

Preface

The beauty of statistics lies in the fact that almost all planning, management, business and engineering problems, and phenomena require statistics as an analytical tool to help in subsequent decision making. The users of these and other sciences need statistics equally. To most of the users, the applied parts and not the fine mathematics of the subject are of great importance. They have little opportunity and time in going to the sophisticated theories of statistics. At the same time, they must be in a position to interpret the technical details of the subject in order to correctly use the tool. This is important to guard against misuse of statistics. It is recognized that the users of statistics come largely from various disciplines, some having no strong mathematical background. Emphasis of such users is on the application of statistics in the real and practical problems.

My engineering background, training in planning and management, and teaching of statistics in the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, have helped me in identifying the need of the subject in a wide variety of applications in the real-world perspective and the problems the students face in handling the statistical techniques. To overcome these, a lot of techniques and ideas were used and found successful in the classroom. The purpose of writing this text book is to transfer these practical aspects into a reference book from which a wider range of readers can benefit. While I started teaching statistics to the students coming from various disciplines, the students were found fearful of the subject. My constant efforts were, therefore, to make the subject interesting to them rather than a fearful one. This book will reflect to some extent these efforts.

The coverage of the book is evident from the Table of Contents. The chapter “Index Numbers” with their construction techniques, applications, and interpretations is not normally available in ordinary statistics books. Yet the planning and management students need it frequently and to them it is of a great help. This has been added for their benefit.

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