



Indira Gandhi National Open University
National Centre for Disability Studies

MCFTP-002
Dissertation

Dissertation Manual



National Centre for Disability Studies
Indira Gandhi National Open University
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110 068

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Dissertation Manual

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Dear Learner,

Welcome to the Course 'MCFTP-002: Dissertation'. It is of 8 credits, and is a compulsory component of the Master of Science in Counselling and Family Therapy, M.Sc. (CFT).

Dissertation work requires you to do a small scale research. Having the capability to conduct basic research is an important skill. It allows you to explore the facets, areas and aspects of the domain of Counselling and Family Therapy that interest you, and present your findings in a well structured and coherent report. It also allows you to be a critical analyser of research work.

Your dissertation work is to be conceptualised, carried out and reported primarily by you, though there will be an Academic Supervisor approved by the University to advise and guide you at different stages of your dissertation work.

This Dissertation Manual provides you some guidelines which will enable you to plan and conduct your research study and prepare the report. Your dissertation supervisor (also called guide, counsellor, advisor, etc.) will provide you further necessary guidance.

We wish you all success as you progress along the path of learning and discovery.

Programme Coordinators,
IGNOU

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THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

SECTION - 1
INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

This Course MCFTP-002 ‘Dissertation’ involves an *original, rigorous* research work carried out with substantial *independence* by each M.Sc. student of the Counselling and Family Therapy Programme launched by IGNOU. It is worth 8 credits (240 study hours).

To complete this Course, the pre-requisite is to have a good understanding of the Course “Counselling and Family Therapy: Research Methods and Statistics”, so that you are well-versed with the various aspects of research in this field. Further, in the various theory papers as well as the supervised practicum courses of this Master’s Degree Programme, we have tried to provide you adequate knowledge and information about the what, why, and how of counselling and family therapy; including a wide array of areas and issues. Clarity of theoretical aspects is vital for doing justice to the applied aspects, as well as for doing any meaningful research in the domain.

The M.Sc. Dissertation is intended to be the demonstration of research expertise and the mastery of knowledge of current practices and theoretical frameworks of counselling and family therapy. It is intended to prepare the student to conduct original research in the teaching-learning, foundational, and applied aspects of counselling, family therapy and related areas.

This *Dissertation Manual* prepared as part of the MCFTP-002 course is the governing document regarding the dissertation process and the form and substance of dissertation documents. For matters regarding the dissertation that are not covered in the Dissertation Manual, students should follow the advice of their programme incharge and the dissertation counsellor.

The research work you carry out as part of this course will represent a significant extrapolation from a base of solid experience or knowledge in the area of concentration. In a significant way, the dissertation will advance knowledge, improve professional practice or contribute to one’s understanding in the field of study.

Your Dissertation should establish that you are capable of an intellectual and scholarly endeavour that contributes new information to the counselling/family therapy knowledge base. The Dissertation is an indication that you as a student have an ability to pose a question of intellectual merit and are able to pursue methods of scientific inquiry.

We wish you all the best in your endeavours.

SECTION - 2
PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

SECTION 2

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

When to Start the Dissertation Work

Dissertation is a course in the second year of the Master's programme. Thus, you may commence your dissertation work only after you have successfully completed all the courses of the first year curriculum. Further, we strongly advise you to go through the theory courses as well as the corresponding supervised practicum of the second year as well, while doing the ground work of your dissertation, since a strong and comprehensive theoretical foundation and orientation to the application of the same would be beneficial for you as you pursue the dissertation work.

As part of the dissertation work, you are expected to carry out various activities. A checklist of the activities, to be undertaken in the order presented, is enumerated herewith for your reference.

It is absolutely essential that you commence the dissertation work only after having successfully completed all the courses (theory as well as supervised practicum) comprising the first year of the M.Sc.(CFT) programme. This is a pre-requisite for the dissertation component of the programme of study. The programme incharge will consider this strictly before permitting you to start your dissertation work.

Procedural Checklist

1) *Consult the Programme Incharge for Allotment of Dissertation Guide/Counsellor:*

It is essential that you do your dissertation under a Supervisor/Guide/Academic Counsellor approved for the purpose by the Programme Coordinators at IGNOU, Headquarters. Otherwise your dissertation work/report will be considered null and void. Do not forget to enclose the duly filled in proforma/certificate; given at Annexure-I in this Manual for the purpose, in the Dissertation Report that you submit to the University for evaluation.

