UNIT 2  SECONDARY DATA

Contents
2.1  Introduction
2.2  Census
2.3  Registration System and Population Registers
2.4  Sample Survey – National Sample Survey
2.5  Handbooks
2.6  Gazetteer
2.7  Films
2.8  Manuscript
2.9  Documents
2.10  Administrative Records
2.11  Other Sources of Data
2.12  Summary
     References
     Suggested Reading
     Sample Questions

Learning Objectives

After studying this topic, the student should understand:

➢ the importance of collection of reliable quantitative as well as qualitative empirical data;
➢ various techniques of secondary data collection;
➢ the sources of valuable demographic data collected through census, registration method, sample surveys, administrative records, handbooks, gazetteers, etc.; and
➢ that historical reconstruction is often made on the availability of historical records, films, manuscripts and earlier documents.

2.1  INTRODUCTION

The most important problem that social scientists including anthropologists of the day face, concerns the collection of relevant reliable data. The scholars belonging to various social sciences have developed their own techniques of data collection, depending upon the nature of their discipline. Data on births and deaths are normally obtained from vital (or civil) registration system. In countries where registration of marriage is compulsory, data on marriages and divorces, etc. are again obtained from the civil registration system. However, the registration of territorial movement largely relates to international migrants only. There are very few countries in the world from which data on internal
movement becomes available from their population registers. These data are otherwise obtained by including some specific questions in the population censuses or by conducting special sample survey queries. Data on social mobility are partly obtained in population censuses and partly by conducting special sample surveys. In India, as in many other countries, a large mass of demographic data are collected regularly through nationally sponsored surveys. Certain demographic characteristics of the individuals and/or heads of the households are also collected from time to time as part of the routine administrative work in various government and quasi-government organisations, for example, at the time of school admission, for the purpose of procuring ration cards, for obtaining medical services, for voting at elections, etc. All these become administrative sources of population statistics. In this unit we will learn about different forms of secondary data collection techniques which are categorically important in anthropology and its research.

2.2 CENSUS

A census count offers a spectrum of population at a particular point in time covering a wide range of demographic, social and economic attributes of population. Fortunately, census once taken tends to become a continuous process repeated every ten or five years. Population censuses are generally conducted on decennial basis and are the most important sources of demographic information. In India, although estimates of population census were obtained during the time of Chandragupta Maurya and Akbar, but the first population census with a modern concept covering almost the whole of India was carried out in 1872. The next censuses which were conducted in our country were after every ten years. The census of 2001 is the 14th census and though collection of 2011 census has been completed, the analysis of the data is awaited.

In India the first systematic census in 1865-72 was an attempt to collect demographic data. The second census was conducted in 1881 and since then decennial census has become a regular feature.

The Indian census till 1931 was de-facto or a synchronous census. Census enumeration was undertaken throughout the country on a particular night in order to count the people at the place where they are found except for snow bound and inaccessible areas where census was done at a later stage. This practice of simultaneous enumeration of the whole population on a fixed date was given up after 1931 census due to inherent difficulties and the concept of de-jure (counting people at place of residence) was adopted. Under this scheme the enumeration is spread over a period of roughly 3 weeks but the count is brought to a fixed date by making a revisional round to make any changes in the entries which may arise due to occurrence of births or deaths between the date of visit to the household and the date of reference.

The evolution of modern census was gradual. In many areas particularly the Far East, a tradition of household canvasses of population registrations continued for quite some time before public confidence, administrative experience and technology could combine to produce counts which could match the standards of completeness, accuracy and simultaneity of modern census. The censuses of pre-19th century which began with the objectives of determining military, tax, and labour obligations had to change their scope in the 19 century to meet other administrative needs of the modern society. The new items relating
to the needs of business, labour, education, research. Now included on the census questionnaires reflected new problems confronting the state and society. In India, the date of census is carefully chosen so as to fall at the time when most parts of the country are easily accessible and people are not too busy with their economic pursuits and are relatively free from festivals also so that they would be available at the places of their normal residence and comparatively free from movement and will find time enough to answer. Except the first census which was taken in November all other have been taken in February and March.

Census gives a complete account of a population in its social and economic setting and presents a picture of a population at a fixed point of time. This certainly helps the researcher who ventures to study any group, community, village etc. and learn about the demographics of the population.

