

Exploring Survey Data on Health Care
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Lecture - 10
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Welcome friends to this NPTEL module on handling Survey Data on Health Care. We are on the 10th lecture of this module. Here we are explaining the Focus Group Discussion as part of going to the field that is why this week is on preparation for field survey on health care.

How the person (the surveyor) should go to the field and start doing research/start collecting data. The last component in this particular week is on focus group discussion. The word itself clarifies many aspects; like we say here is a focus group so; that means, our contention or our target is to identify who are the focus group, who are the persons, who have certain knowledge.


And their discussion is encapsulated in a group meeting or in a discussion. So, this has its own advantages and some disadvantages, but in therefore, these kind of techniques is applied in particular context; especially in qualitative research where we are supposed to get open ended answers.

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Introduction

Focus Group Discussion –

- Semi structured group discussions.
- Generally involves small group of 6 to 10 people.



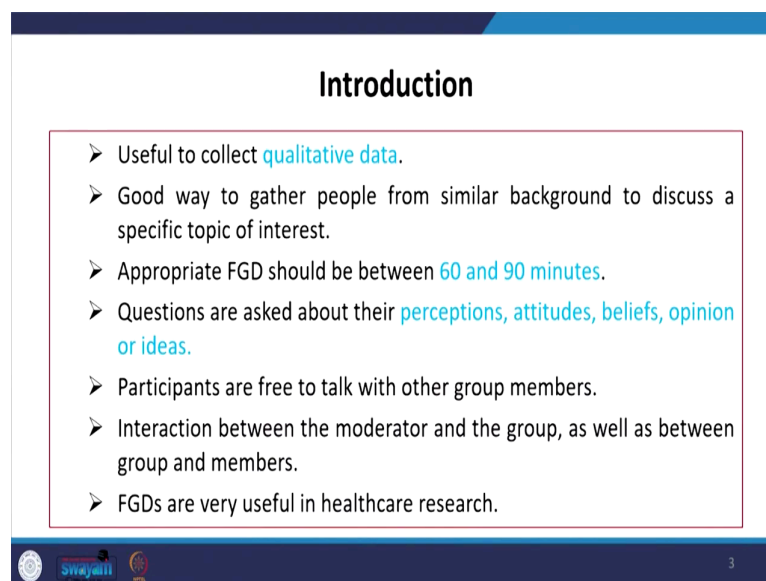
The slide features a central illustration of five silhouetted figures sitting around a table, representing a focus group. Above them are several overlapping speech bubbles in various colors (green, purple, blue, yellow, red), symbolizing discussion and communication. The slide is framed with a blue header and footer. The footer contains logos for NPTEL, Swajati, and IIT Roorkee, along with the number 2.

Let us move to the understanding of all those things in detail. Starting with the introduction of this FDGs (Focus Group Discussion). First aspect of this is that we should have semi structured patterns. Semi structured nature of questions nature of discussion in that some may be very pointed some may be very open ended.

So, the picture clarifies that it usually considers group of people a very small set of persons/experts sitting in a round table. That is where the second point we have written here is as generally the focus group involve small group of 6 to 10 people.

Now, this helps in collecting useful qualitative data. So, quantitative estimations are not usually suggested in this context. We collect more of qualitative information. It is one of the good ways to gather people from similar background to discuss a specific topic of interest. An appropriate FGD should be between 60 to 90 minutes.

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Introduction

- Useful to collect **qualitative data**.
- Good way to gather people from similar background to discuss a specific topic of interest.
- Appropriate FGD should be between **60 and 90 minutes**.
- Questions are asked about their **perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinion or ideas**.
- Participants are free to talk with other group members.
- Interaction between the moderator and the group, as well as between group and members.
- FGDs are very useful in healthcare research.

So, another feature we are adding based on number of literature number of background suggestions by different experts. They suggest that it should be of small group 6 to 9 people or I think in the last one 6 to 10 people and 60 to 90 minutes. So, 1 hour to one and half hours is the ideal time for an FGD. Questions that are asked about their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinion ideas the participants are free to talk with other group members.