When you are ready for dissertation work, the first thing you have to do is to contact the programme study centre incharge/study centre coordinator. The programme incharge/study centre coordinator may have got some guides/supervisors/academic counsellors already approved from the Programme Coordinators at IGNOU, Headquarters for M.Sc. (CFT) dissertation work. In such a case, you may be assigned to an approved Supervisor right away. You may also identify the dissertation counsellor/supervisor/guide on your own from the programme study centre or an expert from outside (with relevant qualifications and subject background), whom you would want to have as a guide for your Dissertation.

The essential qualifications of the dissertation supervisor/guide/counsellor, as approved by the University for this programme of study, are given in the box below.

Essential Qualifications of Dissertation Supervisor/Guide/Academic Counsellor

The Dissertation Supervisor must have a Ph.D degree in any of these disciplines: Human Development and Family Studies/Child Development/Human Development/Psychiatry/Mental Health and Social Psychology/Clinical Psychology/allied fields, with at least five years of teaching experience in the discipline area, at the University/College level.

In case of an external counsellor/guide, the student would make the necessary arrangements to provide the bio-data of the expert to the Programme Incharge, who would ensure that qualifications/experience/expertise of the guide meet the requirement of the programme. The programme incharge will forward the bio-data of the proposed dissertation guide/counsellor to the Programme Coordinators at IGNOU Headquarters for approval.

You may begin your dissertation work under the supervisor/guide proposed by you, only after the approval has been granted by the Programme Coordinators at IGNOU, Headquarters. You will be informed of the approval by the Programme Incharge, and are requested to stay in touch with the Programme Incharge for the purpose.

Once approved, the supervisor/guide may form a part of the panel available to future students of M.Sc. (CFT) at the PSC/SC.

Important

On being assigned an approved Guide/Supervisor by the Programme Incharge, the student is allowed a ***time period of eight months*** to complete the dissertation work and submit the dissertation report. Failure to do so would require fresh approvals, and the student may then be assigned the same or a different Guide by the Programme Incharge through mutual consent.

- 2) ***Consult with Dissertation Guide/Counsellor:*** Once the dissertation counsellor is assigned, the student shall consult the counsellor for possible research areas for the dissertation.
- 3) ***Select an Area of Study and Relevant Topic:*** Identify a research area and the specific topic for research and define the problem or point of interest to be addressed. Discuss the proposed topic with this guide/supervisor and refine as necessary.
- 4) ***Review Literature:*** Review the literature available, related to the topic of the dissertation, and consult with the counsellor/guide concerning the chosen topic including the method of approach and ways to evaluate the results. Collect relevant literature for not more than past 10 years of research. In some topics, all research may be collated pertaining to your specific research objectives; irrespective of how old the research may be.

- 5) **Prepare and Submit the Dissertation Proposal or Synopsis:** Prepare the research proposal or synopsis and submit the same to the guide/supervisor/counsellor by the given deadline (with information to the programme incharge). The student will be advised of what changes are necessary before final approval will be granted by the guide/counsellor.
- 6) **Conduct the Study:** Only after receiving the dissertation approval (from the guide/counsellor), you may proceed to develop the dissertation, conduct it and begin writing.
- 7) **Communicate Regularly with your Dissertation Counsellor/Guide:** Share your experiences, report on the data collected, report the difficulties/problems encountered, to the counsellor. Discuss the data analysis and other issues. Give your guide/supervisor copies of your chapters as they are completed for review and comment.
- 8) **Submit First Draft:** Submit the entire first draft to the counsellor for review and feedback. Please be sure your draft is in proper style and format, and has been carefully proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation and format. Make the necessary changes as suggested.
- 9) **Submit the Final Manuscript:** Submit the bound copy of the word-processed, printed dissertation to the programme incharge for necessary action. Make sure you have got your counsellor's and programme incharge's signatures at the relevant places.
- 10) **Evaluation:** Dissertations will be evaluated in the order received. The dissertation will be sent to an expert for evaluation and conduct of viva-voce (oral defence). You will be required to appear for the viva-voce as per the intimation by the Regional Centre/Programme Incharge.

Points to Remember

Remember to contact the Programme Incharge at your Programme Study Centre or the Study Centre Coordinator to be assigned a dissertation supervisor approved by the Programme Coordinators at the IGNOU Headquarters.

The same supervisor will approve your research proposal, guide you all through the preparation of your dissertation, certify and evaluate the work you have done.

You may also choose your own Guide and forward the biodata, through the Programme Incharge, to us for approval before starting the dissertation work.