2.3 REGISTRATION SYSTEM AND POPULATION REGISTERS

The practice of population registration has been quite common even before the emergence of regular censuses. The Far East has a great demographic tradition of population registration. This practice was common in ancient China, its major function being the control of population. The family constituted the basic social unit in this system of record keeping. Theoretically, such a record keeping should have yielded a continuous population register but in practice the compilations were either not made or landed in inaccessible archives. The Chinese system of registration gradually diffused to nearby lands also. Japan also adopted Chinese system and developed Koseki or household registers.

There are evidences to show that there existed such household registers for over a thousand years. It may be worth mentioning here that Japan's first census or a complete canvass of households was not attempted until 1920. Similarly, Korea is also reported to have frequent compilations of populations and households at least since 1395. In modern times, registration systems have been adopted by different countries to record births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, employment, etc. Some countries call them as population registers. These registers are some times completed at a single point in time, sometimes are repeated periodically and sometimes are cumulative. The cumulative registers are brought up-to-date by recording these occurrences. The chronology of important events in the development of civil registration and of the vital statistics derived from it has been brought out very usefully in the United Nations (1955) Handbook of Vital Statistics Methods. According to this handbook, vital statistics registration system can include legal registration, statistical recording and reporting of occurrences and the collection, compilation, analysis, presentation, and distribution of statistics pertaining to vital events like deaths, still-births, marriages, divorces, adoptions and legal separations. The demographers, of course, are concerned with the vital statistics and less with the legal issues of the documents. In most of the countries, it is obligatory on the part of the individuals to get each birth and death registered with the concerned registration office otherwise it can invite legal action. Since, such registrations are continuous, compulsory and legal, therefore the data supplied by these registers are quite satisfactory. However, the quantum and quality of data being collected by the registration authority vary from country to country. It has been estimated that reliable records of deaths and births are available for
about half the world's population while marriage and divorce statistics may cover only one third of the world's population. In India, the registration of births and deaths is the obligation of the head of the family. The population register is maintained by the municipalities in urban areas and by local revenue official in the rural areas. The registration in India has improved significantly after independence, making the data pertaining to deaths and births in India almost complete and fairly reliable. Such registers are of help to a researcher conducting anthropological investigation.

2.4 SAMPLE SURVEY – NATIONAL SAMPLE SURVEY

Besides the population census many countries in the world have been collecting population data through nationally organised sample surveys. A complete national canvass of the population would be always recognised as a census. On the other hand, a canvass of selected households in a village or urban centre with a view to collecting information on demographic attributes, socio-economic conditions, etc. may be regarded as surveys. But neither the use of sampling nor the geographical size of the area provides a universally recognised criterion for demarcating the boundaries between a census and a survey.

In India National Sample Survey (NSS) was started in 1950. The National Sample Survey (NSS) is a nation-wide, large-scale, survey operation which is done on a regular basis and is operated in sequential turns. NSS was introduced to fill up data gaps for socio-economic planning and policy making by means of sample surveys.

In March 1970, the NSS was restructured and all its work facets were clubbed and were introduced as one Government organisation. From then on it came to be known as National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). It was from then on taken over by the Governing Council to impart neutrality and sovereignty in collecting, processing and publishing of NSS data.

It has been providing valuable demographic data at national and state levels on items such as population, births, deaths, internal migration, employment and unemployment, morbidity, etc. along with many other types of socio-cultural information. Such data is highly helpful to the anthropological researcher. This kind of data has been collected from time to time. A round in NSS covers a certain number of items on which data is collected from the field and processed. The subjects covered are, household income, expenditure, rural retail price of selected commodities, employment and unemployment, demographic characteristics, size of landholdings, savings, etc. It reflects that the surveys conducted in addition to the regular censuses quite often can provide vital additional information for population scientists.

2.5 HANDBOOKS

Handbooks provide ready reference. It is a kind of book which contains reference work, set of instructions etc. It is also called by some as a vade mecum (Latin, "go with me") or pocket reference. This is so as its main purpose is to be easily carried around while looking for things.
We will find that handbooks may be based on any specific or specialised theme. Whatever the theme, it is always hugely informative. They are designed in such a way that they can be easily grasped by the reader and contain answers to questions related to the topic concerned.

It is to be noted that handbooks are not necessarily always pocket sized. They act as genuine reference books and deliver ready reference, for example *Economic Anthropology, Forensic Anthropology and Archaeology, Religion and Health*, etc. Handbooks are widely used in the sciences and social sciences, including anthropology as quick references for various kinds of secondary data.

