

→ Characteristics of an average:

Acc to Prof. J.F. Kenney and E.S. Keeping, an average should be:

- (i) Rigorously defined
- (ii) easily computed
- (iii) Capable of simple interpretation
- (iv) dependent of simple interpretation
- (v) Not unduly influenced by one or two extremely large or small value.
- (vi) Likely to fluctuate relatively little from one random sample to another
- (vii) Capable of mathematical manipulation

→ Limitations of an average:

- (i) An average is a single value representing a group of values but it is not always safe to depend on it because there is every possibility of getting wrong calculation.
- (ii) A wrong choice of an average for a particular problem might give wrong and fallacious conclusions.
- (iii) An average (as a measure of central tendency, say) fails to give the complete picture of the data (in particular, about the formation of the frequency distributions).
- (iv) In certain types of frequency distributions like U-shaped or J-shaped, an average may fail to represent the entire data. That is unless the data show a clear single concentration of observations, an average may not be meaningful at all.
- (v) An average may give us a value that does not exist in the data.
- (vi) Sometimes an average might give very absurd result.
For ex:- The average no. of children per adult woman is 3.4.