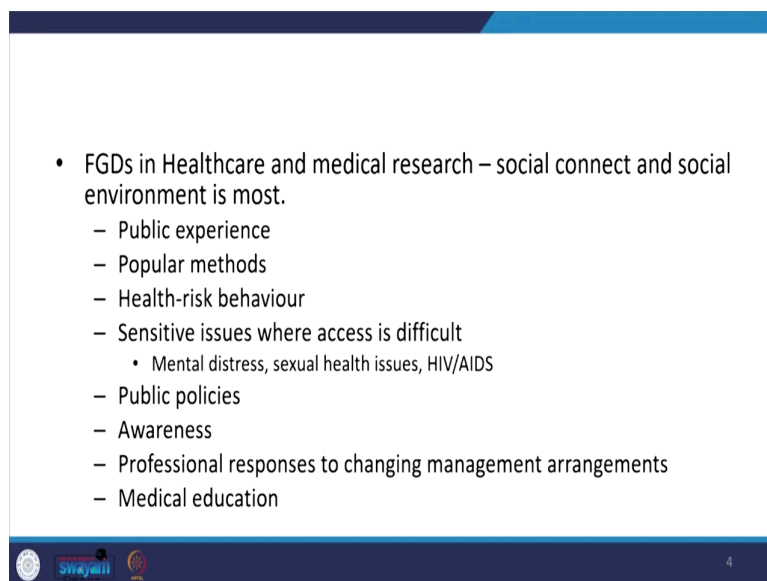
So, there should not be any sort of restrictions not to debate, not to express their free views. There must be enough interaction between the moderator and the group as well as between

the group and members. So, there should be a moderator in the picture we will show it how they locate and how they sit in a meeting in a structure of FGD. FGDs are very useful in health care research we will give you one chart where we can identify the requirement of FGD in health care research.

Since health care pertains to many qualitative perspective of the individual. Such as individual reproductive behaviour, sexual behavior. Like their caste, their age, their behaviour towards the society or to adoption of different medicinal practices.

So, many healing techniques which we are not discussed in the quantitative data. So, those could be captured through the FGDs. So, FGDs in health care and medical research has social connect and social environment.

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- FGDs in Healthcare and medical research – social connect and social environment is most.
 - Public experience
 - Popular methods
 - Health-risk behaviour
 - Sensitive issues where access is difficult
 - Mental distress, sexual health issues, HIV/AIDS
 - Public policies
 - Awareness
 - Professional responses to changing management arrangements
 - Medical education

That especially medical research many official prescriptions are not necessarily going to be reliving to the body of a human being, they may get based on the social connect and social interactions. So, this helps in having lots of parallel solutions.

So, the FGD gives much information on public experiences, popular methods those were on practice. The FGD identifies health related risk behaviour or health risk behaviour. Some of the sensitive issues which are very difficult to capture through the survey could be identified in FGDs.

Sensitive issues like as I already mentioned called mental distress, sexual health issues, HIV-AIDS etc. Many public policies are there in existence, but number of people do not know about the policies.

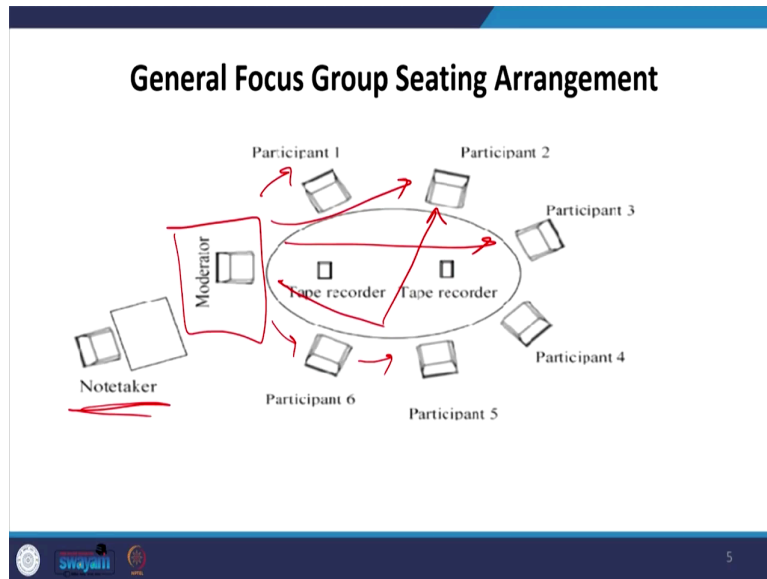
Even they read between the lines they do not understand, the policy framework even those public policies which are meant for those last mile to the rural population. But, those policies are not easily understood by the common man.

So, from the FGDs many experts give their simplified version of those policies and helps in awaring the people. So, awareness also one of the dimensions of the FGDs. The researchers gets enough understanding through the FGDs. So, that caters to the last mile of our population.

Then, FGD gives professional responses to changing management arrangements, how different management arrangements could be done in targeting a policy. So, that could be also derived from the FGDs and the medical education is also equally required not just for the patients or the population it is also helpful for the medical professions.

