

FIELDWORK

Fieldwork is defined as activities done outside class work involving observation, recording, interviewing, analyzing and interpreting as well as drawing conclusions from Geographical phenomena.

Or

It's the scientific study/method where people observe, record, analyze and interpret for themselves the realities of man, his environment and how they are interrelated.

In other words its geographical laboratory in the physical and human environment for the practical reality of theoretical, conceptual and abstract knowledge.

The Geographical phenomena may be Natural or Artificial. The natural phenomena includes; climate, soils, natural vegetation, relief, rocks, drainage etc.

On the other hand, the Artificial or man-made phenomena includes; Agricultural activities, settlement patterns, fishing, trade, transport, forestry, mining, urbanization etc.

All these Geographical aspects are closely inter-related. For instance, Relief often influences different economic activities; Transport routes influence linear settlement and the Relief influences soils, etc. Therefore, it is important in fieldwork to inter-relate a number of Geographical aspects or phenomena.

IMPORTANCE OF CARRYING OUT FIELDWORK

The following are the reasons as to why students, teachers and other researchers go wandering in the countryside's on fieldwork studies;

1. Fieldwork enables students to collect live/up-dated information from the field since there are continuous changing patterns from time to time.
2. Fieldwork enables students to illustrate class theories, principles and concepts (theoretical knowledge) with real examples in the environment.
3. Fieldwork helps students to get familiar to environment examples in which they live other than basing on those given in Textbooks.
4. Fieldwork offers a variety of activities in a more lively way, which breaks a class monotonous couching and learning.
5. Fieldwork prepares pupils to the life after school since they are introduced to different working systems which they are yet to find after school
6. Fieldwork enables students to acquire various skills like the skill of map reading, sketching, interpretation, drawing graphs, effective skills of sorting, relating and reporting effectively/relevantly, precisely and conveniently; skills of measuring and recording the elements of weather; skills of observing Geographical phenomena and their relationship and skills of dealing with people of different divergent inclinations.
7. Statistical methods and skills used in fieldwork can be applied in other subjects and fields like maths, physics, chemistry and biology for instance drawing of graphs, charts, tables and other illustrative diagrams can be used in those subjects.
8. It enables students to be exposed to new equipments in their areas of fieldwork study like those at the meteorological station (weather instruments).
9. Through fieldwork, students get to know how information collected is used to write field research books as they make a fieldwork report.
10. It enables students to acquire attitudes to make decisions and judgments, which are meaningful and effective after personal exposure to the real physical and human/artificial environment in the field.
11. Students in the field see, learn, and easily remember and understand directly the location, appearance, the importance and consequences of the Geographical phenomena.
12. Through fieldwork, students are trained in the application of different research methods, which are not only useful at their "A" Level study but also later in life and in higher learning.
13. Fieldwork presents to students a more composite picture of the inter-relationships between the Geographical aspects/phenomena. (Physical and human, physical and physical, then human and human).

DISADVANTAGES OF CARRYING OUT FIELDWORK

1. Fieldwork is expensive especially where costs have to be incurred like sending questionnaires, buying of equipments or tools to be used in researching.
2. The researcher may face the danger of hostility from the community where the fieldwork is to be carried out especially when the community mistakes the researcher's aims.
3. Fieldwork is a tedious work as it involves many activities at ago like interviewing, observing, recording, measuring etc.
4. It is time consuming
5. Analyzing and interpreting of the collected data is always a difficult task to the students/researcher.
6. Possible apathy/resistance from parents, community and the school Authority in allowing students to carryout fieldwork.
7. Lack of adequate expertise/experience in the existing personnel i.e. Teachers and supervisors which results in inadequate guidance.
8. Unpredictable changes such as changes in weather, social and political turmoil or insecurity or an area declared out of bound.
9. Possible lack of equipments or tools needed in fieldwork like survey maps, tape measures, measuring cylinders, meter rulers, sampling containers, binoculars and a camera etc.
10. Possible lack of records where bookkeeping has not been seriously taken as important.
11. Language barrier since some people may find it difficult to communicate in their local languages.

PROCEDURES OF CARRYING OUT FIELDWORK

There are three major categories under which fieldwork is done namely;

1. Pre-field study or pre-field preparation.
2. Real fieldwork studying or organization or excursion
3. Follow up study or class discussion.

