

Development Research Methods
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Lecture-09
Week3, Lesson 3: Introducing Qualitative Research Methods

Hello and welcome to week 3 and lesson 3 of the NPTEL MOOC's course on development research methods. So far in this we have covered 2 modules. In the first module we looked at the theoretical and conceptual foundations to studying development research methods and development studies. As part of the first module we looked at the various types and forms of development studies and development research. We understood what is called rigor in development studies and development research, we also looked at the issues of ethics in development studies. And most importantly we got introduced to what is referred to as the worldviews- the philosophical paradigms to different kinds of research methods in development studies.

In module 2 we have so far covered different kinds of reviews of literature particularly focusing on what is called the systematic review of literature. We have also studied selected articles from M.N. Srinivas's very celebrated book known as 'The Fieldworker and the Field'.

In today's lesson we will study the different forms of qualitative research or what I have titled as 'introduction to qualitative research methods'.

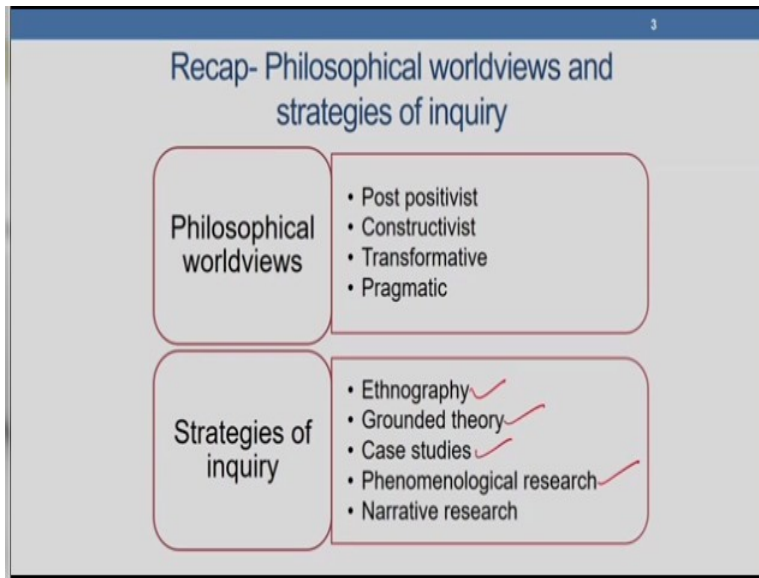
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What we will cover in today's lesson

1. Designing qualitative research
2. Qualitative research – characteristics, data collection and data recording procedures
3. Qualitative purpose statements
4. Theory use, inductive approach and data analysis in qualitative research
5. Validity, reliability, generalizability and writing-up

Now what we will cover in today's lesson are as follows; we will see how to design qualitative research. So, we will look at what are the different components when we are designing a qualitative research, the characteristics, data collection and data recording procedures of qualitative research. We will also look at some of the examples of qualitative purpose statements in the sense that there are various strategies of inquiries or various inquires that are followed as part of qualitative research methods. And what I have tried to do is to introduce lesson is to bring some examples referring to qualitative purpose statements as part of each of these methods of inquiry. We will also look at what is called theory use, inductive approach and data analysis in qualitative research. And finally we will end this lesson on issues of validity, reliability, generalizability and things to keep in mind when we are writing up qualitative research.

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Now before we do that let me recapitulate some of the important points that we had covered in lesson 2 of week 1 when we studied worldviews or philosophical paradigms of development research methods. Now in lesson 2 of week 1, we studied the paradigms of development research in which we began with what constitute paradigms or worldviews. We studied that worldviews are a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that the researcher begins to or makes an attempt to study. We also saw that there are various terminologies that are used for worldviews; sometimes we refer to epistemologies, ontologies, we also refer to paradigms and so on. And all of these are broadly conceived as research methodologies. But four philosophical worldviews were primarily focused on, that are showing on your slide, they are the post positivist, constructivist, transformative and pragmatic worldviews.

And post positivist is mostly used by the scientific tradition where we are entering into a fact finding sort of exercise. The constructivist is also referred to as the interpretivist paradigm and we also discussed that the qualitative researchers or qualitative research methodologists focus a lot on the interpretative or the constructivist worldview. We also got introduced to transformative or advocacy and participatory worldviews where the focus was primarily on action research formats. And lastly the pragmatic or the pluralist worldviews where various kinds of considerations went into deciding what is the kind of research method that should be followed

for investigating a certain question and which is why mixed methods research forms a very important part of the pluralistic viewpoint or the pragmatic viewpoint.

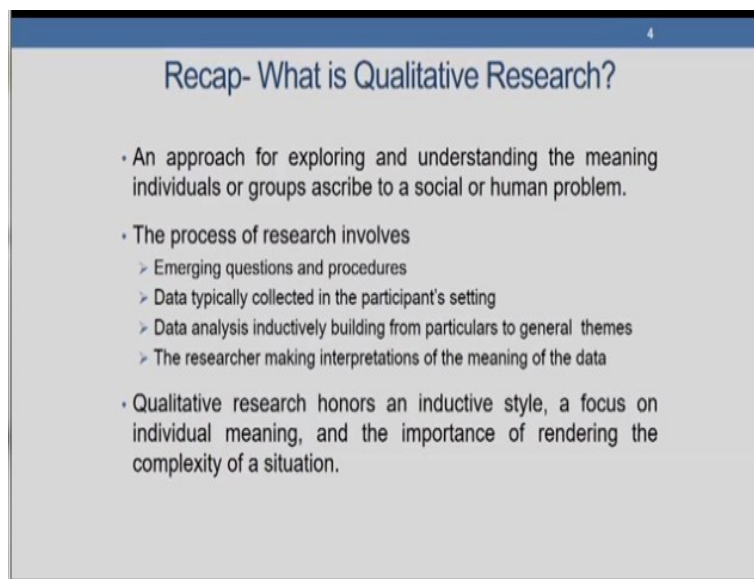
We have also been introduced some of the basic strategies of inquiry pertaining to qualitative research. So, in qualitative research the numbers and types approaches have become more clearly visible particularly during the 1990s and the 2000s. And among strategies of inquiry, there has been a lot of focus on ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research and narrative research. In the classes following today's lesson, the focus will primarily be on focus group discussions, interviews, participatory research methods which would include some examples related to ethnography, how to conduct case studies, how to do case coding, how to do field diaries and so on.

However if I have to again sort of revise or give you some kind of a very brief introduction to each of these strategies of inquiry beginning with ethnography, it is nothing but a strategy in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting primarily observational and interviewed data. In the case of grounded theory, grounded theory is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives the general abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants. So, the researcher tries to derive a theory out of the different processes of interaction with the participant themselves.