Professionals who require certain expertise views based on the population based on the patients as well as from the supplier side. So, if both the parties are sitting together, some of the important information can be learnt. So, this is how the structure we collected from the websites, there are different sources we are not citing because of the free sources are available on the internet.

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So, this is where we are again citing, but we are actually giving our own views as well. Now, the seating arrangements is presented here you can mark here like a note taker is its position is given and the moderator we are putting it here.

So, that moderator can listen the views of all the participants, there should be one tape recorder maybe one or two, but whatever there should be recording of the views. So, that some of the ideas should not be simply dropped or should be neglected. So, all the participants and their views should be collected.

So, another aspect I wanted to mention that this participant may cross question through the moderator or directly through the participants. So, by all those cross exchanges the focus group discussion gets its right direction and generate better qualitative information.

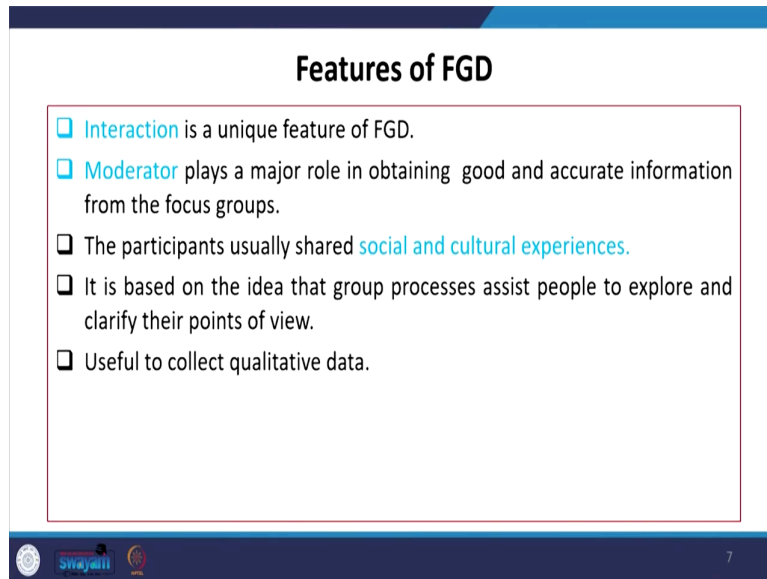
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Then why we use focus group? I think I have already given enough justification, but again to your clarity, we get better solution to problems deeper understanding of the quantitative data, to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of different groups. When there is belief to be difference in power between researcher and participants FGDs is going to give better direction.

Similarly, generate ideas through certain exploratory research or exploratory stage. And differences or commonalities can also be observe and most importantly this helps in solving complex and behavior, complex ideas and behaviour.

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Features of FGD

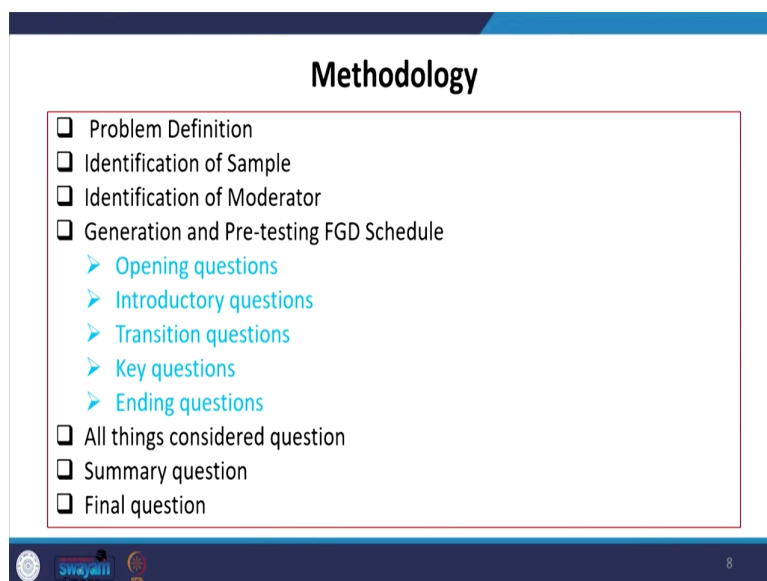
- Interaction** is a unique feature of FGD.
- Moderator** plays a major role in obtaining good and accurate information from the focus groups.
- The participants usually shared **social and cultural experiences**.
- It is based on the idea that group processes assist people to explore and clarify their points of view.
- Useful to collect qualitative data.

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Let us understand categorically on the features of FGDs first one is on interaction is a unique feature of these FGDs. Then second one is moderator plays a significant role in getting correct information and placing before others to have their views. And getting tested with their parallel views then the participants usually shared social and cultural experiences.