A. PRE-FIELD STUDY / PREPARATIONS.

This is the **backbone** of the field excursions. It's the study before the actual fieldwork study. Adequate arrangements must be first done before going to the field. It involves the following steps.

- a) Conceiving a problem, which arise from any topic on the Geography syllabus to be researched on.
- b) Identifying the area of study basing on the problem above from where information and data would be got. It should be in reach of the researcher and appropriate for the problem.
- c) Seeking permission from the school Authority to endorse for the fieldwork study. And also secondly, seeking permission from the local Authority of the area of study chose above to be allowed to carry out fieldwork in their locality.
- d) Carrying out a pilot study. This is a tour to the area identified noting important geographical phenomena which will help at the real fieldwork and being knowledgeable of the equipments needed in the fieldwork as well as methods to be used.
- e) Choosing what to study about (the topic of study), which should be related to conceived problem above. It should have; geographical validity, covering a smallest unit possible, being specific and not general, being interrelated with a number of geographical phenomena, being original and easy to interpret.
- f) Formulating objectives of the study, which should be in relation to the topic of the study. The objectives should be **SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and testable)** during the fieldwork research. Constructional words must be used while stating them e.g. find out, suggest, identify, examine, describe, discover, etc but words like; know, understand, appreciate, study, comprehend, etc must totally be avoided while stating the objectives of the study.
- g) Choosing the methods to be used in fieldwork, these are used to investigate and collect data. They may include among others; observation, recording, interviewing, sampling, map orientation, measurement, etc.
- h) Choosing the tools or equipments to be used while collecting data aiding the above methods like map extracts, binoculars, cameras, measuring tapes, meter rulers, text books, etc.
- i) Reviewing the already written literature on the similar topic of the study so as to be enlightened about what is expected in the field.
- j) Distributing and time allocating fieldwork tasks like sketching work, interview work, observation, etc.
- k) Briefing and departure to the area of study is done after taking last instructions or warning procedures to follow and availing all the needed arrangements as set at that time before going the field.

SUMMARY OF PREFIELD ACTIVITIES

Half page

B. REAL / ACTUAL FIELDWORK EXCURSION.

During the real fieldwork study, the main activity is to **collect data/information** related to the topic and objectives stated earlier in preparation (stage 1). It involves applying the chosen methods as well as equipments / tools to be used while collecting information. Various methods with the aid of equipments are used in collecting and recording of information from the field. Among them the main ones are:

Observation method involves the use of naked or optical eyes and other human senses to identify and view the Geographical phenomena in the field.

Advantages of observation method

1. It gives firsthand information, which is factual and reliable as well as accurate because the researcher is physically in the field him/herself.
2. It gives direct information as a result of direct observation.
3. It is a quick method and speeds up the work within a short period of time.
4. It requires no personal contact with other people.
5. It is less costly because it needs few materials or tools while collecting data.
6. It gives the chance to the researcher to have personal judgment of what is on ground.
7. It avoids the problem of language barrier like in interviewing.

Disadvantages of observation method

1. It leaves out some important information which cannot be observed or as a result of poor observation like historical background, an employee's / er's salary, prices of the produce, etc.
2. It cannot be used by people with poor sight.
3. Since it requires physical appearance of the observer, expenses are incurred while traveling.
4. It requires seeking permission from the area of study so as to observe without interferences.
5. It's limited when there are obstacles making such areas in accessible due to poor drainage, relief, etc.
6. Information may be misinterpreted because it depends on individual preference.
7. It may not be applied in case there is an abrupt weather change like prolonged rainfall.

Interviewing method is the conversation with questions and answers between the interviewer and the interviewees. It involves direct questioning and answering or face-to-face discussion between the researcher and the respondents in relation to the fieldwork study using an interview guide and a mouth.

An illustration of interview guide:

For instance, When it's on urbanization in Luzira trading centre, questions and answers are expected to be like;

Interviewer: What is the historical background of Luzira trading centre?

Interviewee: Answer

Interviewer: What is the location of Luzira trading centre?

Interviewee: Answer

Advantages of interviewing method

1. Firsthand information is obtained because of the physical presence of the researcher.
2. Correct information is collected at spot due to the presence of the interviewee.
3. More information is collected where inadequate answers are given using many interviewees'.
4. It provides hidden information like historical background, income earned, prices of the produce, etc.
5. It provides up-to-date information because those interviewed are local people in the area.
6. It promotes good relationship with the local people due to the interaction between the two.
7. It is a flexible method because the interview guides can be changed according to people's personality.
8. It is not restricted to only those people who can read and write
9. The validity of the information collected can be assessed immediately with the researcher and the respondents.
10. It is less costly as it involves less expense.
11. It is lively as it involves direct flow of information from the interviewees to the interviewer.
12. It is the fast method of collecting data.