Case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, or a process. And mostly case studies are time-bound and activity-bound and therefore various kinds of methods are followed to collect data as part of case studies. To give you an example, if I am carrying out a study on let us say complementary feeding practices of a certain community of children in a certain locality. Let us say we are studying complementary feeding practices of children within the age group of 6 months to 2 years or under 2 years and we are focusing on mothers who are particularly vulnerable to various kinds of diseases in a certain community in a state of India. Then one of the ways to investigate this question would be to follow specific case studies of mothers with children under 2 and then come up with various methods of data collection techniques and take down in-depth interviews from the cases and come up with a conclusion on it.

Phenomenological research is a strategy in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participants. And this is where mostly we come across the term called 'lived experiences', where the researcher herself or himself keeps aside his or her own experiences and does not bring his or her own experiences to the field, rather the focus is on participants' lived experience and drawing a conclusion out of or doing a systematic study of those lived experiences and then coming up with a conclusion based on it. So, understanding lived experiences of participants marks the philosophy of phenomenology. Narrative research is when the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more participants to narrate stories about their lives and then they are recorded in proper formats and proper codes can be formed out of different kinds of narratives taken from different samples that have been identified by certain sampling procedures.

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We also studied in the paradigms of development research methods regarding what exactly is qualitative research and we came up with a formulation or a brief definition of what is qualitative research. It is nothing but an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. And the process of qualitative research involves some of the following questions or features. One is what are the emerging questions and procedures. The data is typically collected in the participants setting.

So, in the previous example that I took about complementary feeding practices among a certain community, let us say we visit a certain teagarden community in the state of Assam and we collect data on complementary feeding practices from the mothers of children under 2 from the teagarden community. We ensure that the participant setting is intact. The researcher goes to the participant setting and collects information while being there. Data analysis is inductively built from particular to general themes and the researcher makes interpretations of the meaning of this data. And therefore we say that qualitative research honors an inductive style with the focus on individual meaning and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation which is why the writing up of qualitative research is of extreme importance where the writing style is rich with quotations and narratives taken from the participants' setting.

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What is Qualitative Research?	
	Qualitative approach
Philosophical assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructivist/advocacy/participatory knowledge claims
Strategies of inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, and narrative
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended questions, emerging approaches, text or image data
Practices of research as the researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions him-herself • Collects participant meanings • Focuses on a single concept or phenomenon • Brings personal values into the study • Studies the context or setting or participants • Validates the accuracy of findings • Makes interpretations of the data • Creates an agenda for change or reform • Collaborates with the participants

Now so to in a way to summarize what is qualitative research, we can think of them as following; there are philosophical assumptions, philosophical assumptions maybe guided by constructivist, advocacy, and participatory knowledge claims. The strategies of inquiry could be any or all of the following- phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study and narratives. The methods could be in the form of open-ended questions, looking at emerging approaches, text or image data which I will elaborate on in the consequence slides.

The practices of the research as the researcher is extremely important in the case of qualitative research and is also one of the limitations of qualitative research because it is often pretty clear that the researchers' bias enters into the qualitative research findings. Therefore it is extremely important how the researcher positions himself or herself while conducting an inquiry with respect to qualitative research. So, the position of the researcher himself or herself, it is important to clarify that in the beginning of research. The researcher collects participant meanings, focuses on a single concept or phenomenon. The researcher brings personal values into the study and studies the context or setting of the participants, the researcher validates the accuracy of findings, makes interpretations of the data, creates an agenda for change or reform, and collaborates with participants. And all of this takes place with the active role of the researcher sometimes being a leader, sometimes being a facilitator or a moderator, and sometimes being an observant- an active observant or a passive observant of what is happening in the participants' setting.

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Now let us come to the first part of the lesson which is on designing qualitative research. Now, every research project has to start from somewhere and typically the starting point is an idea. Sometimes this idea originates because of a particular problem or a situation that the researcher is in or a certain experience that our researcher has. For example you may observe that you have gone to a bank for receiving some information regarding a certain scheme. And in spite of the fact that there has been significant technological upgradation in the bank, the personnel

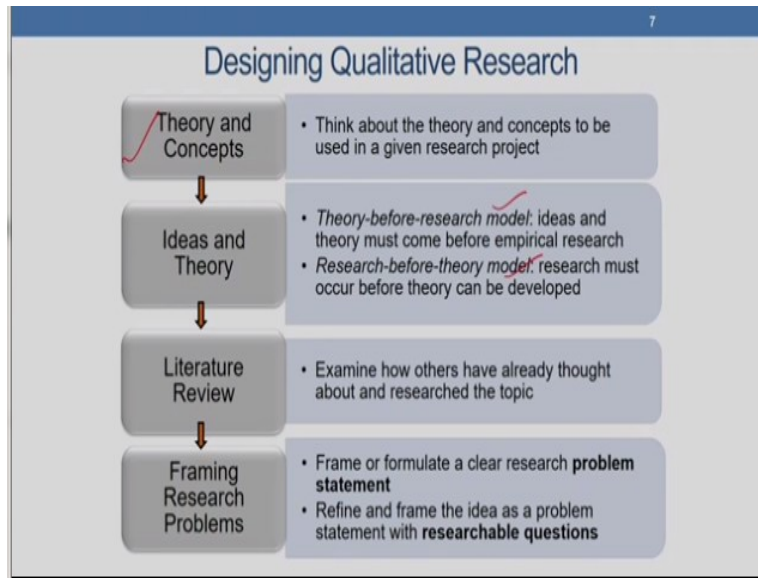
employed in the bank take a lot of time to provide you the information that you are seeking for the particular scheme. A rural manual worker maybe in the possession of an MGNREGS job card and yet the jobs are not forthcoming or there is not much employment available to the rural manual worker.

You might also face a situation where the state government might have introduced electronic wage payment system to the beneficiaries of various schemes and it is expected that because an efficient electronic wage payment system is in place, wages of different workers would be in their bank accounts. However, it has not been received. Now in some situations ideas move from information you hear but you may not actually experience. For example you are watching news and you come across the news where it says that demonetization which was implemented as an efficient strategy was supposed to curb corruption yet has resulted in employment losses. So, then you start wondering why on earth demonetization resulted in such an issue.

Or you read in the newspaper that Guwahati city is one of the most important human trafficking points in the whole of India. Now such situations may awake different kinds of curiosities in your mind and then you start to think about how these questions could be explored in the form of a research question and how you might research these phenomena. Now these examples that I have just cited of watching through news or the experiences that you face or somebody else you know might have faced in a certain situation results and serves important for purposes.

First is that they point out how ideas promote potential research endeavors but second and perhaps more important, they suggest a certain central research orientation. So, this orientation is the attitude that the world is a research lab and that you really need to open your eyes and ears to the sensory reality that surrounds all of us to find numerous ideas for research. In fact once you become familiar with this orientation, the biggest problem will be to filter out all the many possible researchable ideas and actually investigate one. Most experienced qualitative researcher agree on the fact that if you position an expert qualitative researcher on the field, then she will manage to identify a research idea, develop a research plan, and project potential research findings.

