

NALSAR Directorate of Distance Education

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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Project Writing: Relevance and Uses

- Writing a report on a topic chosen by the candidate is called Project work. It is mandatory and part of the Course. But one need not look at this exercise only in a formal and narrower sense. A more saner and broader view of this exercise offers many long-term benefits than just obtaining a Certificate. If so, what are the advantages of Project writing to the candidate?
- Writing a thesis/report trains the researcher in improving his/her language. This is called writing skills. Remember *language is power* and command over language gives you confidence. You will not gain such skills overnight. It is a *process*.
- Whether you are employed or aspiring for a job or preparing to write a competitive examination (UPSC/banking/insurance/Groups) good language helps you. Choosing the correct word, framing a sentence without grammatical/syntax mistakes, or abridging (summarizing) a long text into brief content can be learnt by carefully planning and scripting your Project report.

Project Writing: Relevance and Uses contd...

- It is true current digital modes help you gain quick access to a word or word formation. But remember *how* to use a particular word, *when* and *what* sense can be learnt only by taking your report writing with some degree of seriousness. These days you get offers/invitations to write a content/lesson/ questionnaire through online/work from home mode, promising payment. Language skills earn you money.
- If you are a mid-level/senior officer or professional, good language helps you in: a. understanding correct meaning/sense of an official note or policy document; b. to prepare a policy brief for your HoD/ministry/head office; c. write a press note on behalf of your department/company/enterprise.

Selection of Topic

- It is the topic that you choose for writing a project that determines the purpose: only for gaining Certificate, or gaining knowledge on the subject matter. Discretion is yours. You are your own judge in deciding on this issue. It is rather a value-based choice: degree or learning.
- It is mainly your interest in a subject/service/emerging domain of knowledge that should govern your topic selection. If you are a Business Management student you may like to select a theme relating to PPP (public private partnership) management; an IR student may chose on the influence of Indian states on foreign policy; or, a defence person may like to write on the relevance of outer space for national security.
- If you are intending to write a small book or article for a journal, you may select a more topical issue. Or if you are from media background, on any current/controversial issue like combating digital crimes. A law student might be willing to examine the legality of abolition of Art. 370.

Data Collection

- Very often the researcher wonders how to go about collecting data on the topic selected. Remember data collection is not an easy task, though Google has mercifully made it easier. But please note there are no ‘quick fixes’ in a good research. A diligent and sincere researcher will not, and should not, depending totally on Web sources. If so then what are the other and dependable/authentic sources? Following are the major sources.
- *Primary Sources*: These are original documents, official papers, legislative debates, government policy statements and legal texts (e.g. case laws). These documents are official, authentic. You may need to visit libraries or government departments or ministries. Of course, some of the official publications are also placed on Websites.
- *Secondary Sources* are books, journals, periodicals, media sources. There is no dearth of secondary sources on any particular topic. This is a world of over information. You should be selective in choosing your sources. The researcher is expected to read important published books available on the subject. *Do not borrow data only from media and web sources.*

Data Collection contd...

- Empirical method of data collection: Empirical data means collecting information on your topic through personal experience. The researcher will himself talk to the policy makers/stakeholders/lawmakers/beneficiaries etc. He will go to the field /area and observe personally how people behave, or how they respond to a scheme/policy introduced. Gaining information through personal experience and observation is the essence of empirical (also called behavioural) approach to data collection.
- Main empirical techniques of data collection are : *Questionnaire* (Postal or Email) to concerned persons; *Interview* technique which involves the researcher directly meeting the experts/stakeholders/business groups/workers related to the topic; lastly, *Observation* which leads researcher to personally visit a ground situation, school, farm area, factory or hospital depending upon the nature of the subject of research.

Planning the Report

- Final stage of your project assignment is writing the report/thesis. This involves properly organizing your data collection, chapters, tables/maps/charts. In writing his thesis the candidate will have enough opportunity and scope to give the best of his intellect, analytical competence, language skill. Writing a thesis is an intellectual exercise. Your thesis can be a mirror of your thinking.
- *Preface* is the commencement part of the thesis. Here researcher very briefly, in two or three paragraphs, will explain importance of his topic and its relevance. He personally declares it is an original research work and its content is not reproduced or plagiarized from any other source. He will thank those people who were helpful in his research effort. If he wishes may be acknowledging the services or cooperation extended by family members.

Planning the Report contd...

- Next step is organizing serially the chapters of the thesis . First chapter is *Introduction* in which it is explained why the topic is chosen, its importance to society/country, what is the literature available and consulted by him. In each chapter two or three sub-headings be given. Statements/important figures/ quotations must be acknowledged as per the style mentioned in Project Guidelines.
- Last part of thesis is Bibliography. Here all the sources, primary, secondary, media and web should be alphabetically arranged. How to cite a book, journal or web source is mentioned in the Project Guidelines prepared by NALSAR.

Thank You