

Meaning and Definitions of Statistics:

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“Statistics”, that a word is often used, has been derived from the Latin word ‘Status’ that means a group of numbers or figures; those represent some information of our human interest.

Statistics is a form of mathematical analysis that uses quantified models, representations and synopses for a given set of experimental data or real-life studies. Statistics studies methodologies to gather, review, analyze and draw conclusions from data.

The term ‘Statistics’ has been defined in two senses, i.e. in Singular and in Plural sense. —Oxford Dictionary

In plural sense, it means a systematic collection of numerical facts and in singular sense; it is the science of collecting, classifying and using statistics.

A. In the Plural Sense:

“Statistics are numerical statements of facts in any department of enquiry placed in relation to each other.” —A.L. Bowley

“The classified facts respecting the condition of the people in a state—especially those facts which can be stated in numbers or in tables of numbers or in any tabular or classified arrangement.” —Webster

These definitions given above give a narrow meaning to the statistics as they do not indicate its various aspects as are witnessed in its practical applications. From the this point of view the definition given by Prof. Horace Sacrist appears to be the most comprehensive and meaningful:

“By statistics we mean aggregates of facts affected to a marked extent by multiplicity of causes, numerically expressed, enumerated or estimated according to reasonable standard of accuracy, collected in a systematic

manner for a predetermined purpose, and placed in relation to each other.”—Horace Sacrist

B. In the Singular Sense:

“Statistics refers to the body of technique or methodology, which has been developed for the collection, presentation and analysis of quantitative data and for the use of such data in decision making.” — Ncttor and Washerman

“Statistics may rightly be called the science of averages.” —Bowleg

“Statistics may be defined as the collection, presentation, analysis, and interpretation of numerical data.” —Croxtton and Cowden

“Statistics is a body of methods for making wise decisions on the face of uncertainty.” —Wallis and Roberts

“Statistics is a body of methods for obtaining and analyzing numerical data in order to make better decisions in an uncertain world.” —Edward N. Dubois

So, from above definitions we find that science of statistics also includes the methods of collecting, organizing, presenting, analyzing and interpreting numerical facts and decisions are taken on their basis.

The most proper definition of statistics can be given as following after analyzing the various definitions of statistics.

“Statistics in the plural sense are numerical statements of facts capable of some meaningful analysis and interpretation, and in singular sense, it relates to the collection, classification, presentation and interpretation of numerical data.”

1. *"Statistics may be called the science of counting"*
—Bowley A.L.
2. *"Statistics may rightly be called the science of averages."*
—Bowley A.L.
3. *"Statistics is the science of the measurement of social organism, regarded as a whole in all its manifestations."*
—Bowley A.L.
4. *"Statistics is the science of estimates and probabilities."*
—Boddington
5. *"The science of Statistics is the method of judging collective, natural or social phenomenon from the results obtained from the analysis or enumeration or collection of estimates."*
—King
6. *"Statistics is the science which deals with classification and tabulation of numerical facts as the basis for explanation, description and comparison of phenomenon."*
—Lovitt
7. *"Statistics is the science which deals with the methods of collecting, classifying, presenting, comparing and interpreting numerical data collected to throw some light on any sphere of enquiry."*
—Selligman
8. *"Statistics may be defined as the science of collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation of numerical data."*
—Croxtan and Cowden
9. *"Statistics may be regarded as a body of methods for making wise decision in the face of uncertainty."*
—Wallis and Roberts
10. *"Statistics is a method of decision making in the face of uncertainty on the basis of numerical data and calculated risks."*
—Prof. Ya-Lun-Chou
11. *"The science and art of handling aggregate of facts—observing, enumeration, recording, classifying and otherwise systematically treating them."*
—Harlow