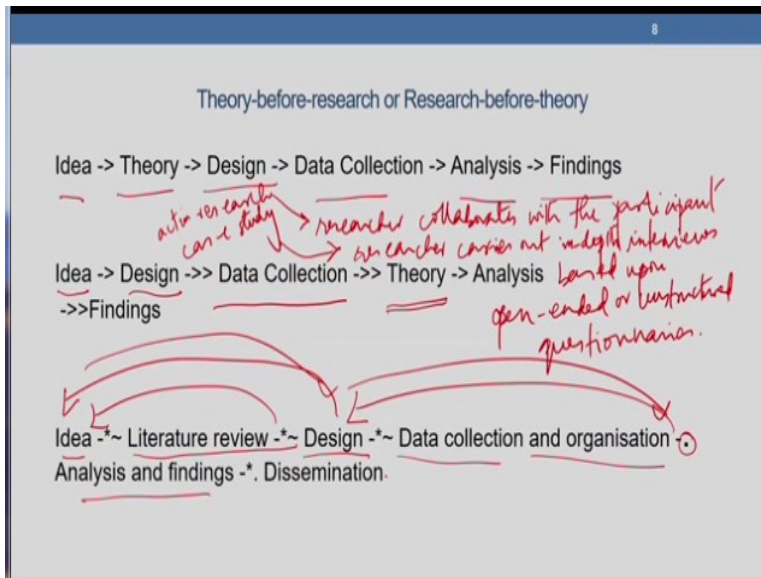
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Now, in this context let us look at what are the things needs to be kept in mind when we are designing qualitative research. There is a lot of talk about whether we begin with an idea or we begin with a theory. Now the reality is that some ideas will be more difficult to investigate than others. This is because those who control access to a given location, what the literature calls gatekeepers, or the subjects maybe reluctant or resistant to cooperate. And similarly some ideas may initially seem very interesting to investigate but as you progress in the process of investigation, the ideas may fall flat. So, therefore you begin with an idea but how is the idea related to theory and there are some who argue that ideas and theory must come before empirical research which has been called ‘theory before research’. And some others have suggested that research should come before theory.

So, what are those steps in designing qualitative research? Ideally we begin with theories and concepts. You think about the theory and concepts to be used in a given research project and then you think about ideas and theory. As I just said there is a contradiction in terms of whether theory should precede research model or research should precede theoretical model. And there are various kinds of emerging researches which say that it need not be so. One need not precede the other, all of them can be compatible with each other. Both these models can be compatible with each other in a way of going back and forth between ideas and theories and then coming back to ideas again or starting with theories going to ideas and coming back to theory again.

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These are 2 diagrammatic representation of what I have been just talking about. So ideally you begin with an idea, let us say the whole idea of complementary feeding practice that I was just referring to. So, you could begin with the idea of child nutrition, let us say you come across these news reports either through television or newspapers of very low survival rates of children in the teagarden communities of a certain state. And then you come up with this idea of child nutrition or malnutrition and then you look up theories surrounding complementary feeding practices. And then you see that there is a full-fledged theory with respect to mothers' health and child's health or socioeconomic determinants that contribute to ill health and malnourishment of children and so on.

And then you move towards designing your qualitative method whether you want to carry out a focus group discussion or carryout in-depth interviews with your cases that you have selected or you want to carry out various other kinds of participatory research methods whether it is in the form of an ethnography or whether it is in the form of an action research component. And then accordingly design your research and then move onto data collection, analysis, and findings.

Another way of doing the same thing would be to come up with an idea, design your research which is where we will bring in the different strategic inquires in the form of let us say action research formats. I am just giving an example here. It could be an action research format or it could be a case study format. If you design an action research format, that would mean that the researcher then collaborates with the participant and if it is a case study method, the researcher

carries out in-depth interviews based upon open-ended or unstructured questionnaires. After having designed the study, you move on to data collection. Based upon the data that have been collected, you then relate your data to the theory that exists. So, unlike theory coming in first, here you try to connect it with theory after the data collection process move on to analysis and findings.

There are those researchers that say that this need not follow a linear progression whereas they can go in a back and forth manner. So, you start with an idea, move towards literature review and then go back to your idea and refine your ideas further. So, you start with malnutrition or child undernourishment is an idea, you do a lot of literature review and keep in mind that we have already discussed systematic review of literature wherein you are looking at not just the narratives with respect to the different literature that is available, but the contradictions that are coming with respect to certain studies when you are doing a systematic review of literature. So, you go back to your idea you refine your idea, then come to the design and data collection and organization. You can again move to your design or the refine the research design further based upon data collection and organization or you can even move back to your idea, refine your idea further come back to research design and go to data collection again. After the data collection and organization is done, after these stages of refinements that happen you cannot again go back to your research design because your data collection is done, you come to findings and then finally dissemination- analysis and findings and dissemination of data.

So, when we looking at designing of qualitative research methods there are two important things to keep in mind. One is the research idea and that research idea can be in the form of a research problem or you could be studying a research problem which is a problem in your everyday life that you have experienced or you could study a research problem which you know somebody else has experience and you start seeing a pattern in the different kinds of problems that others are experiencing or you might study different patterns that you are seeing from news paper reports or from various kinds of journal reporting. And then accordingly design your study further by connecting your idea to theory. So, first is an idea and the second is theory. Whether you begin with an idea and then move on to theory or you start with the theory and then move on to an idea is a matter of choice for the qualitative researcher. However when the process of investigation starts you can always move back and forth from idea to theory or theory to idea.

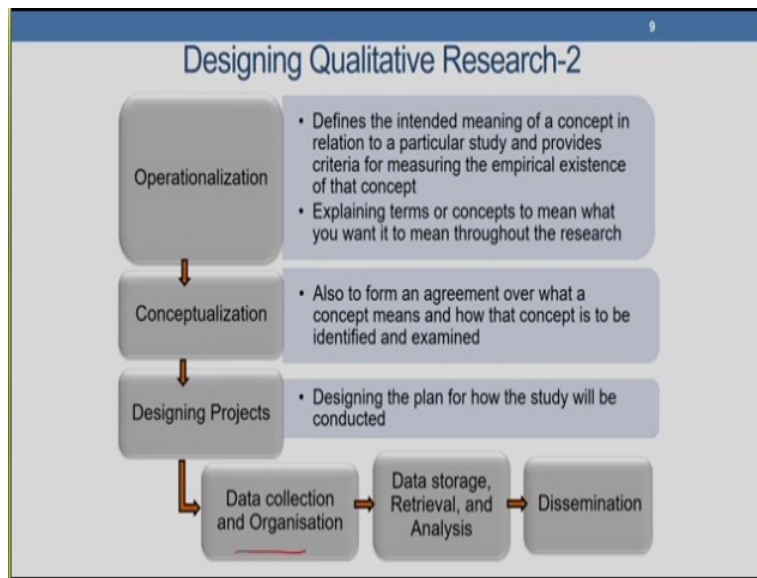
Now the next step after we have discussed the issue of ideas and theory is to move to literature review. We basically examine how others have already thought about and researched the topic. And in the first lesson of this week we have already discussed in detail the various forms of literature review and the various techniques that we can apply or employ for carrying out a systematic review of literature which is one of the most important methods of reviewing literature in today's emerging questions that we are facing as part of development studies research.

