



A note on the training titled 'Qualitative Research'

The Context and Background

In recent years Qualitative Research has quickly moved to center stage of social research. Although qualitative research is normally considered as synonymous with anthropology, however, it is gaining popularity within the mainstream social sciences and also beyond to public health and international development. Anthropological research for qualitative data collection has undergone significant transformation and now we talk about “Qualitative Research” where old techniques of anthropological research has been redefined, redesigned and reoriented so that it meets the objective and need of different types of research. These did not affect the “quality” of qualitative research though many new techniques have been incorporated to meet the need of many disciplines and stakeholders. The searching for relevance for research methods has become a pivotal issue among the researchers representing different disciplines. Qualitative research is currently widely used, valued and promoted in teaching and research in the academia as well as in the development sector.

Another issue that requires attention is that qualitative research came into prominence alongside with a very influential research tradition known as “quantitative research” that focuses on the collection of numeric data. Indeed, the qualitative and quantitative research have evolved as two fundamentally different paradigms where qualitative approach is more humanistic, emphasizes in-depth understanding and greater reflexivity whereas quantitative research adopts more complex statistical techniques. Another overarching issue in empirical research is which of the two research approaches is superior. This has been a divisive issue in social research for a long time but the current trend in social science and other researches is “*methodological triangulation*” that results in a “*synthetic approach*”. It has come to be known as “*qualt-quant*” or “*mixed approach*”.

Focus of the Workshop and Approach

The focus of this workshop is qualitative research. It has been designed with the major objective of providing an overview and also to discuss various techniques that are used in qualitative research. The discussion also focuses on how to conduct interview, take field notes, document and manage qualitative data. Ethical issues in qualitative research will also get attention.

The workshop will be conducted through lecture and discussion. All lectures will be participatory and interactive in nature. The participants will be encouraged to share their own experience of research (if any) and relate this to qualitative research.

In course of the workshop participants will require choosing a topic and conducting fieldwork on their own, write a report and present this in the workshop. The participants should be prepared to read several reading materials that will complement the lectures in the class.

Participants

The participants with different backgrounds and interest will join the workshop. It is expected that all the participants will remain present in the workshop from the *beginning to the end*. It is not a seminar or presentation of one session rather complete package of training extending over three days.

Profile of Resource Person

Dr. SM Nurul Alam teaching as Adjunct Professor in the Master's in the Development Studies Program (MDS) at North South University since 2002. He has teaching and research experience in economics, anthropology and development studies for more than four decades. Dr. Alam studied both economics and anthropology, holds M.S and Ph.D. in Social Anthropology (specializing in development and economic anthropology) from Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA. He also holds B.A. (Honors) and M.A degree in Economics from Dhaka University. Dr. Alam is a retired Professor of anthropology from Jahangirnagar University. Before joining anthropology department at Jahangirnagar University in 1987, he taught economics at Chittagong University for twelve years. He has worked as consultant and principal investigator for many national and international organizations. Dr. Alam is an ardent exponent of mixed method approach in development and social science research. He has written and edited books, published numerous articles both at home and abroad, completed research and consultancy.