Once you have been assigned by the Programme Incharge a Dissertation Guide/Supervisor who has been approved by the Programme Coordinators at the IGNOU Headquarters, you are allowed eight months to do your dissertation work and submit the dissertation report. The time would start from the date of communication of approval of the proposed Guide by the Programme Coordinators at IGNOU Headquarters by the Programme Incharge, or if you are assigned an already approved Guide, the commencement of the eight month period would be from the date of allotment by the Programme Incharge.

If you do not finish your dissertation and submit the dissertation report in this 8-month period, you would need fresh approvals; including making a fresh request to the Programme Incharge to be assigned a Guide; getting the research proposal approved by the new Guide assigned by the Programme Incharge; and conducting the research accordingly.

Remember not to select a topic which is chosen by other students of M.Sc. (CFT) known to you. The University will reject the dissertation, if it is found to be copied, repeated or translated from another dissertation. One can be debarred from continuing the programme of study for a couple of years or even for lifetime.

You are required to get your research proposal approved by your Guide/Supervisor. No further approval is required. However, you must provide a copy of the approved proposal to the Programme Incharge for records.

A copy of computerised approved synopsis along with the name and particulars of the Supervisor and submission deadline has to be mandatorily sent by the Programme Incharge at the PSC or the Study Centre Coordinator to the Programme Coordinators at the IGNOU Headquarters.

Do not mail your proposal to IGNOU, Headquarters or Regional Centre for approval.

The approved original proposal must be bound along with your dissertation before submission to IGNOU.

If you want the programme coordinators to be your Guide only then you may contact them for approval of your proposal. This would mean that you have to be located in the NCR Region.

The title of the dissertation report should be the same as in the approved synopsis.

The complete dissertation work should be done by the student only. The role of the “Guide” is to guide, supervise and evaluate. Remember to seek guidance and approval of your Guide at every stage of your dissertation work.

Students are advised not to pay any fees/remuneration to the Dissertation Guide/Supervisor, as the University has the provision for paying remuneration to the Guide. (the requisite proforma is attached at the end of this Manual).

Violation of the dissertation guidelines will lead to the rejection of the dissertation at any stage.

The University will require about 4 to 6 months to complete the evaluation process before your grades/ results are declared. The evaluation is done by a pool of experts identified by IGNOU from across the country. Therefore, the evaluation process requires sufficient time.

The Dissertation Report submitted to IGNOU will not be returned to you.

Planning Your Year

Postgraduate students are expected to be able to organise time for work on the dissertation in a responsible way. Your success in managing the whole process will depend on how well you plan the work and monitor progress against your plan.

When you are planning your schedule, remember that your own time and application is only one of the determining factors. You need to take into account delays, which are beyond your control, and you should take into account your Academic Supervisor's time as well as your own when estimating overall time needed. Data collection always takes longer than you expect, as generally does analysis and drafting and redrafting the dissertation. So to be on the safe side, double your initial estimate of the time required for these tasks.

The following is a suggested timetable. This is advisory only and will vary from person to person, depending on the time, other course and work commitments, status of the research, etc. You should prepare your own timetable to suit your dissertation work and circumstances and you should discuss the same with your Academic Supervisor/Counsellor.

First month	Identify dissertation topic/theme. Survey literature. Interact with the Supervisor to finalise the Dissertation Proposal/Synopsis.
End of the first month	Finalise the research proposal. Take the Supervisor's signature on the Proposal /Synopsis.
Second and third months	Collect and analyse the data.
Fourth and fifth months	Start writing the dissertation even as you collect and analyse data. Submit the first draft of your dissertation report to your Supervisor. Revise as advised. Work on your Dissertation Report till it is approved by the Supervisor.
Sixth month	Complete the typing work. Check for typing errors and sequencing of pages. Make sure that the approved research proposal and other necessary certificates and enclosures are appended before binding the Dissertation. Submit as stipulated. You still have two more months available in case of any unforeseen delays!

Remember that the dissertation cannot be completed in a quick burst of effort over a few days. The best strategy is to do a little at a time over the whole period of time available for its completion. If you are in difficulty at any point with the dissertation, especially if you seem to be getting nowhere, consult your Supervisor in the first instance.