The next step after having dealt with this issue of idea versus theory and literature is to come up with framing of your research problems. And this is again another important step where you are framing, you are formulating a research problem statement in a coherent manner. And you can further refine and frame the idea as a problem statement with researchable questions. I will go back to the example of malnourishment or undernutrition I have just taken. So, undernourishment can be an idea or child undernourishment can be an idea. However if you want to put it in the form of researchable question or you want to make a problem statement out of it, you could start with a problem statement such as this saying that 'what is the contribution of lack of complementary feeding among children under 2 and how that impacts their rates of survival over a period of time.'

Now this could be a problem statement and then you can refine and frame this idea by coming up with a number of researchable questions. So, following this problem statement, you could come up with a research question such as this 'what are the socio-economic determinants that contribute to the health of a child', 'what are the anthropometric measurements that can help us determine the state of survival of the child?' Or we could also ask a question such as 'is complementary feeding practice a problem only among certain social groups of the population?'. These are the first three research questions that can come to my mind when we are talking about complimentary feeding practices.

We then go to theory. There is a sizable literature on complimentary feeding practices by peer reviewed journals. There is a sizable literature on this being carried out by international institutions such as the world Health Organization. We can start with these literature and which will enable us to refine our researchable questions of problem statement much better.

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The next step in designing of qualitative research is operationalization. So, this basically contains the following; it defines the indented meaning of a concept in relation to a particular study and provides criteria for measuring the empirical existence of that concept. So, similarly in the complementary feeding practice we can basically look at the meaning of this concept of complementary feeding practice in this particular study in our case we are looking at teagarden communities and it can provide criteria for measuring the empirical existence of that concepts. So, basically we can try and look at various empirical studies which have measured stunting, wasting, or underweight among children under 2 in the teagarden areas of Assam.

Those of you who are well versed with various kind of databases- Indian official statistics databases, for example the National Family Health Survey, you would know that there are various important indicators that go on to explain nutrition and undernourishment. And in our example that we have just taken on complementary feeding practices these indicators in the teagarden communities of Assam can go on to explain what is the incidents or what is the depth of the problem of malnourishment let us say for example. And then we can superimpose the idea of complementary feeding practices or dietary diversity and how that can check the problem of stunting and wasting in these areas.

Going on with operationalization. We can again explain terms or concepts to mean what we wanted to mean throughout the research. For example the term complementary feeding practices maybe being used differently in different researches. However when we are formulating a research problem and going on with our research, for operationalization of the term we can make it clear that for our research complimentary feeding practices mean this and this. So, we could say that complementary feeding practices for the tea garden communities of Assam focusing on mothers of children under 2 means that what is it that they are feeding their children once the children have crossed the age of 6 months. Are they being only breastfed or they are being fed with different other kinds of food items apart from being breastfed. So, these are certain conceptual clarifications that can be made in the very beginning of the research with respect to operationalization of a research problem.

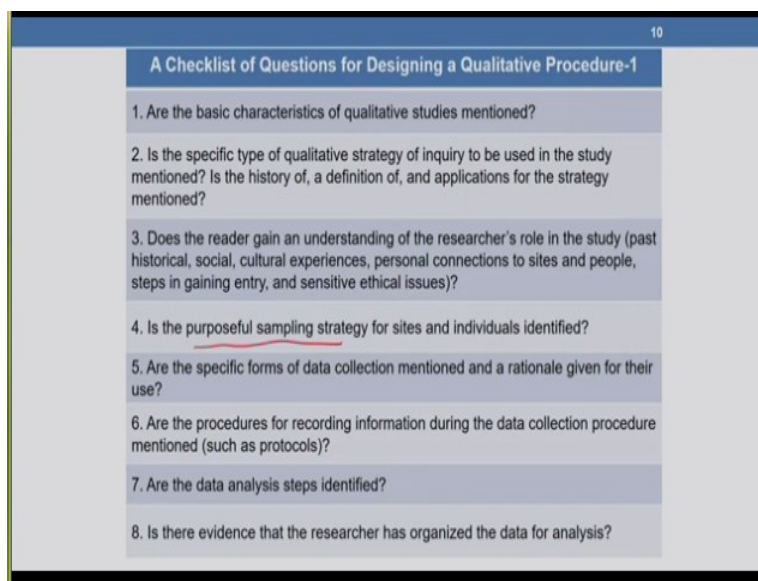
Then we move on to conceptualization, also to form an agreement over what a concept means and how that concept is to be identified and examined. I was referring to the fact that there us international literature on complementary feeding practice and if the literature already identifies the concept as such then it need not be necessary for us to come up with a completely new concept, if the characteristic features of what we mean by complementary feeding also means what the international literature has already identified. So then, which is what I mean by saying that there has to be a form of an agreement over what a concept means and how that concept is to be identified and examined.

Then we move on to designing the projects, so design the plan for how the study will be conducted, the data collection and organization, data storage, retrieval and analysis, and finally in the form of dissemination. So, in the data collection and organization whether we decide to carryout an in-depth study over a very long period of time, an ideal method to be taken up is what is called ethnographic studies. If we want to complete the study within a given time frame and in a structured manner, we could go for a survey of the concerned families- we could go ahead with a survey of mothers of children under 2. And frame a questionnaire, a structured questionnaire which asks questions pertaining to child health and different kinds of feeding practices or consumption practices followed by the family, different kinds of income considerations or we could also ask questions related to immunization and vaccinations of the

children or the physiological status of mother and child and so on and the survey methods could be used.

So, when we are moving to survey methods, the same problem can also be studied in a quantitative format where we collect quantitative data, whether we go for an ethnographic study or a more quantitative study the form of survey methods or we want to carry out a case study approach to collect our data, is what the researcher need to decide at this stage. If we are collecting survey data, we need to think about data storage in the form of databases. If we are collecting more qualitative data in the form of case studies then we need to also think about how to code the case studies, how to maintain the field diaries. Because field diaries are utmost important when collecting qualitative information, because the researcher is interpreting the participants' environment for a larger audience and therefore field diaries is utmost importance. So, how are the field diaries being maintained, how are we coding the content that we are getting out of the field diaries is very important when looking a data storage. And then of course retrieving the data from the data we have stored and analyzing them. And finally the dissemination- whether it is form of a government project report or a consultancy report or if it is in the form of a student dissertation that we are attempting.