It is based on the idea that group processes assist people to explore and clarify their points of view and it is useful to collect qualitative data.

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Methodology

- Problem Definition
- Identification of Sample
- Identification of Moderator
- Generation and Pre-testing FGD Schedule
 - Opening questions
 - Introductory questions
 - Transition questions
 - Key questions
 - Ending questions
- All things considered question
- Summary question
- Final question

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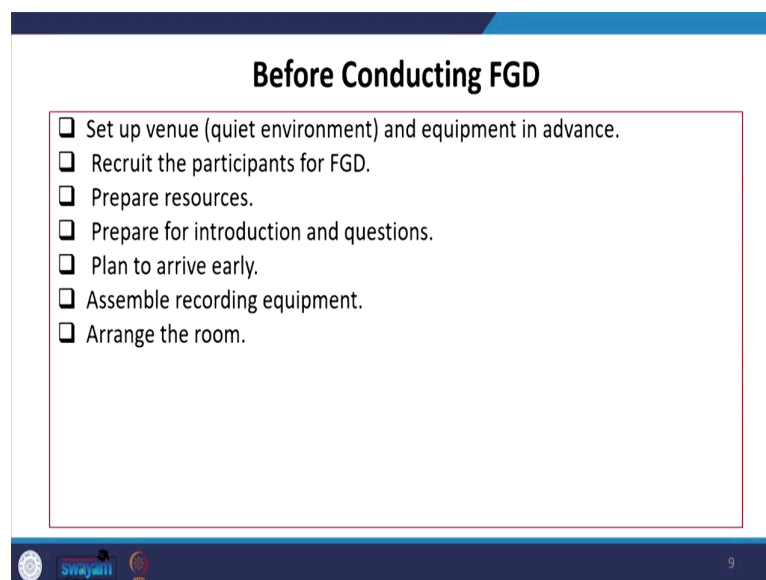
So, these are important features we discuss let us understand some of the methodology as part of the FGDs that is followed. First one is the exact definition should be clarified second one is on identification of the sample who are going to be the sampled in the FGDs then who should be the moderator.

Then next is you understanding the pretesting or generation of the FGD schedule. Like starting for the pretesting is opening questions, then introductory questions, then transitory question or transition based questions. Key questions (important questions) should have been dealt then at the end there should be some summarized form of questions.

So, that the entire discussion follow a right direction in concluding the FGD. All things considered question then summary of the question and final question we have already mentioned. Now, before conducting FGDs what we should do? Other aspects such as there should be a quiet environment, should be a congenial environment a right venue.

With such equipment like maybe voice or video recording, maybe a noticeboard. So, that a design could be also identified.

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Before Conducting FGD

- Set up venue (quiet environment) and equipment in advance.
- Recruit the participants for FGD.
- Prepare resources.
- Prepare for introduction and questions.
- Plan to arrive early.
- Assemble recording equipment.
- Arrange the room.

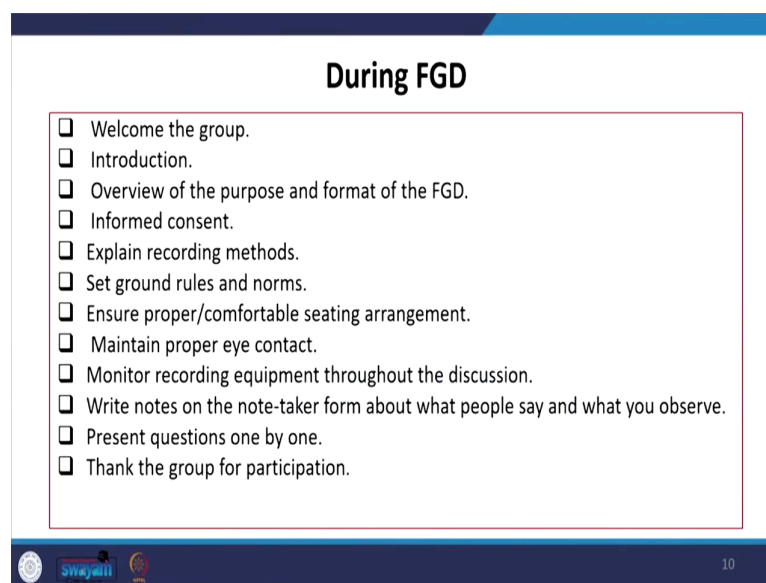
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So, such equipment are necessary, then recruiting the participants for their FGDs that is also essential. Prepare resources i.e. minimum resources to manage the FGDs for 1 hour to one and half an hour duration. Preparing for introduction and question are also equally important.