Last Date for Submission of the Dissertation

- If you wish the marks of the Dissertation to be included in the June Term-end Examination marksheet, then your Dissertation Report must reach SED, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi latest by 20th March. The Report should be duly verified and evaluated by your Supervisor before submission for external evaluation.
- In case the Dissertation Report is submitted after 20th March, and before 20th September, marks would be included in December term-end examination marksheet.
Thus, if your Dissertation Report reaches IGNOU between 20th September and 20th March, it will be accounted for in the marksheet for the June examination, and if the Dissertation Report reaches IGNOU between 21st March and 20th September, it will be accounted for in the marksheet for the December examination.
- The Dissertation Report submitted will not be returned to you.
- Do remember to keep a photocopy of your Dissertation Report.



SECTION - 3
BASICS OF RESEARCH METHODS:
A BRIEF RECAPITULATION

SECTION 3

BASICS OF RESEARCH METHODS: A BRIEF RECAPITULATION

In the course MCFT-005, a detailed description of research methods has been given. Please read it thoroughly, once again, before beginning work on the research proposal for your dissertation.

In this Section, we are providing you with a brief recapitulation of some of basic aspects and foundational concepts of research methods, including some commonly used tools and techniques.

☞ **Descriptive Study**

It is a study that focuses on a particular situation or set of situations, reports on important aspects observed, and attempts to determine the interrelationships among them. Generally, in a descriptive study, the emphasis is on estimation rather than testing. Some of the quantities you might want to estimate are:

- the prevalence of a problem.
- the natural history of a problem.
- the resources required to treat the problem.
- attitudes and perceptions about the problem.

☞ **Experimental Design**

In the scientific method, an *experiment* is a set of actions and observations, performed in the context of solving a particular problem or question, to support or falsify a hypothesis or research concerning phenomena. In an experiment, we deliberately change one or more process variables (or factors) in order to observe the effect the changes have on one or more response variables. Most experimental studies allocate and compare treatments between individual subjects and/or population groups.

To put it in simple words, experimental design is a research design in which the researcher has control over the selection of participants in the study, and these participants are randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. For example, we could undertake an experimental study to assess reduction of alcohol dependence with and without family support. People who visit the clinics/hospital etc. to stop drinking, can be divided into two groups; one who has family support, expressed by alcohol dependent person being accompanied by family member(s) and the other group in which the family member does not accompany the alcohol dependent person. Subsequent reduction of alcohol dependence can be then compared between the groups.

☞ **Correlation Study**

Correlation studies, as the phrase implies, look at co-relations between variables. For example, a researcher looking at body shape might correlate the height and weight of a number of people. What would the relationship between these two variables look like? Another example would be a researcher looking at marital satisfaction and might correlate number of years of marriage span, preparedness for marriage, influence of mass media, presence of own children, acceptance of in-laws, support of in-laws, specific socio-economic status to marital satisfaction of the couple/man/woman.

☞ **Observational Study**

In order to study the relationships among variables, observational studies are conducted. Unlike controlled experimental designs where only certain variables are allowed to vary (at prespecified levels), in observational studies the variables are observed and recorded. Often some of the variables are controlled as much as possible. A long term study of impact of child rearing among children living with their parents and children living in hostels; observation study of influence of father's drinking habits on adolescent boys; influence of culture on the life skill education learning among adolescents, etc. are some of the researches that can be undertaken as participatory and non-participatory observation. In observational studies, cause and effect are hard (often impossible) to establish. But associations and predictabilities among variables can be investigated.

☞ **Intervention Study**

In an intervention study, the subjects are selected from one population with a particular characteristic present; then, immediately after baseline, the total study group is split up into a group that receives the intervention and a group that does not receive that intervention (control group). The comparison of the outcomes of the two groups at the end of the study period is an evaluation of the intervention.

Interventions have the intention to improve the condition of an individual or a group of individuals. Some examples of intervention studies are impact of yoga therapy on patients having tension and headache, psychosomatic problems, schizophrenia, etc. or impact of yogic lifestyle on prevention of drugs dependence, alcohol and tobacco cessation, HIV-AIDS, etc.

☞ **Cohort Study**

A cohort is a group of people who share a common characteristic or experience within a defined time period (e.g., are born, leave school, lose their job, are exposed to a drug or a vaccine, etc.).

Cohort study is an epidemiological study that observes a large group of people over a period of time. Within the cohort, one may address gender issues, impact of teacher-pupil relations on the life skills learning, impact of media on increased live-in relationships and other related issues among the youth of the country, impact on members in a group counselling session, etc.

Cohort study could also be an observational study in which outcomes in a group of patients that received an intervention are compared with outcomes in a similar group i.e., the cohort, either contemporary or historical, of patients that did not receive the intervention.