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A Checklist of Questions for Designing a Qualitative Procedure-1	
1.	Are the basic characteristics of qualitative studies mentioned?
2.	Is the specific type of qualitative strategy of inquiry to be used in the study mentioned? Is the history of, a definition of, and applications for the strategy mentioned?
3.	Does the reader gain an understanding of the researcher's role in the study (past historical, social, cultural experiences, personal connections to sites and people, steps in gaining entry, and sensitive ethical issues)?
4.	Is the <u>purposeful sampling strategy</u> for sites and individuals identified?
5.	Are the specific forms of data collection mentioned and a rationale given for their use?
6.	Are the procedures for recording information during the data collection procedure mentioned (such as protocols)?
7.	Are the data analysis steps identified?
8.	Is there evidence that the researcher has organized the data for analysis?

Now this is a checklist of questions that can be kept in mind for designing a qualitative procedure. So, what I have done is I have summarized the discussion that we have just had regarding the different steps to be kept in mind when designing a qualitative research. There are many more questions can be added on to the checklist that I am presenting here. But these are some of the most general questions that can be kept in mind for a smoother conducting of a qualitative designing process. So, one is ‘are the basic characteristics of qualitative studies mentioned?’ ‘Is the specific type of qualitative strategy of inquiry to be used in the study mentioned is the history of definition of and applications for the strategy mentioned?’

Number three, ‘does the reader gain an understanding of the researcher’s role in the study past, historical, social, cultural experiences, personal connections to sites and people, steps in gaining entry and sensitive ethical issues.’ So, this is of utmost importance, in fact in the next class I will make an attempt to bring you an example of how the researcher’s role is explained in good qualitative research explanations where in the researcher makes her position clear with regard to how the research has been carried out and how the research is being presented.

‘Is the purposeful sampling strategy for sites and individuals identified?’ I have not entered into a discussion of purposive sampling in this class. However when I take up quantitative research methods as a part of introduction to sampling procedures, I will cover what is purposive sampling because purposive sampling is one of the most important forms of sampling which is carried out for qualitative research methods.

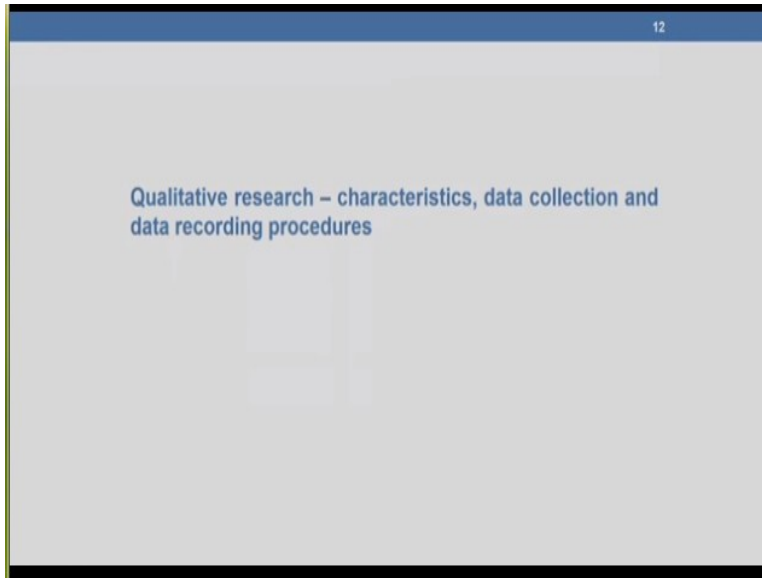
Number 5, ‘are the specific forms of data collection mentioned and rationale given for their use?’ ‘Are the procedures for recording information during the data collection procedure mentioned?’ So, ‘what are the protocols?’ ‘Are the data analysis steps identified?’ ‘Is there evidence that the researcher has organize the data for analysis?’

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A Checklist of Questions for Designing a Qualitative Procedure-2	
9.	Has the researcher reviewed the data generally to obtain a sense of the information?
10.	Has coding been used with the data?
11.	Have the codes been developed to form a description or to identify themes?
12.	Are the themes interrelated to show a higher level of analysis and abstraction?
13.	Are the ways that the data will be represented mentioned-such as in tables, graphs, and figures?
14.	Have the bases for interpreting the analysis been specified (personal experiences, the literature, questions, action agenda)?
15.	Has the researcher mentioned the outcome of the study (developed a theory, provided a complex picture of themes?)
16.	Have multiple strategies been cited for validating the findings?

‘Has the researcher reviewed the data generally to obtain a sense of the information? Has coding been used with data?’ This is something that we will cover in the next week- in week 4 lesson 2 and 3, WE will be dealing with coding and field diaries that are maintained as part of qualitative research methods. ‘Have the codes been develop to form a description or to identify themes? Are the themes interrelated to show a higher level of analysis and abstraction? Are the ways the data will be represented mention such as in tables, graphs and figures? Have the basis for interpreting the analysis being specified, that is personal experiences, literature, questions, action agenda? Has the researcher mention the outcome of the study as in whether a theory will be developed or whether a complex picture of the themes will be provided? Have multiple strategies been cited for validating the findings?’

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So, this in a nutshell is how we can design a good qualitative research project whether it is for your dissertation or if it is for a government sponsored project or a privately sponsored project. These are some of the generic steps and of course there are specific issues pertaining to each of the steps which can be probed further by the students through the references that I have given at the end of this lesson.

Let us now move on to the next part of our lesson which is on the data collection and data recording procedures after having discussing the characteristics of what are qualitative research.

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The Characteristics of Qualitative Research

1. **Natural setting:** Data collection takes place in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem
2. **Researcher as key instrument:** Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants.
3. **Multiple sources of data:** Gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information rather than rely on a single data source.
4. **Inductive data analysis:** Inductive data analysis involves building patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information.

So, although I have discussed already what is the designing of qualitative research which will already have given a sense the students regarding the characteristic of qualitative research. However it is also good to put in one place what are the specific characteristics of qualitative research. So, first is the natural setting that is the first characteristic because the qualitative researcher goes to the field. And the setting of the field is not changed while collecting the data. So, it happens in a natural setting, data collection takes place in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem. So, for example for case studies the interviews are carried out in the houses of the mothers of children under 2.

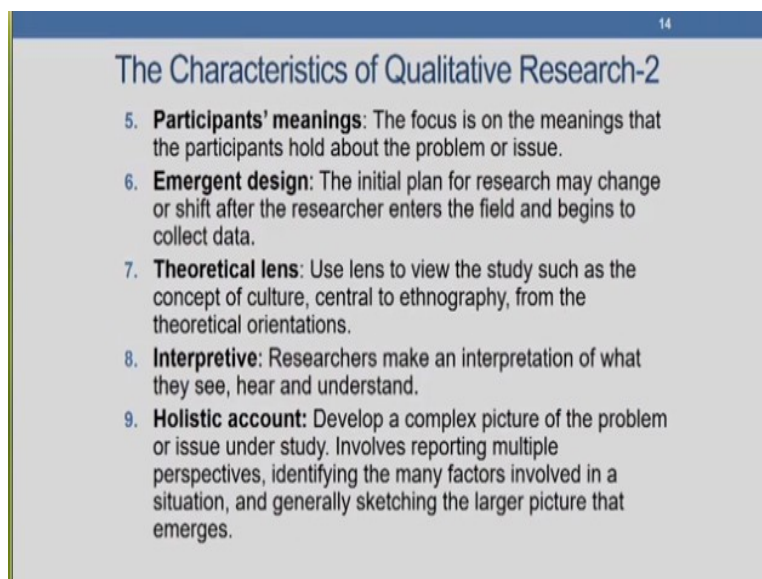
Or for example if you are collecting information with regard to knowledge systems or how seeds are preserved or how knowledge is disseminated among the fellow farmers in a certain locality, the researcher visits the sample families in the field and collects information. So the natural setting is undisturbed.

