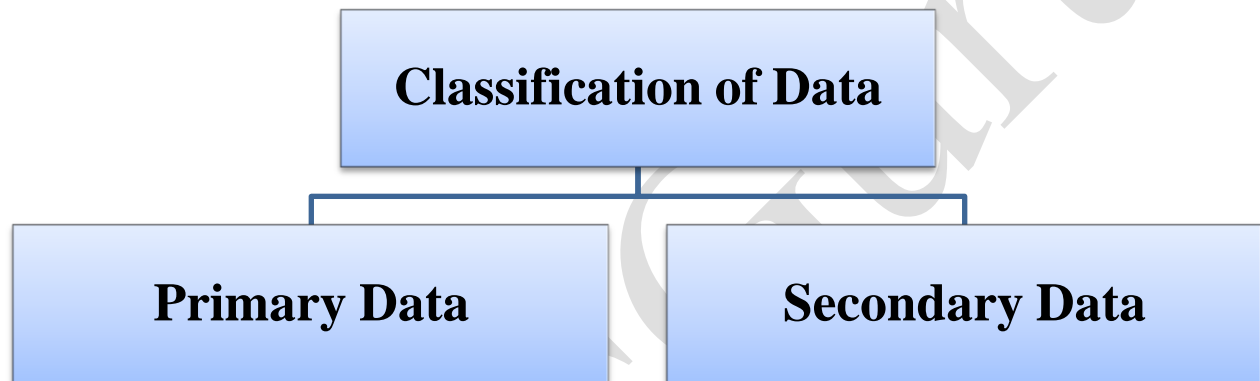# Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities, business, etc. While methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same.

Classification of Data

Data is classified into two categories:

1. Primary Data

Data which is collected by the researcher directly from his observations and experiences is primary data. For example, collection of data directly by the researcher on brand awareness, brand preference, brand loyalty and other aspects of consumer behavior from a sample of consumers by interviewing them. Primary data are first-hand information collected through various methods such as observations, interviewing, mailing, etc.

Advantages of Primary Data:

- It is original source of data.

- It is possible to capture changes occuring in the course of time.

- It is flexible to the advantage of researcher.

- Extensive research study is based on primary data.

Disadvantages of Primary Data:

- Primary Data is expensive to obtain.

- It is time consuming.

- It requires extensive research personnel who are skilled.

- It is difficult to adminster.

2. Secondary Data

Secondary data is data that has already been collected and collated by somebody for some reason other than the current study. It may available in the form of publishes or unpublished sources. For example, population census data collected by the government in a country is a primary data for that government. But the same data becomes secondary for those researchers who use it later.

Advantages of Secondary Data:

- Secondary Data is much more economical and quicker to collect than primary data, as we need not spend time and money on designing and printing data collection forms such as questionnaires, schedules, etc.

- It is impossible to an individual or small institution to collect primary data with regard to some subjects such as population census, imports and exports of different countries, national income data, etc. but can obtain form secondary data.

Disadvantages of Secondary Data:

- Secondary data is very risky because it may not be suitable, reliable, adequate and also difficult to find which exactly fit the need of the present situation.

- It is difficult to judge whether the secondary data is sufficiently accurate or not for our investigations.

- Secondary data may not be available for some investigations. For example, bargaining strategies in live products marketing, impact of TV on advertisements on viewers, opinion polls on a specific subject, etc. In such situations, we have to collect primary data.