### 2.6 GAZETTEER

A gazetteer is usually described as a book or a part of a book which contains a list of names of places with information about them. It may also contain a map or an atlas with it. However, this name is also used to describe a daily newspaper other than providing as a reference to give knowledge about places and their names.

A gazetteer conventionally includes data about the geographical composition of any country, locality, continent etc. It contains information about their physical features like roads, rivers, mountains, etc. It also provides knowledge about their population. Such information is of great help to the anthropologist who will be visiting the place of research for the first time.

#### BOX

Gazetteers are of different kinds based on the kind of information they provide. They are:

- **World gazetteer:** It is a geographic dictionary index which contains data of the world. It includes the geographic structure of a country/area including its social statistics like literacy rate, GDP etc. Such gazetteers are easily found in libraries.

- **Short-form gazetteer:** It contains a list of names of places with their locations. This kind of referencing is found in place-name indexes of atlases.

- **Long-form (or descriptive) gazetteer:** In long-form or descriptive gazetteer, the description of places is given in length. It also includes the places’ histories, maps, photographs etc.

- **Thematic gazetteer:** This contains a list of places according to a theme, for example famous buildings, markets, oil stations etc.

- **Address gazetteer:** This contains a list of addresses which are geo-referenced.

### 2.7 FILMS

Films can be viewed as a medium for recording events, as a form of entertainment or as a form of art. In all its forms it can educate and provide knowledge to society. In anthropology films are used as a medium or as a
secondary source to give more information about a particular society or about the ways of life or about any social event.

Not only are films seen as creating awareness about societal realities, but they also create new ideas in the minds of the viewer. Popularity of this medium led to its study which is called film theory and is now a recognised field in academics. Films can be studied from structural, feminist, artistic, psychoanalytic and many other perspectives. Disciplines including anthropology seek help from films as whatever is depicted in films can be seen as indicators of real life. Not only can the films, but their reviews also help in furthering anthropological research. Besides all genres of films, there are films which are specific to the study of anthropology. They are made within the realm of anthropology. While films in general may add to the development of a research, ethnographic films are made either to portray empirical evidence of a society's way of life (which surely helps in a new research) or is made in the process of a research as a visual representation or interpretation of the culture studied. Either ways, such ethnographic films can be used as a secondary source of data in one's anthropological research.

An ethnographic film records and reveals patterns of culture. In fact, other genres of films reveal such patterns as well. By reason of their content and form or both, all films are ethnographic as they all reveal cultural patterning in some way or the other in varied degrees. Though ethnographic filming became an institutionalised scientific discipline only during the 1950s, almost every people in the world had been filmed in one way or the other, some groups repeatedly or intensively, even before the turn of the century and the initial years. Ethnographic films developed from the fragmentary and idiosyncratic to systematic and thorough with technological and communication revolution of the 1950s. Moreover, ethnographic filming which began as a phenomenon of colonialism slowly evolved as a scientific discipline. Some films have even aided cultural renewal. The most exciting possibility of ethnographic films is to enable to record and review the range of patterns in the behaviour of man. According to Regnault (1931), films preserve forever all human behaviour for the needs of our studies.

Regnault, who rightly understood the importance of a film in preserving patterns of behaviour, was the first person to make an ethnographic film in the year 1895. He championed the systematic use of motion pictures in anthropology and proposed the formation of anthropological film archives. The first film made by Regnault portrayed Wolof woman making pots. The film showed the Wolof method of making pots in which the shallow concave wheel is turned by one hand while the clay is shaped by the other.

The Torres Straits Expedition led by A.C. Haddon was the turning point in the history of anthropology for it transformed the Nineteenth Century speculative anthropology into a scientific discipline with standards of evidence comparable to those of other Natural Sciences. A whole battery of recording methods was used such as genealogical method, photography and motion pictures. Haddon's ethnographic films are the earliest known to have been made in the field.

Haddon invigorated his colleagues to arrange themselves in order to conduct fieldwork with photographic gears. He believed in the advantages of film making in the field and expressed his thoughts in a letter to Baldwin Spencer:
in 1901. Motivated by Haddon, Spencer with his partner studied the Australian aborigines by filming them for thirty years. Rudolf Poch took movie and stereoscopic cameras on his field trips to New Guinea and southwest Africa in 1904 and 1907. He made films of dance and sequences of children playing, of girls carrying water and a man being shaved with an obsidian razor.

The first use of the film in applied anthropology came towards the end of the pioneer periods of ethnographic filming. This was the origin of the colonial cinema. By 1912, it had occurred to the Americans who administered the Philippines that films might serve a purpose in native education, where a language barrier prevented giving lessons successfully by word of mouth.