Second is researcher is the key instrument. Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, interviewing participants. So, the qualitative researcher does not have the leisure or the privilege of sending field investigators to the field and collecting the data on their behalf which is something that the quantitative researchers through survey methods have the privilege to do. So, for the qualitative researcher himself or herself going to the field observing the behavior of the participants in the natural setting of the participants and then drawing a conclusion out of it is of at most importance.

There are multiple sources of data. The qualitative researcher can gather multiple forms of data such as interviews, observations, documents and audio visual information rather than rely on a single data source. So, this is in sharp contrast to what is called positivist research where the research is not being carried out in a lab environment whereas it is being carried out in natural setting. So, sometimes and often most of the times personal interviews or carrying out case studies is not sufficient to get all information. Therefore different kinds of methods are followed for collecting information about a certain problem over a period of time.

The fourth and one of the most important probably is inductive data analysis qualitative research follows an inductive approach. They build patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organizing data into increasingly more abstractiveness of information. So, qualitative researcher observes participants' behavior very closely and then try to come up with themes based upon their observations. And therefore it is referred to as an inductive approach, a bottom up approach rather than a top down approach when we are looking at most of the survey research methods which constitute the domain of quantitative research.

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The Characteristics of Qualitative Research-2

5. **Participants' meanings:** The focus is on the meanings that the participants hold about the problem or issue.
6. **Emergent design:** The initial plan for research may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data.
7. **Theoretical lens:** Use lens to view the study such as the concept of culture, central to ethnography, from the theoretical orientations.
8. **Interpretive:** Researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear and understand.
9. **Holistic account:** Develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. Involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges.

Moving on, participants' meaning is also very important. The focus is on the meanings that the participants hold about the problem or the issue. So, again I will go back to the example on complementary feeding practice. So, if I am a qualitative researcher going to the field, collecting

information from the mothers of children under 2 regarding what they think about complementary feeding practices to children more than 6 months of age, the onus is on the participant themselves to give me information about what they think about complementary feeding practice. It is not my business as a researcher to inform them about what they should or should not do about complementary feeding practices. I should not be giving them any information about what are the best practices to be followed with regard to complementary feeding practices. Because if I do that then I am disturbing the natural setting within which I am conducting the interview. So, it is best to collect information about what the mothers themselves think about the practice about which we are investigating.

However there is a slight difference in what a qualitative researcher following a participate-observation does when we are contrasting it with respect to let us say action researchers. So, when the action researchers go to the field, one of the agendas that they have on their mind is to bring about some kind of a social transformation in the field. So, their agenda would be to change the behavioral practices of the mothers of children under 2 with respect to complementary feeding practices. Therefore there is an element advocacy in there. They are trying to bring in that transformation.

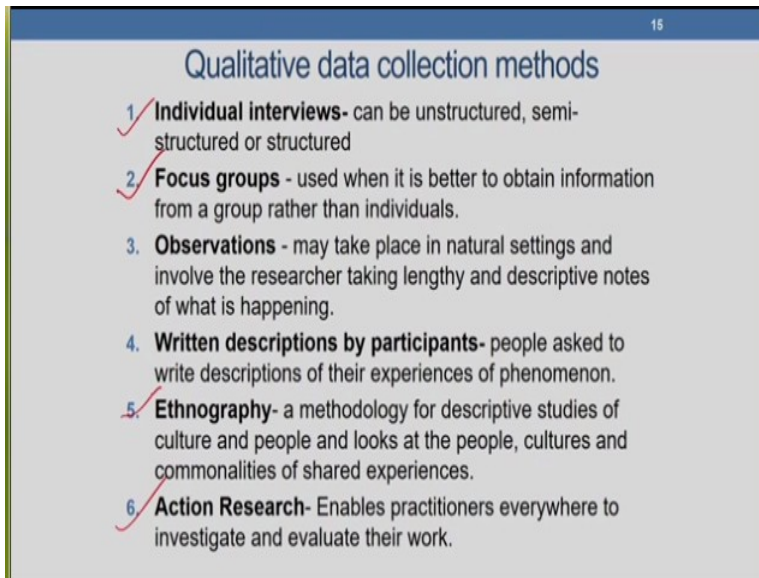
However a participant-observant observation method as part of qualitative researchers has no such agenda, it does not have an agenda of transformation at the end of the day. And action researcher would have an agenda of transformation therefore an action researcher is supposed to be a collaborator in the process of research, collecting questions from the participant with regard to what they think about the research problem, what they think about the problem of nutrition or malnutrition. And then pose research questions based upon what the participant thinks and this is an important distinction that needs to be kept in mind.

Emergent design- the initial plan for research may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data and this is something which happens very frequently in most social science research where we go with a certain research question and as the research progresses, the research questions keep on shifting based upon the ideas that get added on.

The theoretical lens- we use lenses, the qualitative researcher I mean, use lenses to view the study such as the concept of culture which is central ethnography from the theoretical

orientations. Interpretative- I will not elaborate further on this, because we have discussed this in detail in previous classes, but researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear and understand. And finally they develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study and it involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges.

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Qualitative data collection methods

1. **Individual interviews**- can be unstructured, semi-structured or structured
2. **Focus groups** - used when it is better to obtain information from a group rather than individuals.
3. **Observations** - may take place in natural settings and involve the researcher taking lengthy and descriptive notes of what is happening.
4. **Written descriptions by participants**- people asked to write descriptions of their experiences of phenomenon.
5. **Ethnography**- a methodology for descriptive studies of culture and people and looks at the people, cultures and commonalities of shared experiences.
6. **Action Research**- Enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work.

Now these are some of the qualitative data collection methods. For example in individual interviews, they can be unstructured, semi-structured, or structured. Focus groups- individual interviews and focus group discussions will be covered in detail in the coming classes that following today's lesson. Observations, written descriptions by participants, ethnography, action research, we will also focus a little on action research and ethnography in the upcoming classes.

