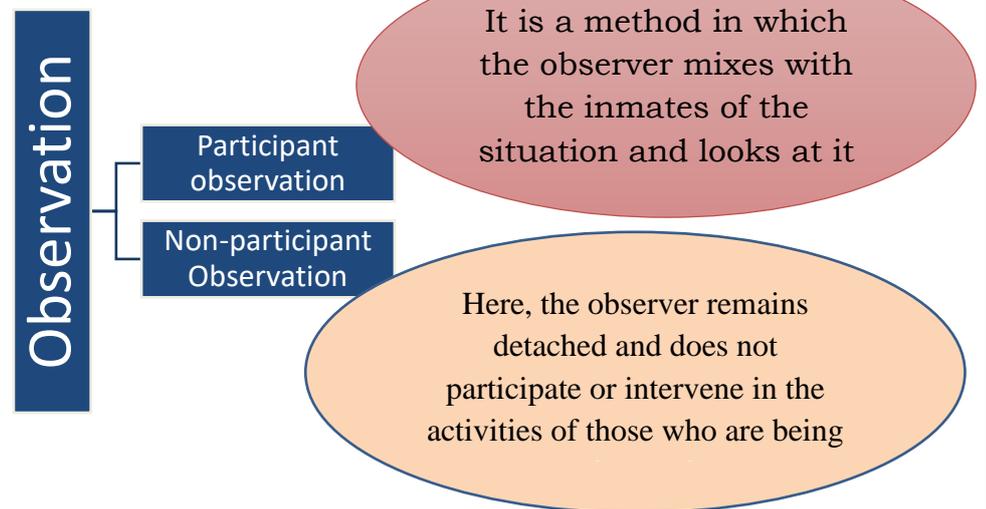
**Experimental Method:** This mostly done in is in the natural sciences. However, there are examples in sociology of 'field-experiments'. These take place in the 'real-world' and not in the laboratory

**Sources of Data:** Sociologists make use of both primary and secondary data in research



**Techniques of Data Collection:** Some of the major techniques of data collection are: Observation, survey, case study, Questionnaire and interview.

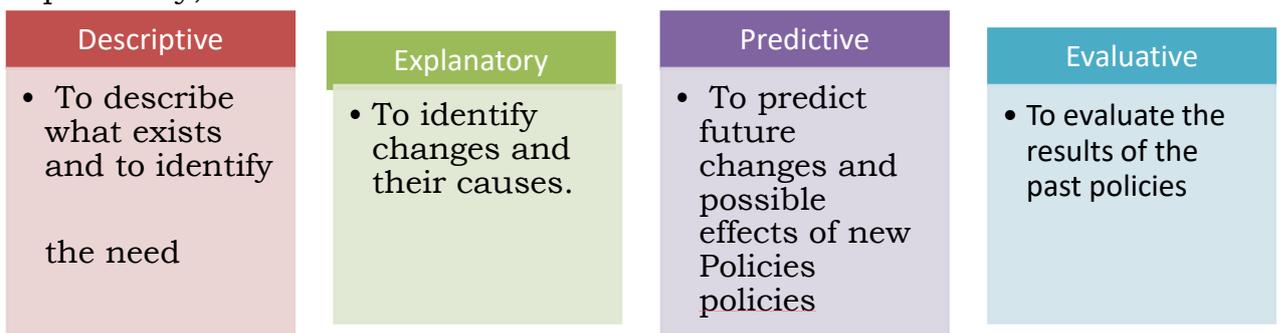
**Observation:** Observation as a tool provide rich source of information. It aims to explore important events and situations capturing human conduct as it actually happens. .



There are also other kinds of observation based on different kind of classification: These are: *Structured & Unstructured* observation; *Natural & Laboratory* Observation, *Open & Hidden* Observation, *Direct & Indirect* Observation and *Covert & Overt* Observation

**Social Survey**

Social survey is a systematic and comprehensive study of a particular community to analyse a social problem. There are four types of survey. These are: Descriptive, Explanatory, Predictive and evaluative.

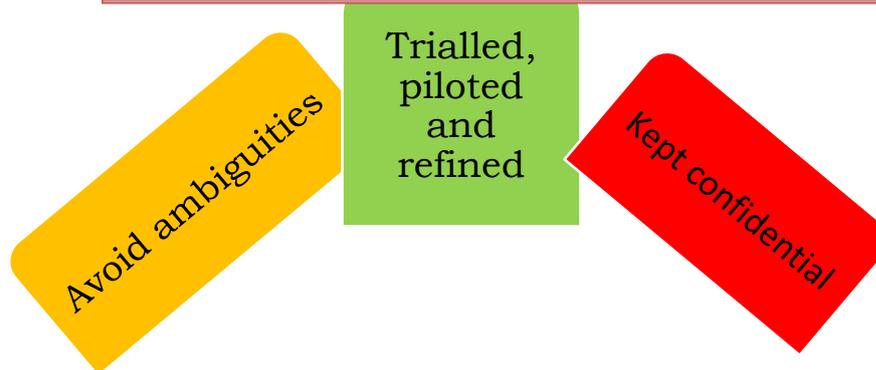


## Other Techniques of Data Collection

**The Case Study Method:** This involves the study of social phenomena through the analysis of an individual case. The case may be a person, a group, an institution, a classroom, an episode, a process, a society or any unit of social life

**Questionnaire:** It usually consist of a list of questions, but should also include clear instructions and space for answers This is carefully prepared with simple phrases and is generally sent by post.

While using questionnaire as tool, following considerations are required



**Interview:** Interview as a tool provide detailed information about the subject to be studied. It involves a face-to-face talk between the researcher and the informant for the purpose of gathering information

**Structured interview** the brief formal interview in which the working of the questions and the order in which they are asked is fixed is called **structured interview**.

**Unstructured interview** the freer discursive interview is called unstructured interview.

## Evaluate Yourself

1. Under what conditions, comparative method is most useful in Sociological research?
2. Which of the techniques of data collection would you use if you have to collect data from 100 respondents those who are living in some foreign countries?
3. How is case study useful in studying social phenomena?
4. Compare and contrast interview and questionnaire as techniques of data collection.