Disadvantages of the interviewing method

1. Language could be a serious problem if the researcher does not understand the local languages used by the local people.
2. It is time consuming when many people are to be interviewed or when a language interpreter is to be used.
3. Direct hostilities may erupt when the respondents misinterprets/don't understand what the researcher is all about.
4. It is reliable to personal biases and exaggerations
5. Possibility of low quality data and lack of comparability of results obtained may occur.
6. Some people are reluctant in sparing time to give information to the researcher.
7. Some information may not be given due to fear of tax by the government or not to be embarrassed or when it is considered to be confidential.
8. It requires the researcher to be gentle and diplomatic, which some researchers can't bear like students thus failure to obtain data.
9. It requires seeking permission from the concerned authorities, which may delay the study.

Questionnaire method is similar to interviewing except there is no direct contact between the researcher and the respondents. A questionnaire is a list of questions composed or set, typed and printed and sent to the respondent to be answered through post office or any other means. Answers are later sent back to the researcher.

A format of the questionnaire is like that of an interview method, but the respondent fills the questions of the questionnaire at a later stage after receiving the questionnaire guide.

Advantages of Questionnaire method

1. It helps to get information from people in distant places.
2. It can be used to get information of a very large number of people because questionnaires are given to many people.
3. It gives the respondent ample time to answer.
4. The presence of the researcher is not a prerequisite (requirement).
5. It gives the respondent to feel free while expressing his ideas.
6. It saves time because more people are questioned at ago through different questionnaires.
7. It provides permanent record of important information since data is on a questionnaire itself.
8. It avoids irrelevant information since questions are organized systematically according to the aims and objectives of the study.
9. It is cheap when transport costs are not involved on the side of the researcher.

10. It helps to avoid a problem of language barrier.

Disadvantages of the Questionnaire method

1. It is rigid because the information collected is unchangeable.
2. It is limited to the literate people who can read and write.
3. Few people are willing to attend to the questionnaires and even to return them.
4. It's expensive in terms of typing, printing and posting the questions.
5. Assessing of the information obtained is tiresome because of the different and many people used.
6. It is time consuming in terms of setting questions, typing, printing as well as sending them.
7. It is a slow method because questionnaires are sent back at the respondent's free will.
8. It is a risky method because the posted questionnaire letters may not reach the places of interest.
9. Wrong information may be obtained because there are a lot of mistakes, omissions and exaggerations.
10. It provides a narrow scope of information since the researcher is not present physically to collect more additional information.

Recording method involves storing down the data collected from the field in form of writing down the information collected using the other methods and drawing all the field sketches like maps, transects and panoramic views, diagrams, tables, graphs and other field illustrations with help of writing materials like pen, ruler, pencil and papers. It is done in a systematic order and in an understandable manner for easy interpretation and concluding meaningfully later on in the follow up stage.

Advantages of recording

1. It stores information, which is used in making data analysis and writing the report of the fieldwork.
2. It is a direct method because information is got and written on the spot.
3. It gives firsthand information because the researcher physically records it in the field.
4. It makes the researcher active in the field because he physically writes down the information and also draws all the necessary sketches and illustrations.
5. It enables the researcher to acquire the skills of determining the validity of the data.
6. It gives the actual appearance of the area of study in form of sketches drawn.
7. It is a quick and fast method since information is collected directly.
8. It does not require any assistance of another person to record down the data.

Disadvantages of the recording method

1. It is difficult to use this method, where there is unpredictable change in weather.
2. It is expensive in terms of the materials used like papers, pens, cameras, tape recorders, etc.
3. It may not apply when the researcher is illiterate.
4. It requires having the skills of recording to avoid irrelevant data.
5. It is tiresome because of the surveying, observing and other fieldwork activities as well as recording down.

Field sketching involves the drawing of sketch maps, transects and panoramas using writing materials like base map, compass, pen, ruler, pencil and papers showing the geographical features.

- a) **Sketch maps** is a representation of the field area of study as seen from above and drawn to show the location of the physical and man-made features. It gives a clear view of the information about the geographical phenomena observed in the field area of study.