By the 1920s the social documentary film came into being. It was basically used as a mass education medium sensitive to the needs of Government policy or of opposition politics in various countries. By this time the ‘anthropological teaching film’ had evolved its canonical form, the single concept films or ceremonies, craft and the like. Another form, the ‘comparison film’, was less common. In format the ‘anthropological teaching film’ was little over ten minutes to about an hour’s duration, silent, with inter-titles which sometimes took up more than half of the film. After the adoption of sound in 1927, voice-over narration gradually replaced titles.

The middle 1930s was a very controversial phase for anthropological films. There was constant dialogue about its importance and acceptability. This shift towards filming and photography was directed primarily at recording the types of non-verbal behaviour for which there existed neither vocabulary nor conceptualised methods of observation in which the observation had to precede the codification.

The use of film to elicit responses was adopted to sociological research by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin in the early 1960s. During this period, definition and typologies of ethnographic films were devised in accordance with probable use to which they can be put. Instruction in ethnographic filming, initiated by Margaret Mead in Columbia in the 1940s has, of late, become extremely popular. Jean Rouch and Robert Gardner, both visual anthropologists, trained individually a number of filmmakers in ethnographic filming.

The history of ethnographic films is rich in examples of unique capacity to record the multilevel nature of events, of its usefulness in teaching new ways of perception and of its power to evoke deeply positive feelings about mankind by communicating the essence of a people. Ethnographic films can be very useful if they are used as data which are incorporated in teaching. But as a form of public entertainment, they can often be embarrassing or uncomfortable. The idea that an ethnographic film speaks for itself is wrong.

Now-a-days, videotape recording has become very popular with both, the instructors and students of ethnography. The use of videotape in teaching ethnographic and participatory filming to students with little or no previous experience offers a number of advantages. These may be identified as simplicity, economy and speed.

The second advantage of videotape recording is the economy of production. The cost of videotape equipments and training are comparatively low, and due to its capacity to be reused repeatedly, the expenses of raw material are minimal.
and that of processing, non existent. This is important because it is when the students are beginning to master filming techniques that they need to shoot most often.

The third advantage is that of speed in the processing of raw data. With videotape, the filmmaker student can review what he has filmed a minute earlier and assess his own level of achievement. If he is not satisfied with the result, there is every likelihood that he may be able to shoot the same scene over again, right way. Another important benefit is the opportunity videotape offers for getting feedback that will help in understanding and editing from the very people who form the subject matter of the videotape. This offers a chance to observe and interpret cultural material in a simple and speedy way.

### 2.8 MANUSCRIPT

It is any work or document that is written by hand as opposed to the printed word. It can be a writer’s text or an article for publication. It can also define that information that is recorded by hand using other means, like making a graffiti, or chiseling on a piece of rock or making inscriptions on clay etc. In today’s times, a handwritten piece of text would also include a typed text on a computer.

It is not the matter of a written work which defines a manuscript. A manuscript may have in it material like figures, diagrams, maps, pictorial decorations, etc. Manuscripts may be designed in the form of a book, a scroll or a parchment. In the past, before printing was invented, all written recorded material were in the form of manuscripts and their production and reproduction was done by hand. These were usually scrolls or codices and were made on vellum, papyrus and later, on paper. Examples of such may be the Bible, philosophical texts, administrative texts etc.

A researcher who looks for a manuscript in a library would try to look for any hand-written archived item. Such manuscripts may help in anthropological research to view the historical aspect of a topic to be studied.

As mentioned above, when it comes to books, magazines etc, a manuscript is taken to be the original written document. In film and in theatre, a manuscript implies the author’s dramatized text.

Manuscripts in any form may be of secondary help to a researcher depending on the kind of data (s)he wishes to collect.

### 2.9 DOCUMENTS

A document is a formal piece of writing which is used as or acts as a record of events. It is generally a term used in business and Government circles. However it can also imply a film, a photograph, an audio recording or a digitalized document. Documents may be categorized as private, public or secret. Sometimes it is also called a draft or a proof.
BOX

There are accepted standards for specific applications which may be defined as a document in various fields, such as:

- Business and Accounting: invoice, quote, RFP, proposal, contract
- Law and Politics: summons, certificate, license, gazette
- Government and Industry: white paper
- Media and Marketing: brief, mock-up, script
- Such standard documents can be created based on a template.