☞ **Ethnographical study:** Ethnography is used to describe and interpret cultural or social group or setting. Emphasis may be on patterns of behaviour, customs, ways of life, use and acceptance of substance abuse, spread of HIV in a village, etc. Here, participant observation, direct or focussed interviews, questionnaires, etc. are used for data collection.

☞ **Exploratory Study**

It is also known as “inductive” or “theory-building”. In this kind of study, we don’t begin with a theory. Instead, we collect data that, after analysis, we will use to develop a theory. After we develop the theory, we might then design a study to test the theory. Herein, testing of research tool and development of new research tool can also be done. Exploratory study may use interview methods, questionnaires, rating scales, etc.

☞ **Longitudinal Study**

A longitudinal study is a correlational research study that involves observations of the same items over long periods of time, often many decades. A longitudinal study for example would follow patients over an extended period of time to look at changes in individuals. Information is collected on a regular basis and studied by research scientists to find new ways to track the problems, for example, substance use and predict who will respond to different treatments and settings.

☞ **Cross-sectional Study**

Cross-sectional analysis is the alternative to longitudinal studies. It forms a class of research methods that involve observation of some subset of a population of items all at the same time. In fact, it is a descriptive study in which problem and exposure status are measured simultaneously in a given population. This type of data can be used to assess the prevalence of acute or chronic problems in a population.

☞ **Qualitative Research (Study)**

It involves data that is usually not in the form of numbers. Qualitative research is an inductive approach, and its goal is to gain a deeper understanding of a person’s or group’s experience, beliefs, attitudes etc. There is no intervention, or control group used in qualitative research. It is naturalistic so that field researchers know what to ask and can change their line of questioning depending on the participant and her/his response. Focus group meetings are an example of qualitative research. For instance, we can have a focussed discussion on notions held by youngsters on acceptance of gay/lesbian orientations.

☞ **Action Research**

Action research is research oriented towards enhancement of direct practice. It offers a research design, which links the research process closely to its context. In traditional forms of empirical research, researchers do research on other people. In action research, researchers often do research on themselves as an individual or on the group or organisation of which they are members. Typically, a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts are, and if not satisfied, try again.

It is a popular approach among small-scale researchers in social sciences, particularly those working in professional areas such as education, social care etc. What distinguishes action research from daily problem solving is its emphasis on scientific study. The researcher, who is usually a member of the community or organisation, studies the problem systematically

and ensures the intervention, keeping in view the theoretical considerations. Much of the researcher's time is spent on refining the methodological tools to suit the exigencies of the situation, and on collecting, analysing, and presenting data on an ongoing, cyclical basis. Action research thus fits well with the idea of the research process as a spiral activity, going through repeated cycles and changing each time.

Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social sciences simultaneously. In other words, action research has a dual commitment to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded as a desirable direction. Action research has many variations and therefore is known by many names, including participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, and contextual action research.

☞ **Retrospective Study**

A retrospective study is a study that looks backwards in time. For example, we try to figure out whether people who are suffering from, say, substance abuse or schizophrenia, were born in families showing such previous incidents. A retrospective study is fast. But the condition is that the backward data related to the subjects should be available. Then we just have to tabulate all the results. The one problem is that it's hard to obtain such data.

☞ **Prospective Study**

In contrast to retrospective, prospective study looks forward in time. For example, we select a group of subjects and sit around and watch them for a decade. A prospective study is slow. Unless you are studying a rapidly fatal disease, you have to wait years or even decades to accumulate sufficient data to draw any strong conclusions.

☞ **Survey**

Survey method involves the collection of information by asking a set of pre-determined questions in a specific sequence to a sample of individuals drawn so as to be representative of a defined population. Survey method, in other words, involves the collection and analysis of information gathered from representative sample of the population.

Survey method is adopted for a variety of purposes. News media use it to gather (and even for making) news, business corporations use it to develop marketing strategies, political parties and candidates use it to develop campaign strategies, and government agencies use it to obtain information about the effectiveness of its own policies and programmes. Social scientists use it to test hypothesis and develop generalisations.

Not only do surveys have a wide variety of purposes, they can also be conducted in many ways — including over the telephone, by mail, or in person. Nonetheless, all surveys do have certain characteristics in common. First, unlike a census, where all members of the population are studied, surveys gather information from only a portion of a population of interest — the size of the sample depending on the purpose of the study. Secondly, the sample is not selected haphazardly or only from persons who volunteer to participate. It is scientifically chosen so that each person in the population will have a measurable chance of selection. This way, the results can be reliably projected from the sample to the larger population. Thirdly, since the objective of a survey is to get a composite profile of the

population, information is collected by means of standardised procedures so that every individual is asked the same questions in more or less the same way. Finally, individual respondents in a survey are never identified in reporting survey findings. All of the survey's results are presented in completely anonymous summaries, such as statistical tables and charts.