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Data Collection Procedures

1. **Identify** the purposefully selected sites or individuals for the proposed study. A discussion about participants and site might include four aspects:
 - **the setting** (where the research will take place),
 - **the actors** (who will be observed or interviewed),
 - **the events** (what the actors will be observed or interviewed doing), and
 - **the process** (the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting).
2. **Indicate** the type or types of data to be collected.
3. Be **specific** about the types of data collection and include arguments concerning the strengths and weaknesses of each type.
4. **Include** data collection types that **go beyond** typical observations and interviews.

Now data collection procedures. These are a few things that needs to be kept in mind. First, we need to identify purposefully selected sites or individuals for the propose study. A discussion about participant and site might include four aspects- one is the setting where the research will take place, the actors who will be observed a interviewed, the events what the actors will be observed or interviewed doing, and the process- the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the study.

Now, I keep taking the example of complementary feeding practice because I am researching the issue of complementary feeding practices currently. And I keep taking the example of teagarden communities in Assam because my research is contextualized in the teagarden communities of Assam. And it will be best to take example from the research that I am conducting at present.

So, earlier I spoke about gatekeepers. Gatekeepers of research that has a lot of baring on the identification of the site where we want to conduct our study. So, we have already dealt with the problem of idea and theory. We have a problem statement in mind. We have refined a research questions, we have connected our research questions and the research problem to the theory and to the theoretical concept or theoretical frameworks or conceptual frameworks whatever we might want to call them. The problem arises when we are trying to identify the location where we want to study and this poses serious challenges for a qualitative researcher. Because for a quantitative researcher, a quantitative researcher begins locating the study after following a secondary data analysis of various kinds of data, following a proper sampling procedure and the

sampling procedure throws up the locations where a quantitative researcher can go and conduct his or her study.

Whereas a qualitative researcher has a certain meaning to why a certain locality can be selected. So, for example if I as a qualitative researcher decide to go to the nearest district which is Udalguri district which is a teagarden district and which is an aspirational district in the context of Assam. And I want to conduct a study on the teagarden community. One of the first challenges that I would face is with respect to receiving permissions from the teagarden estates for conducting a study in their area. And here the teagarden management then becomes the gatekeeper of the research of the issues that I want to collect information on from their estate. And that may pose to be a very big challenge and that setting where the research will take place has to be decided upon with a lot of deliberation by the qualitative researchers.

The actors who will be observed or interviewed, in our example the actors are the mothers of children under 2. So, in other words they are also referred to as a sample but in the qualitative research terminology, we may refer to them as actors. The events that is what is the actors will be observed or interviewed doing- they will mostly be observed or interviewed looking at what are the items that they are feeding their child once they have crossed 6 months of age, what are the traditional rights and rituals that they are following with respect to child feeding practices, and what are their different socio-economic determinants that have a bearing on the health of the child.

The processes- the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting. So, if we have a tea garden family, we have a mother of a child under 2 who is also a plucker in the tea garden who works for about 8 hours a day. Then what happens when she leaves behind the child at home, does the child go to a crutch, is the child taken care of by any other adult member in the family or by a non-adult member in the family, and what effect that has on the feeding practices of the child? So, these are certain evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting.

We also indicate the type or types of data to be collected, whether we want to collect quantitative data or we want to collect narratives from the samples or from the actors. We want to be specific about the types of data collection and include arguments concerning the strengths and

weaknesses of each type. And include collection types that go beyond typical observations and interviews. Now each of these data collection methods, I have tabulated them in the form of options, advantages, and limitations. This is to bring about more clarity in how the student can think about it. So, with respect to observations as the method of data collection what are the options- the complete participant-researchers conceals role, as participant, role of researcher is known, participant as observer- observation role secondary to participant role, complete observer-researcher observes without participating.

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Observations - Options, advantages and limitations	
Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete participant-researcher conceals role • Observer as participant-role of researcher is known • Participant as observer-observation role secondary to participant role • Complete observer-researcher observes without participating
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher has a first-hand experience with participant • Researcher can record information as it occurs • Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation • Useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher may be seen as intrusive ✓ • Private information may be observed that researcher cannot report • Researcher may not have good attending and observing skills • Certain participants (e.g., children) may present special problems in gaining rapport

So, we were talking about the roles played by the participant and the researcher. So, in one case here the researcher can conceal the role in the sense that the observation of the participants can take place without the participant themselves knowing that they are being observed. So, that is not to disturb the natural setting of the participant. Observer as participant where the participant is observing the researcher and what the researcher is doing is known to the participants. So, for example in the case of action research formats where advocacy is an important tool, the researcher makes it known to the group regarding what is the purpose of carrying out the research. And then the participant participates in the research process, so the researcher's role is known. Participant as observer where participant becomes the observer and the observation role is secondary to participant role. So, this is another method and then the complete observer research observes without participating.

What are the advantages of observation as a method of data collection? The researcher has a firsthand experience with participant, researcher can record information as it occurs, unusual aspects can be noticed during observation, useful in exploring topics that maybe uncomfortable for participants to discuss. And these are important things that come up when we are studying issues of human trafficking let us say for example, or child trafficking or trafficking of women or various kinds of gender roles or domestic violence. These are the advantages that we can have when we are using observation as a method of data collection.

Limitations- the researcher may be seen as intrusive, the participant might feel that the researcher is unwanted in that natural setting, private information may be observed that researcher cannot report, the researcher may not have good attending and observing skills and certain participants example children may present special problems in gaining rapport and it may not be possible for the researchers to be able to gather some rapport with the children.

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Interviews - Options, advantages and limitations	
Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face-one-on-one, in-person interview • Telephone-researcher interviews by phone • Focus group-researcher interviews participants in a group • E-mail internet interview
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful when participants cannot be directly observed • Participants can provide historical information • Allows researcher control over the line of questioning
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees. • Provides information in a designated place rather than the natural field setting. • Researcher's presence may bias responses • Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive.

Interviews- the options are face-to face interview, telephone researcher interviews, focus group researcher interview, e-mail internet interviews. Advantages- useful when participants cannot be directly observed, participants can provide historical information and allows researcher control over the line of questioning. Limitations are various, among them few are- provide indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees, provides information in a designated

place rather than the natural field setting, researcher's presence may bias responses, not all people are equally articulate and perceptive.

With regard to documents which is one of the important methods of data collection, the options are public documents such as minutes of meetings or newspapers, private documents, journals, diaries or letters. Advantages are it enables a researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants, it can be accessed at a time convenient to researcher, an unobtrusive source of information, represents data which are thoughtful in that participants have given attention to compiling them and as written evidence it saves a researcher the time and expense of transcribing. Limitations- not all people are equally articulate and perceptive, it may be protected information unavailable to public or private access, requires the researcher to search out the information in hard-to find places, requires transcribing or optically scanning for computer entry, materials may be incomplete, documents may not be authentic or accurate.

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Audio-visual materials – Options, advantages and limitations	
Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photographs• Videotapes• Art objects• Computer software• Film
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be an unobtrusive method of collecting data• Provides an opportunity for participants to directly share their reality• It is creative in that it captures attention visually.
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be difficult to interpret• May not be accessible publicly or privately• The presence of an observer (e.g., photographer may be disruptive and affect responses).