Now plan to arrive early so that the FGD should start on time should not make others hesitant of delaying the matters or the matters of discussion. Then assemble recording equipment or any sort of recording equipment we did in the FGDs, those would be also systematically assembled.

Then arranging a room not just venue a correct room is also important. Then what next we wanted to discuss about during FGD what should we do. Before that we said prerequisite of FGDs now we are discussing what should we do at the time of FGDs.

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During FGD

- Welcome the group.
- Introduction.
- Overview of the purpose and format of the FGD.
- Informed consent.
- Explain recording methods.
- Set ground rules and norms.
- Ensure proper/comfortable seating arrangement.
- Maintain proper eye contact.
- Monitor recording equipment throughout the discussion.
- Write notes on the note-taker form about what people say and what you observe.
- Present questions one by one.
- Thank the group for participation.

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Especially welcoming the group, which is likewise we do in meetings or any sort of program. So, welcoming the group or the members, then one should be introducing above the FGDs then there should be the overview of the purpose and format of the FGDs. Then informed consent should be taken as an ethical aspects of dealing with collecting views.

Then explain recording methods how their voices are being recorded that should be informed to everyone. Set ground rules and norms what is the time what should be the time of asking question, whether at maximum one can consume 1 minute or 2 minutes those has to be defined from the beginning.

Then maintain proper eye contact; that has to be there it is not like one should be just simply silently placing his or hers views is not actually right. Then monitor recording equipment

throughout the discussion that should be also monitored the recording equipment. Writing notes by the person who is sitting aside should be noting all their views.

So, the note-taker should be responsible in writing correctly about the views of different persons or members. Then present questions one by one it's not like all should be taken off simultaneously rather it should be in a order or in a systematic process. Then at the end there must be a person who is thanking the group for participation.

Then after saying what is being followed in the starting, next is what are the right steps again. First of all identifying the main objectives of the discussion, then developing an agenda, then developing key questions. Planning how to record the session identifying and inviting suitable participants for discussion; these are important steps of FGDs.

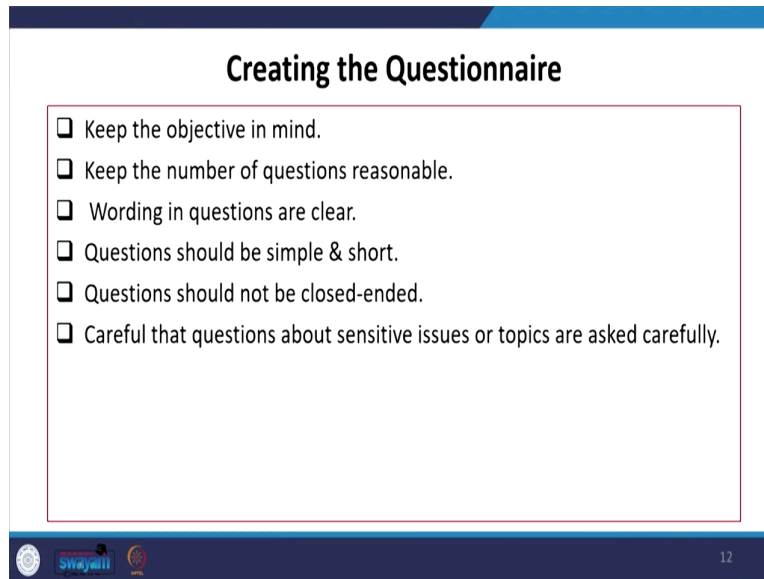
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FGD Steps

- Identify the main objective of the Discussion
- Developing an agenda
- Developing key questions
- Planning how to record the session
- Identify & Invite suitable participants for discussion

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Creating the Questionnaire

- Keep the objective in mind.
- Keep the number of questions reasonable.
- Wording in questions are clear.
- Questions should be simple & short.
- Questions should not be closed-ended.
- Careful that questions about sensitive issues or topics are asked carefully.

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Then other issues like creating the questionnaire. Keep the objective in mind regarding the questionnaire it's not like detailed schedule or questionnaire, it should be very pointed. Keep the number of questions reasonable, it should not be too vast, if there are huge questions it might be very difficult to cover.

So, it has to be very limited and the most important questions which cannot be covered through the field survey should have been asked or should have been taken off in the FGDs. Wording in the questions should be very clear and lucid should be in simple sentences should be short sentence. Questions should be simple and short.

Questions should not be close ended this is what is very essential. A question should be not be close ended rather it should be open ended. There might be some mixed questions like unstructured questionnaire which we have already said, but it should not be close ended.