☞ **Case Study**

To refer to a work as a case study might mean: a) that its method is qualitative, b) that the research is ethnographic, clinical, participant-observation, or otherwise “in the field”, c) that the research is characterized by process-tracing, d) that the research investigates the properties of a single case, or e) a single phenomenon. To illustrate, a case study may be a detailed account of impact of emotion focussed couples therapy or the empty chair technique over a given amount of time on improving couple relationships, reducing anxiety in a spouse, increasing coping abilities of a couple or spouse. The content within a case study may include information about establishment of objectives, strategies, challenges, results, recommendations, and more.

☞ **Documents**

All research projects involve, to a greater or lesser extent, the use and analysis of documents often in conjunction with other research techniques. Some research projects, entirely or almost entirely, depend on documents of various kinds. For instance, such research projects might:

- be library based, aimed at analysis of an existing area of research writing;
- have a policy focus, examining materials relevant to a particular set of policy decisions;
- have a historical orientation, making use of available archival and other documentary evidence.

The Documents used may be:-

- Statistics and reports of various UN agencies and other international organisations/institutions;
- Case records available at hospitals, clinics, counselling centres, etc.
- Census reports;
- Books and journals; and
- Newspapers, television and radio programmes.

☞ **Interview**

The interview method involves questioning or discussing issues with people. It is a process of communication or interaction in which the subject or interviewer provides the needed information verbally either face-to-face or over telephone. It can be a very useful technique for collecting data, which would be unlikely to be accessible using techniques such as observation or questionnaires.

Interviews are classified as structured or unstructured. A structured interview is one in which the procedure to be followed is standardised and is determined in advance of the interview. The same questions are addressed in the same order to each subject. The interviewer has no freedom to rephrase questions, add extra ones, or change the order

in which the questions have been presented. Unstructured interview, on the other hand, provides greater flexibility. Although the series of questions to be asked and the procedure to be followed are decided beforehand, the interviewer is largely free to arrange the form and timing of the questions.

The planning, execution and analysis of an interview is a time consuming process. Yet the technique has been found useful in many descriptive and case study researches.

Tips for Conducting Interview

In order to elicit genuine responses from your respondents, you may follow some of the points mentioned below:

Ask only one question at a time.

Repeat a question if necessary.

Try to make sure that the interviewee understands the question.

Listen carefully to the interviewee's answer.

Observe the interviewee's facial expressions, gestures, and tone or voice so as to derive meanings from his/her body language.

Allow the interviewee sufficient time to answer the question, but do not let the interview drag on and on.

Strictly avoid suggesting answers to questions.

Do not show signs of surprise, shock, anger, or other emotions if unexpected answers are given.

Maintain a neutral attitude with respect to some controversial issues during the interview.

Make a note of answers that seem to be vague, ambiguous, or evasive.

Use tact and skill in getting the subject back to the area of inquiry if he/she strays too far away from the original question.

In the unstructured interview, ask additional questions to follow-up clues or to obtain additional information.

☞ Questionnaire

Questionnaires comprise one of the most widely used social research techniques. While it might seem easy to prepare a set of written questions to seek experiences and opinions of the people, the exercise is not as simple as it might seem. The questionnaire has to be well-designed after a review of the objectives of the study so that it performs the intended functions. You have to ensure that as far as possible, the questions seek information / responses covering all aspects of study. The questionnaire should not be too demanding and time consuming on the people for whom it is intended.

Questions in a questionnaire fall into two types: open and closed. Closed questions offer limited number of options to the respondents. The Likert scale is one of the most useful of such question forms. The respondent is presented with a sentence and is asked to agree or disagree on a three, five or seven point scale.

Open questions allow the respondents to answer, as they desire. For example, to know about the nature of parent - adolescent relationship, an open question is more appropriate. Open-ended questions can also be structured by asking the respondents to give three main problem areas. Questions have to be structured to get optimum response.

☞ **Observation**

Observation is a technique in which one or more persons observe what is occurring in some real-life situation. It classifies and records pertinent happenings according to some planned scheme. It is used to evaluate the overt behaviour of individuals in controlled and uncontrolled situations. Observational technique has occupied an important place in descriptive studies. This technique needs proper planning, expert execution, and adequate recording and interpretation.