A good sketch map should have the following;

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| ▪ Title | ▪ Frame | ▪ Nearby places |
| ▪ Compass direction | ▪ Physical features | |
| ▪ Key/labeling | ▪ Human features | |

- b) **Transect** is a cross section or sketch section of the field area of study. It can be drawn from east to West, North to South or any other opposite directions. It is drawn appropriately when the researcher walks across the area of study in a linear form, observing and recording the geographical aspects like changes in relief, altitude, types of soils, vegetation types, Land uses and other geographical aspects.

A transect should have the following;

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| ▪ Title | ▪ Shading of the ground | ▪ Human features |
| ▪ Frame | ▪ Labeling | ▪ Nearby places |
| ▪ Direction of drawing | ▪ Physical features | |

c) **Panoramas** is a representation of the sketch diagrams in a pictorial way or drawings of the geographical features in the area of study while standing at one point preferably on a raised area.

It shows the general appearance of the area of study as seen from a particular point.

Panoramas should have the following;

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| ▪ Title | ▪ Key/labeling | ▪ Human features |
| ▪ Direction of drawing/ view point | ▪ Frame | ▪ Nearby places. |
| | ▪ Physical features | |

NB: When an annotated field sketch is to be drawn, a key is less vital or not needed, all major labeling must be done in the real sketch drawn. If, in all cases, the labeling is too congested, a provisional key could be drawn for only minor symbols and labeling.

Advantages of field sketching

1. Skills of drawing sketches are acquired.
2. Sketching summarizes the geographical findings obtained in the field.
3. Information obtained on the sketches can be used as reference in follow-up stage.

Disadvantages of field sketching

1. It is costly as various tools are required in drawings.
2. It is hindered in case of unpredictable change in weather
3. Some features may not be drawn as other physical features may obstruct them.

Tabulation involves storing down the data collected from the field in form of tables or tabulated data with help of writing materials like pen, ruler, pencil and papers. It is done in a systematic order and in an understandable manner for easy interpretation and concluding meaningfully later on in the follow up stage and above all it summarizes the collected information.

Advantages of Tabulation

1. A skill of tabulation is acquired.
2. It stores information, which is used in making data analysis and writing the report of the fieldwork.
3. It summarizes the geographical findings obtained in the field.
4. It is a direct method because information is got and written on the spot.
5. It gives firsthand information because the researcher physically records it in the field.
6. It makes the researcher active in the field because he physically writes down the information.
7. It enables the researcher to acquire the skills of determining the validity of the data.
8. It is a quick and fast method since information is collected directly and brief.
9. It does not require any assistance of another person to record down the data.

Disadvantages of the Tabulation

1. It is difficult to use this method, where there is unpredictable change in weather.
2. It is expensive in terms of the materials used like papers, pens, ruler, computer etc.
3. It may not apply when the researcher is illiterate.
4. It requires having the skills of tabulation to avoid irrelevant data.
5. It is tiresome because of the different columns and rows to be drawn.
6. Some geographical features may not be tabulated as some physical features may obstruct them.

Photography / Videography involves taking pictures / video clips of geographical phenomenon using a lens camera / smart phone.

Advantages of Photography

1. Provides data which can be analyzed after the field work study.

2. Trains students the skills of photography.
3. Provides accurate and a variety of information.

Disadvantages of Photography

1. Cameras and batteries are very rare in remote areas due to poverty or ideological backwardness.
2. Expensive to buy.
3. Light may affect the quality of the photographs.

Measurement is the establishment of the relationship between features in form of length, size, weight, height (of any feature) in the field to obtain actual results using measuring devices like meter rule, tape measure, measuring cylinder, weather instruments, speed meter, weighing scale, compass, etc.

Advantages of measurement.

1. It helps to establish the relationship between geographical aspects in the field.
2. It gives accurate information because of the measuring devices
3. It gives firsthand information as the measuring devices are applied directly.
4. It is an efficient way of collecting information.
5. It helps in analyzing and making conclusions on the collected data.

Disadvantages of measurement.

1. It is time consuming since it requires measuring accurately.
2. It is expensive in terms of the measuring devices needed.
3. It is tiresome especially when, what to be measured is big or large or long.
4. It is not applied where physical features act as barriers like poorly drained areas and steep slopes.