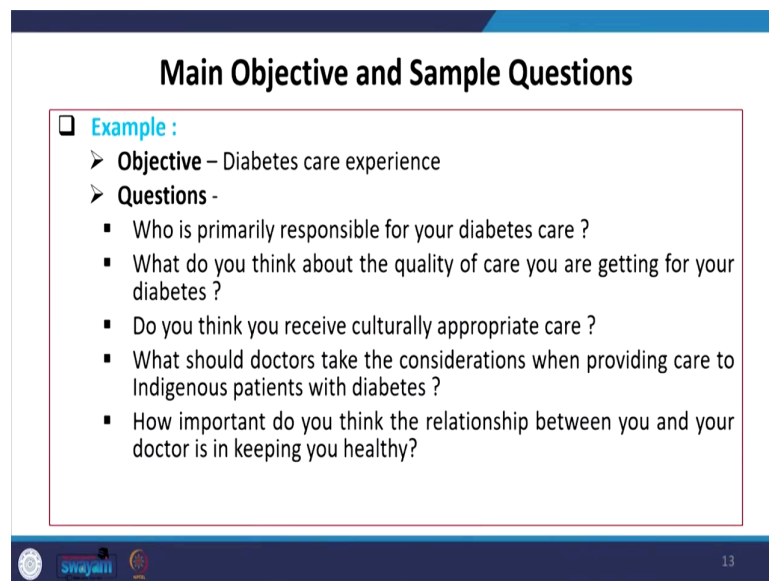
If it is close ended then they are not going to give any discussion on each of these question they may not give any analytical view about the question. So, if it is open ended then there might be debate among the members. So, this is what is required in FGDs.

There should be careful attempt in asking questions or setting questions on sensitive issues or topics. Sensitive issues like if somebody is simply you know asking a question, that if simply giving one questions, like the reservation for Schedule Caste or Schedule Tribe. If somebody is saying that reservation for the STs is creating much disturbance in the society. This

question has actually has one sided story it is disturbing to the society rather the question should be what should be your take on reservation. If you are saying simply that your question is one sided it is disturbing. Then that might be creating chaos within the meeting.

So, we must be very careful in setting sensitive issues. There are number of health issues as well; some of the health issues should not be kept public, there are the some ethical norms should have been followed at the time of FGDs.

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Main Objective and Sample Questions

□ **Example :**

- **Objective** – Diabetes care experience
- **Questions** -
 - Who is primarily responsible for your diabetes care ?
 - What do you think about the quality of care you are getting for your diabetes ?
 - Do you think you receive culturally appropriate care ?
 - What should doctors take the considerations when providing care to Indigenous patients with diabetes ?
 - How important do you think the relationship between you and your doctor is in keeping you healthy?

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So, main objective and sample questions we have noted it down here. Like objectives are related to diabetes care experience. If that is the objective of the FGDs there are some following questions. Who is primarily responsible for your diabetes care.

So, it is very pointed question what do you think about the quality of care you are setting for your diabetes and what should doctors take the consideration when providing care to indigenous patients with diabetes? Then how important do you think the relationship between you and your doctor is in keeping your health.

So, like neither of the question has biased information. If as a moderator if you are simply putting a question that in this case like in a question what should doctors take the consideration when providing care to indigenous patients with diabetes.

Suppose you are asking question, in the indigenous patients views or the doctors take on indigenous patients should not be taken into consideration. If that question is there; that

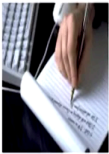
means, you have already biased your views, you have imposed your views among the members.

So, if you are saying one side of the story, then probably the persons in the FGDs would be taking into some directions and that might be disturbing the entire session. So, these type of sample questions we have set it for your reference if you are doing any sort of FGDs. Regarding recording maybe recording through note taking through, audio through video.


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Recording


- Note taking** – is useful but there is many limitations like writing speed is slow, bad handwriting, time consuming etc.
- Video** – video recording is very useful, but many people may feel uncomfortable.
- Audio** – most preferred method. But the audio recorder must be in good working condition.



Note taking



Video



Audio

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So, note taking is very essential, but there is many limitations like writing speed is slow, bad writing, time consuming etc. So, those are limitations we cannot capture all the information. So, recording is must, audio recording at least is preferred because it consumes less space, but video recording usually not suggested by the member. So, their consents should have been taken before.