Observation may be either participant or non-participant. In the former case, the observer becomes more or less one with the groups under observation. The researcher may play any one of the roles in observation, with varying degrees of participation, such as of a visiting stranger, an attentive listener, an eager learner, or a more complete role as participant observer. In the non-participant observation, the researcher takes a position where her or his presence is not disturbing to the group. She or he may follow in detail the behaviour of one individual or may describe one or two behaviour characteristics of a dozen or more individuals.

Observation method is potentially time-consuming. Time is not only absorbed in planning and observing but also later in interpreting and analysing what has been recorded.

☞ **Sociometric Techniques**

Sociometric techniques attempt to describe attractions or repulsions between group members by asking them to indicate whom they would select or reject in various situations. In research, such techniques are generally used to study social adjustments and group dynamics. Numerous sociometric techniques are used to measure social interaction within groups, but sociogram, sociometric matrices, guess-how technique and social distance scale are among the more commonly used ones.

☞ **Checklist**

A checklist is a device through which we can assess the knowledge of the respondents regarding the presence or absence of certain defined characteristics in an object, a phenomenon or a process. It is also used to evaluate the performance, which can be divided into a series of clearly defined actions. We prepare a list of items pertaining to the problem being studied and provide a space for the user to indicate the presence or absence of the characteristic or action mentioned in the item by circling 'Yes' or 'No' or by writing the appropriate word or number (Dash, 2007).

Construction of a Checklist

The first thing in the construction of a checklist is to decide about the type of information required for the investigation. The items are to be prepared keeping in mind the information to be collected. These items may be arranged in a logical or psychological order. Generally, checklist items are framed in the following ways:

- i) Items may be put in question form followed by 'Yes' and 'No' answers. The respondents are expected to encircle or underline the answers.
- ii) Item may be in the form of statements. The respondents are asked to put a () tick or (x) cross depending upon the presence or absence of the phenomenon under study.
- iii) Items are developed in the form of a sentence. The respondents are required to choose, underline or encircle the appropriate words.

☞ **Attitude Scale**

An attitude scale is designed to measure the attitude or belief of an individual towards an object, event, or a phenomenon. Thurstone and Chave (1929) define an attitude as the degree of positive or negative effect associated with some psychological objects, such as any institution, ideas, symbol, phrase, job etc. Attitude of an individual is basically his reaction to an object, situation or proposition in favourable or unfavourable ways. Attitude scale is always in the form of a continuum which ranges from favourableness through neutral to unfavourableness. An attitude scale consists of a set of statements about the particular psychological object. While writing statements for an attitude scale, the following criteria as listed by Edwards (1957) need to be taken into consideration:

Avoid statements that refer to the past rather than to the present.

Avoid statements that are factual or capable of being interpreted as factual.

Avoid statements that may be interpreted in more than one way.

Avoid statements that are irrelevant to the psychological object.

Avoid statements that are likely to be endorsed by almost every one or almost no one.

Keep the language of the statements simple, clear and direct.

Statements should be short and should contain only one complete thought.

Statements with universals such as all, always, never should be avoided.

Statements should be in the form of simple sentences.

Avoid the use of double negatives.

There are two types of attitude scales which are commonly used in assessing attitudes. These are the method of equal-appearing intervals devised by Thurstone and Chave (1929) and the method of summated ratings devised by Likert (1932). Let us discuss the latter one in detail.

The Method of Summated Ratings

The method of summated ratings is a convenient and simple method of measuring attitudes of people towards any psychological object. It was introduced by Likert (1932) and hence is popularly known as Likert scale. It is a popular tool for opinion research. The respondents are asked to respond to each item on a five-point scale, which has categories such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Construction of Scale

A large number of statements with favourable and unfavourable opinions towards the psychological objects are written.

The number of favourable and unfavourable statements in the scale needs to be equal. All the statements are edited. In the beginning of the scale, clear directions are given regarding how to mark the answers, namely, by putting a mark or by putting a circle around the answer.

Scoring weights of 5,4,3,2 and 1 are used for Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree for the statements with favourable attitude and the scoring weights of 1,2,3,4, and 5 are used for order for the statements with unfavourable attitude in reverse. An individual score on a particular attitude scale is the sum total of these ratings on all items.

Once the draft is ready, the scale is generally administered to a large sample selected from the population of the study. Scoring of the items is done as per the scoring weights decided for different items.

