

MESP-105

MANUAL
FOR
PROJECT REPORT
(PGDHE PROGRAMME)



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Learning outcomes

After reading this manual, you will be able to:

- understand various types of research project;
- describe the important sources for problem identification and its selection;
- understand the criteria which are to be kept in view in formulating a research problem;
- describe various stages of a research proposal;
- understand the format of a research proposal;
- prepare a research proposal;
- execute a research project;
- understand the procedure which is followed in typing different sections of the research report.

Classification of research projects

Research projects can be classified into three groups. This classification is based mainly on the type of the research study to be undertaken and its purpose.

- i) The most common project is of the type that is prepared by those who wish to undertake research for their diploma or for their master's or doctoral degree. Submission of a research proposal is a general requirement in most of the universities in case of various diploma or degree courses. The proposal is evaluated by a committee of experts to determine the feasibility of the research project. For example, being a student of PGDHE, you are required to select a theme or a problem in an area of your choice within the framework of the contents of the four courses you have already studied and then develop a research proposal for Project Work. This exercise is meant to help you manifest and explore your specific area of interest related to higher education. As a researcher it is necessary for you to choose a broad area within which you will select a topic/problem for conducting a study. However, it may be noted that you should choose a topic for which all the needed resources are easily available to you. The main purpose of your project work is to sensitise you to the realities and practices of higher education systems, their unique problems, the demands on them and the possibilities inherent in them.
- ii) The second type of research project is one that is submitted by a researcher to a private or governmental agency for financial assistance which is given on the recommendation of expert(s) who evaluate the proposal.
- iii) Finally, in the third category is the research project that is submitted by a university or a college teacher to some research organisation such as Distance Educational Council (DEC) of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR), the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), the University Grants Commission (UGC), or any other organisation. Funds are earmarked by such organisations for research, hence more teachers are taking interest to investigate problems in the areas of concern at the school, college or university levels. After successfully completing your PGDHE, you may also be interested in undertaking a research project of this nature.

9. Give two examples each of descriptive studies and experimental studies.

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The research report

After completing the research project as per the requirements of the research proposal, you are required to write the detailed account of the project highlighting the statement of the problem, research objectives, hypothesis(es) of the study based on the review of the related literature, method and procedures used in respect of development and use of tools, selection of sample groups, collection of data, analysis and interpretation of data, conclusions with educational implications and suggestions for further research in the area. The detailed account of all these aspects constitute a **research report**. There are certain rules and principles involved in writing a research report which we will discuss in the present section.

General format of the research report

For the purposes of presentation of a research report, several style manuals are available which provide us guidance as to the specific rules and on style and format to be followed in reporting the objectives, methods, procedures and findings of the research study. But all formats are somewhat similar to the following outline which comprises of three main sections: (i) the preliminary section; (ii) the body of the report; and (iii) the reference section. Each main section consists of several subsections.

Preliminary section

1. Title page

Several parts of preliminary material are presented prior to the body of a research report. Generally it contains the following information.

- i) Title of the project.
- ii) Name of the institution to which the report is being submitted.
- iii) Name of the candidate (if desired, previous academic degree may be listed after name).
- iv) Date of submission of the report.

2. Preface

The preface usually includes a brief statement of the purpose and scope of the report. It should also include thank for those who gave the researcher substantial guidance or help in the completion of the project work. If the researcher has little to say about the contribution of her/his research project, the preface can easily be omitted. In such situation, the page should be labeled **Acknowledgements** rather than 'preface'. Acknowledgements should be brief and simple. A long list of effusive acknowledgements full of flattery is not in good taste. The brief statement of acknowledgement should sincerely recognise the persons and institutions to whom the researcher is indebted for providing academic guidance, administrative support and facilities.

3. **Table of contents**

The table of contents include the major divisions of the report; the introduction, the chapters with their subsections, the bibliography and the appendix, alongwith the page numbers. The preface or acknowledgements, list of tables and list of figures are also entered in the table of contents.

Body of the report

The main body of the report contains four logical divisions:

1. **The introduction**

The introduction of a research report should be lucid, complete and concise. It should introduce the research problem in proper context, and arouse and stimulate the reader's interest.

In the introduction section the researcher defines, analyses, state the nature of the problem with research objectives. She/he also reviews the related studies so as to provide a rationale for the formulation of hypothesis(es). The introduction also includes the significance of the problem and the need for undertaking the research project. After reviewing the background of the problem, its scope and delimitations, the researcher presents the hypothesis (es) assumptions and operational definitions of the terms.

2. **Design of the study**

This section explains the design of the study in detail. It includes a detailed description about the **method** which was used in the conduct of the study, type of the data needed for the study, the tools and techniques used for their collection, and the procedure by which they have been collected. The details about the nature of the population, the size of sample(s), the method of sampling, tools, procedure of data collection, quantitative (statistical) and qualitative data analysis methods to be employed and reasons for selecting such methods, and how data will be organised and presented for analysis and interpretation, are also provided in this section.

3. **Analysis and interpretation of the data**

This section is the heart of the research report. The data analysis and interpretation may either be presented in separate chapters or may be integrated and presented in one chapter. The data are presented in table and figures accompanied by textual discussion. Tables which are complex and lengthy should be placed in appendix, otherwise the continuity of textual discussion gets broken. In the textual discussion the report should not repeat all the detailed information that is provided in tables and figures. It should only point out important facts and relationship to give meaning to the data and make certain generalisations about the data. Any weakness or limitations in the study pertaining to the research design, tools, or population that have come to light during the completion of the project work should be reported frankly alongwith the manner in which factors may have affected the findings of the study.

4. **Summary and conclusions**

This section includes a brief re-statement of the problem, a description of the procedures used, and discussion of findings and conclusions of the study. The conclusions are presented concisely and related directly to the hypotheses that were tested. As stated earlier they state whether the findings of the study, accept or reject hypothesis(es). Conclusions are answers to the questions raised and suggest modifications in the existing knowledge. In