A document is either handwritten with ink or it is mechanically produced either at a printing press or a personal printer. In the past, documents were written with handmade ink on dried leaves, papyrus, with sharp objects on stones, or stamped on clay.

BOX

Modern electronic means of storing and displaying documents include:

- Desktop computer and monitor (or laptop, tablet PC, etc.); optionally with a printer to obtain a hard copy
- Personal digital assistant (PDA)
- Dedicated e-book device
- Electronic paper
- Information appliances
- Digital audio players
- Radio and television service provider

In anthropology documents can be vital in providing formal information about the people and place to be studied. Documents can provide data regarding the political scenario of a community or can give information about their health status etc.

2.10 ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

In Government work a number of things are recorded as part of routine processes. For example, at the time of admission of children in schools/colleges, their age, parental occupation and income are recorded along with certain other particulars. Ration cards contain the name, sex, age and relationship with the head and every member of the household. In hospitals and dispensaries, records are made from the name, sex, and age of the patient along with the nature of the ailment. When people go to countries outside India or come to our own country from other counties, information is collected on number of items before embarking, or at the time of disembarking from the plane or the ship. The electoral rolls prepared at the time of elections provide the name, sex and age of the persons who are eligible for voting separately for each geographical area. The Labour Bureau collects many types of details about the working
population in the organised sector of industries, and the central and the state
governments bring out publications giving information about their employees.
Some of these data are published by the concerned organization at national
level, some at the state levels and some at the lower levels of aggregations and
some of the data are not published at all like the information related to the
ration card holder. These and similar records become another source of data.
While using these data, one must, however, be clear about the concepts and
definitions used by the particular organisations for collecting the data, and
also about the reliability of statistics published by them otherwise one may
lend himself in a situation similar to the use of vital registration records which
are completely unreliable for most scientific studies.

### 2.11 OTHER SOURCES OF DATA

Apart from these major sources of basic data, anthropologists, especially
anthropologists studying demography, do make use of migration reports,
linguistic reports, national and international reports, estimates and projections.
The United Nations in recent years is increasingly assuming the responsibility
of collecting vital population data from its member countries and reproducing
and regrouping the same in a comparable form. There are some countries,
though in a very small minority, which maintain proper migration records.
Most of the developed countries do bring out migration reports from time to
time which yield quite useful information for the population geographers. In
the old world, China’s pass book system for each family provides basic
information at micro level. Similarly, in many of the countries which remained
under British rule, linguistic reports have been prepared by the British which
even today can form the basis for any analysis of this attribute. India was one
such country where such reports had been produced by the British through the
agencies of census operation. Similarly, the estimates which are attempted at
annually in different countries are not the primary data but are derived from
other sources. These estimates are produced in a variety of ways. For instance,
the estimates may be derived from continuous population registers mentioned
under registration systems. Secondly, these may be arrived at with the help of
sample surveys. Thirdly, the estimates can also be computed by carrying the
population from the previous census either by mathematical extrapolation of
the past trends or by a component method using birth and death registration
and symptomatic data reflecting migration. The quality of such estimates
depends largely on the type of method used. Such estimates are usually
published in national reports such as *National Statistical Yearbook*. Population
projections relate to estimates of population for the future. These projections
may be made for the total population or by age sex, marital status, manpower
required, etc. The compilation projections at international scale are not as
common as the computation of estimates.

### 2.12 SUMMARY

The collection of relevant data is a major concern for social scientists as well
as anthropologists today. Each discipline seeks to get information as per its
requirement depending upon its nature, scope and subject matter. Yet one of
the fundamental requirements of each discipline is its dependence of socio-
demographic information. Census, registration of vital (civil) statistics, sample
survey, population registers, administrative records, handbooks and gazetteers form major reliable sources of secondary data for the use of anthropologists. Besides these, historical records, manuscripts, documents, films, maps, and other sources of data like migration reports, linguistic reports, international and national reports, estimates and projections are also considered as reliable sources of secondary data.

References


Suggested Reading


Sample Questions

1) What do you understand by secondary sources of data? Briefly discuss some of the useful sources of secondary data for anthropologists.

2) Define Census. Write an exhaustive note on “Indian Census through ages”.

3) Why are Registration System and National Sample Surveys important to a student of Anthropology? What kind of secondary data do we generate from them? Discuss.

4) Write short notes on the importance of the following in the discipline of Anthropology:
   i) Handbooks
   ii) Gazetteers
   iii) Films
   iv) Administrative records
   v) Documents
   vi) Manuscripts