Pacing is finding out the lengths and sizes of specific geographical features by means of strides called paces like a road, etc. that is counting paces

Advantages of pacing.

1. It is a quick method of finding the length and size.
2. It is cheap, as it does not require any instrument in pacing.

Disadvantages of pacing.

1. It lacks accuracy, as every pacing is just an approximate.
2. It is not applied in area where physical features act as barriers like poorly drained areas and steep slopes.

Sampling method is the systematic selection of items out of the total population to be interviewed or observed. The population does not only mean people but any group of variable in the field of study, which represents the whole study.

Advantages of sampling.

1. It saves time as the researcher deals with a few variables of the group/a part of the whole group.
2. A detailed study out of the sample can easily be under taken / studied.

Disadvantages of sampling.

1. It generalizes the information collected to the whole group.
2. It leaves out unique features or characteristics of geographical phenomena, not found in the sample.

Map orientation refers to the determination of the position of a place or any geographical phenomena in relation to the compass direction and all their actual positions. In other words, it involves aligning and marking of geographical features on the sketch map drawn in relation to the actual ground to see whether the features shown on the sketch map relate with what is on the actual ground using a base/survey map.

Advantages of map orientation.

1. It helps in marking features in their right positions
2. It gives up-to-date information on the map from the students' (researchers') observation in the field.
3. It helps in data analysis and writing fieldwork report.

Disadvantages of map orientation.

1. Some existing maps are out dated.
2. It is expensive as it involves the designing of detailed scaled maps.
3. Some researchers lack the skills of map reading and interpretation.

Consultation of written documents. This is also the analysis of the existing information/documentary analysis. It involves consulting information in the already written documents like textbooks, newspapers, magazines, maps, statistics and other illustrative materials as secondary sources and primary sources about the particular topic of study in the field.

Advantages of consultation method.

1. The information is provided in the shortest period of time.
2. It tends to provide accurate information.
3. It helps in data analysis and writing fieldwork report.

Disadvantages of consultation method.

1. Due to insecurity and poor recording keeping, most of the written information is being lacked in many firms and areas.
2. It is expensive in making the written information.
3. Some documents contain out dated materials.

SUMMARY OF METHODS AND TOOLS

Full page

SUMMARY OF MERITS AND DEMERITS

Full page

C. FOLLOW UP STAGE.

This is a **general comprehensive discussion** carried out by the researchers immediately when they come back from the field study so as to re-organize the results of the data collected and fostering an understanding of the field studies through intellectual reflection aided by empirical data.

Therefore, the following activities are carried out in the follow up stage;

1. Organisation of the data. Data collected from the field through the various methods should be organised and all the information arranged under that particular unit (objective).
2. Compiling data. The organised data is then compiled systematically according to the stated objectives of the fieldwork study.
3. Comparison of the data collected. The different data got/collected through the various methods is compared so as to revert to the correct information only, while omitting errors and repetitions.
4. Drawing and polishing sketches. All the fieldwork sketches like maps, cross sections, panoramas, tables, graphs and other illustrations (diagrams) are polished up from being rough as they were drawn in the field.
5. Analysing and interpretation of data. Through a field discussion, analysis and interpretation of the compiled data from the field is made to effect various relationships between natural and natural phenomena, Natural and man-made phenomena and between man-made and man-made phenomena.
6. Verification of data. The information interpreted and analyzed should be verified with that in the existing written documents like textbooks, maps research and other secondary materials. Sometimes, verification is done, by going back to the site of study.
7. Giving recommendations and suggestions from the fieldwork finding. The researcher is expected to give his opinion as an advice, proposal, way forward, or a solution basing on the problems in the area of the study.
8. Drawing conclusions from the data collected, analysed, interpreted and verified. A general conclusion is drawn by the researcher using the findings of his/her own fieldwork study to be applied to similar problem of the topic in rest of the world.
9. Writing the report. This involves the use of both written descriptions and illustrations to write a research report orderly and in a clear manner about the topic of study in the relation to the stated objectives.
10. Presentation of fieldwork study data. The fieldwork findings should be presented to all relevant stakeholders for example the class teacher, subject teacher, head teacher, Geography department, District, the area of study Authority and any other concerned Authority.
11. Evaluation of the Data from the fieldwork. In this the extent to which the fieldwork objectives were achieved as intended or determined.

THIS FIELDWORK SPECULATIVE BULLETIN IS TOWARDS THE REALISTIC CREATIVITY!