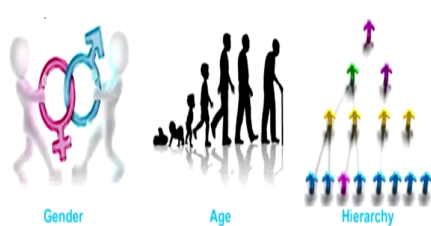
Video recording is very useful, but many people may feel uncomfortable. So, their views would have been consider. Then audio is most preferred method, but the audio recorder must be in good working condition. Then selecting the participants who are going to be your participant, there must be mixed gender.

Such as can men and women feel comfortable discussing about a mixed gender topic. So, such type of topics should have been taken up, if it is completely women centric questions are on women so, better not to include the men.

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Selecting the Participants

- Gender** : can men and women feel comfortable discussing about a mixed-gender topic ?
- Age** : Will age affect the participation of the participants ?
- Hierarchy** : Can the participants of different levels of hierarchy be able to participate equally in the discussion?



Gender Age Hierarchy

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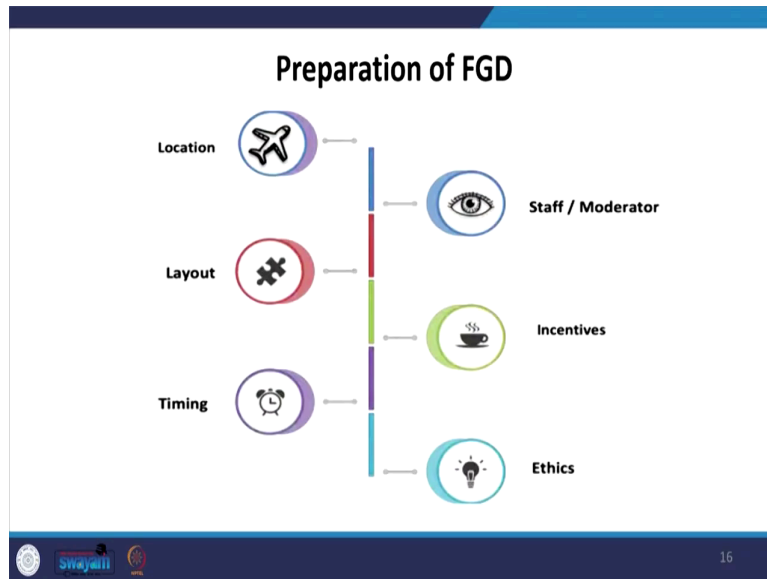
If male stake is not at all required like their reproductive behaviour if societal like family support is required then some men could be considered. But if it is purely the perception like for example, on domestic violence in case of domestic violence. If you are keeping male member in the FGDs women may feel uncomfortable to respond.

So, there should be proper topic of discussion and proper persons. Then age: will age affect the participation of the participants? There should be also a balance of age related to the topic of interest. Regarding hierarchy can the participants of different levels of hierarchy be able to participate equally in the discussion.

Like hierarchy in the sense suppose you want to work for any educational institution let it be an IIT wanted to give some sort of module for IIT and its educational format. But if you are including the director of the institute in the committee and a student a or a faculty; who is at the very entry level the faculty may not able to express the right views because of the hierarchy in the participation.

So, in that case either keep the discussion among the new faculties or the faculties who has nothing to do with any sort of restriction on the new faculties. So, hierarchy is also equally important.

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Then coming to the preparation of FGDs what are finally, after discussion we have come to know or we have understood that location matters, layout or design matters then timing matters, the moderator or the staff who is taking note of it really matters.

Then incentives structure, otherwise the members may not attend your meeting or FGD. Incentive should also be provided and then some ethical note should be very clearly spelled at the time of discussion. All those aspects we have already discussed in between.

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- ### Technique to guide the FGD
- Remain neutral.
 - Elicit further information from the SHY participants.
 - Deal with dominant participants.
 - Paraphrase or summarize long, unclear comments by the participants.
 - Act spontaneously.

Now, there are number of techniques to guide the FGDs; like remaining neutral. Elicit in further information from the shy participants that is also equally important some techniques should be adopted. Deal with dominant participants, paraphrasing or summarizing long unclear comments by the participant through the moderator.