Audio-visual materials. The options are photographs, videotapes, art objects, computer software, films. Advantages- may be an unobtrusive method of collecting data, provides an opportunity for participants to directly share their reality, creative in that it captures attention visually. But it may be difficult to interpret, may not be accessible publicly or privately, and the presence of an observer example photographer may be disruptive and affect responses.

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Observations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather field notes by conducting an observation as a participant.• Gather field notes by conducting an observation as an observer.• Gather field notes by spending time as a participant than as an observer.• Gather field notes by spending more time as an observer than as a participant.• Gather field notes first by observing as an outsider and then moving into the setting and observing as an insider.	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct an unstructured, open-ended interview and take interview notes.• Conduct an unstructured, open-ended interview, audiotape the interview, and transcribe it.• Conduct a semi-structured interview, audiotape the interview, and transcribe it.• Conduct a focus group interview, audiotape the interview, and transcribe it.• Conduct different types of interviews: email face-to-face, focus group, online focus group, telephone interviews.
Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep a journal during the research study.• Have a participant keep a journal or diary during the research study.• Collect personal letters from participants.• Analyze public documents (e.g., official memos, minutes, records, archival material).• Examine autobiographies and biographies.• Have participants take photographs or videotapes (i.e., photo elicitation).• Chart audits.• Medical records.	Audio-visual Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine the physical trace evidence (e.g., footprints in the snow).• Videotape or film a social situation or an individual or group.• Examine photographs or videotapes.• Collect sounds (e.g., musical sounds, a child's laughter, etc).• Collect e-mail messages.• Collect cell phone text messages.• Examine possessions or ritual objects.• Collect sounds, smells, tastes, or any stimuli of the senses.

So, these are a list of qualitative data collection approaches. This is the again a summary slide of what have shown earlier- observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials.

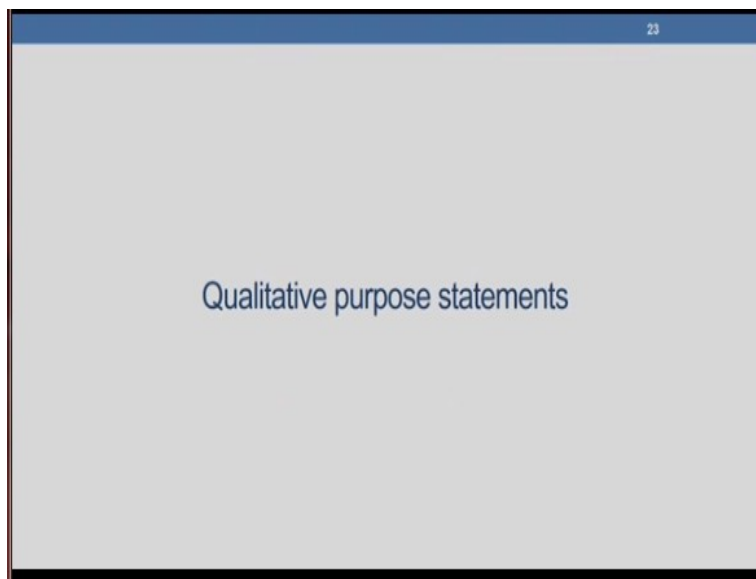
With respect to data recording procedures there are 2 protocols.

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<h3>Data Recording Procedures</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a protocol for recording observational data. Researchers use an observational protocol for recording information while observing.• Use an interview protocol for asking questions and recording answers during a qualitative interview.• Researchers record information from interviews by asking <u>hand-written notes</u>, by <u>audiotaping</u>, or by <u>videotaping</u>.• The recording of documents and visual materials can be based on the researcher's structure for taking notes.	

There are observational protocols and interviews protocols. We can use a protocol for recording observation data. So, researchers use an observational protocol for recording information while observing. And, for interviews for asking questions and recording answers during a qualitative interview, researchers record information from interviews by asking hand-written notes, audio taping or videotaping. These days we have software that can scramble out information from audio tapes and video tapes and then take it into coding formats. And therefore hand-written notes are being used restrictively these days. The recording of documents and visual materials can be based on the researcher's structure for taking notes.

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So, we will end today's lesson with this. What we have done in today's lesson is to give you a brief overview of what is qualitative research methods by designing the different forms of qualitative research methods. I will make this lesson into 2 parts, today is part1 of introduction of qualitative research methods. In the second part of qualitative research methods, we will look at various qualitative purpose statements, how do you write a purpose statement with respect to the phenomenology or case study, ethnography grounded theory studies.

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A purpose statement in a Grounded Theory Study

- A qualitative study to develop a theory of the career development of 18 prominent, highly achieving African American Black and White women in the United States working in different occupational fields. The purpose statement will be as follows:

The present article describes a qualitative study of the career development of 18 prominent, highly achieving African-American Black and White women in the United States across eight occupational fields. The overall aim in the study is to explore critical influences on the career development of these women, particularly those related to their attainment of professional success.

We will get into the details of it. We will make that a part 2 of qualitative research methods.

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Theory use, inductive approach and data analysis in qualitative research

We will also look at what the data analysis procedures of qualitative research methods, what do we mean when we say it is an inductive approach, and also look at how to write up qualitative research and what are the different writing strategies with respect to qualitative research.

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Writing strategies

1. Use quotes and vary their length from short to long embedded passages.
2. Script conversation and report the conversation in different languages to reflect cultural sensitivity.
3. Present text information in tabular form (e.g., matrices, comparison tables of different codes).
4. Use the wording from participants to form codes and theme labels.
5. Intertwine quotations with (the author's) interpretations.
6. Use the narrative approach typically used within a qualitative strategy of inquiry (e.g., description in case studies and ethnographies a detailed story in narrative research).
7. Describe how the narrative outcome will be compared with the theories and the general literature on the topic.

We will make this a part 2 of qualitative research method studies.

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References used for this lesson

- Bruce L. Berg, "Qualitative Research Methods For The Social Sciences" 2001, A Pearson Education Company.
- John W. Cresswell, " Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches", 2014, Sage Publications.
- Vandana Desai and Robert B. Potter, "Doing Development Research", 2006, Sage Publications.
- Britha Mikkelsen, "Methods For Development Work And Research, A New Guide For Practioners, 2005, Sage Publications.

For a comprehensive literature on the topics covered in this lecture it is also suggested that students go through the reference list of the above cited papers.

And these are the references that I have used for this lesson and which I will also use for part 2 of this lesson. In the next week for qualitative design- the two research references that have been used in detail are which is showing in red front in your slide. Bruce Berg- Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Science, John Cresswell -Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches. For a comprehensive literature on the topics covered in this lesson, I also suggest that students go through the reference list of all these above cited references.

So thank you very much. See you in the next class.