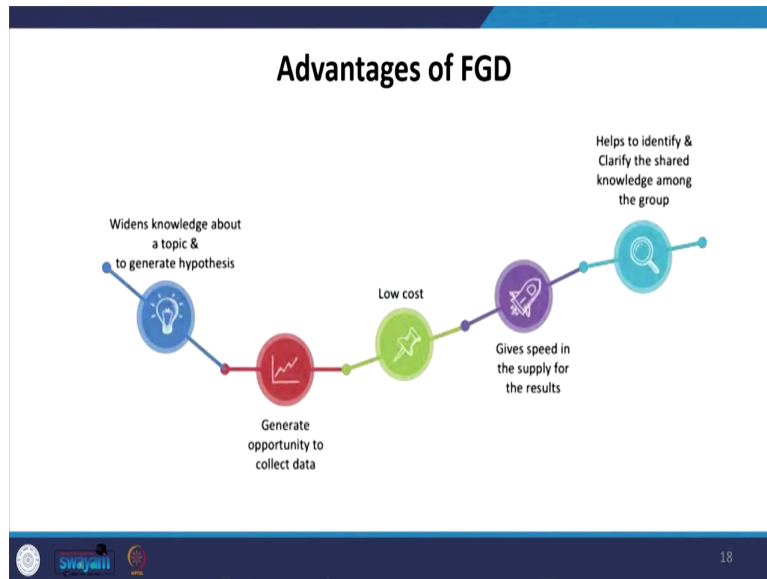
Ask spontaneously or act spontaneously like why these are all important, there might be some shy participants some might be dominating throughout the discussion. So, other views may not come clear likewise in news hour debates prime time shows in different channels you might have seen that only few speakers are dominating. Just to hegemonizing their own views is not always right, others representations may not come forward.

Or just for the sake of claiming is important participant some might remain neutral, not to showcase their controversial views. So, though the topic is not controversial sometimes their views are considered to be controversial. So, some may feel neutral. So, it is the duty of the moderator to get them involved and speak to the point which is essential to get certain conclusion out of the FGDs.

So, like long sentences which I have said if somebody is saying or somebody is just simply presenting with long sentences long views that should be simplified before all the participants. So, what are the advantages then of FGDs there are so many advantages starting with it broadens your knowledge about the topic and generate lots of hypothesis for the testing.

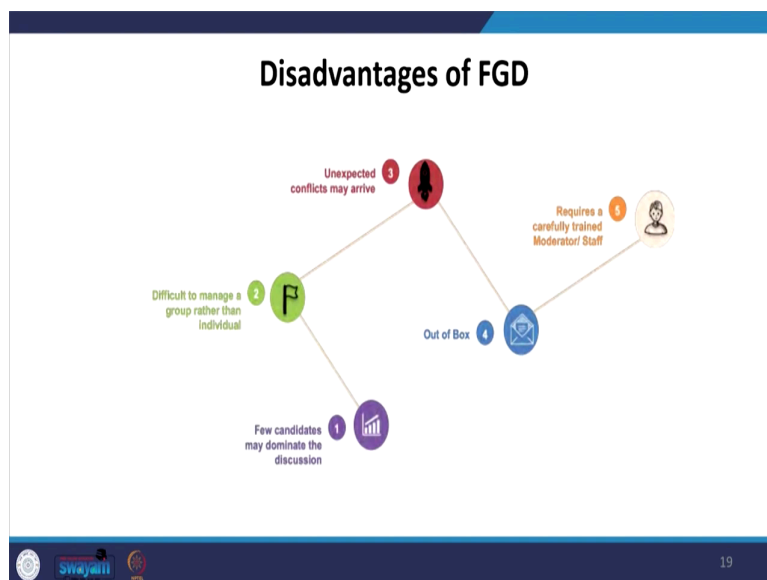
So, this gives opportunity to collect better data, better qualitative data with lower cost. Since you are involving very less people with less time of discussion; obviously, it minimizes your cost. Though some incentives are given to the participants still it minimizes cost and this gives very fast information about your requirement.

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And this helps to identify and clarify the shared knowledge among the group. And all the group will simultaneously get the knowledge and it helps in getting awareness quick awareness for the people.

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There are also some disadvantages, disadvantages like few candidates may dominate the shy. So, it is always possible in any sort of debate. And it is difficult to manage a group rather than an individual. It is unexpected and conflicts may arrive some unexpected conflicts may

arrive in the discussion and some discussion may go out of box; that is difficult to control and requires a careful trained moderator or staff.

So, moderator should be professional and should be trained which is very difficult to get while starting an FGD. So, number of things we have discussed so far. So far we have discussed about features, we have discussed steps, we have discussed techniques, we have discussed its advantages its disadvantages.

And we have also discussed the ambience the condition by which an FGD should be taken. So, at the last the final words to conclude this session (this particular lecture) is that, whoever is following or proceeding for health care research or any qualitative research it is suggested that they should organize FGDs.

These are also called small workhops and FGDs is must that will be giving you better information and to write a good report out of the discussion. So, these are all for today we will discuss other aspects in the next lecture. I hope you will be preparing seriously and any sort of questions you might be having, I will welcome you and discuss you in our live sessions with this.

Thank you.