The final selection of the items for the scale is made on the basis of their t-values. For this, itemwise analysis of the responses is carried out. On the basis of the total scores obtained by the respondents, the upper 25 percent obtaining the highest scores and the lower 25 percent obtaining the lowest score are taken. The value of 't' is found out based on the responses of upper and lower group to the individual statement. Finally, 20 to 25 statements with the largest t-values ($t > 1.75$) are selected for the final draft of the attitude scale.

The reliability of Likert type attitude scale is computed by the split-half method. The validity of the scale is decided by comparing it with other similar standardised scales.

☛ Psychological Tests

These are among the most useful tools for research. They have to be devised to evaluate or measure behaviour in a standardized way for the purpose of selection, classification, prediction and guidance as well as evaluation of a problem. Tests are used to measure intelligence, aptitude, creativity, achievement, personality traits, interests, values, and so on.

Test Development

You can adopt, or adapt, a test already developed and standardised or you can develop a test on your own. In case you plan to develop a test, you need to follow certain steps (Dash, 2007). These are:

- i) Planning
- ii) Preparation of preliminary draft
- iii) Tryout of the test
- iv) Item analysis
- v) Final draft

Planning

Like any activity, planning of a test involves a detailed description of the tasks to be accomplished in the development of a test. These include the purpose, type, objectives, content and format of the test. Apart from these, it also includes the construction of the test including item-analysis, procedure of tryout, validity and reliability of the test, procedures of test administration, method of scoring, cost involved, etc.

The purpose of the test decides the objectives of the test in specific terms. Specification of objectives, content areas, relative weightage to objectives and content areas, total number of test items, and the format of items, namely, essay type, short answer type, objective type, etc. are to be decided.

Preparation of Preliminary Draft

After having obtained a fair idea of the different aspects of the test, you prepare a preliminary draft. You write test items as per the test specifications. Although you are required to create new test items for the test, yet it is advisable that you consult the existing tests in the concerned area. This helps you to create similar kind of items. You must develop double the number of items as are required for the final draft. While developing test items, you should try out a few items on a small group of subjects to have a rough idea about the difficulty of items. When all the items are prepared, the test items may be edited by a language expert or yourself for ascertaining adequacy of language used in the construction of test items. Apart from test items, the test should also include other necessary details like basic information about the respondents, directions for responding to the items, etc. The preliminary draft is then referred to experts for their opinions and comments. Based on the experts' opinions, the test items can be modified. At this stage, the test can be administered to a group of subjects for pilot-testing of the test items. It is called 'small group try out' of the test. With its feedback, the test items, if required, may be again modified accordingly. After the necessary modification, the test is ready for final 'try out'. Then the preliminary draft is duplicated for try out on a large sample.

Tryout of the Test

The preliminary draft is administered to a large random sample of the population for which test is developed. The size of the sample for try out is usually taken as 370 because it helps the test-maker to get indices of difficulty and discrimination quickly for selecting good items for the final test with the help of the table developed by J.C. Flanagan (Koul, 1984). The test takers need to be given sufficient time to answer the items. Of course, time depends upon the nature of the test.

Item Analysis

After the try out, it is desirable to appraise the effectiveness of the different questions or items. This can be done by considering the responses of subjects to each item. Such a procedure is called item analysis. When systematically done, item analysis would provide information regarding the following aspects:

- The difficulty level of the item.
- The discriminating power of the item.
- The effectiveness of each alternative.

We can find out through item analysis whether an item was too easy or too difficult, to what extent it was able to discriminate between high and low scorers and the effectiveness with which the different alternatives functioned. Such information may be useful in improving the items for later use.

Development of Final Draft

Based on the item analysis, items are selected for inclusion in the final draft of the test. The final draft is administered to a large sample of the population under consideration for estimation of validity, reliability and norms. Validity and reliability are computed as per the nature and purposes of the test. Norms are developed for interpreting the test results of an individual or a group. Let us discuss how validity and reliability of the test are ensured.

Ensuring the Essential Characteristics of a Test

Whether you develop a test or plan to select a test from the available tests, you should ensure that the test selected or developed must fulfill the following characteristics. These characteristics are validity, reliability, usability and objectivity. Let us discuss each of them briefly.

Validity

Validity is associated with specific purpose for which the test is developed. It refers to the extent to which the results of an evaluation procedure serve the particular purpose for which it was intended. For example, a test of attitude towards marriage among youth ought to evaluate the attitude towards marriage. The validity of test may be low or high which depends upon the result of the test. The validity of a test depends upon the nature of a test. Hence, we generally estimate the following different types of validity:

- i) Content validity
- ii) Criterion-related validity
- iii) Construct validity

Content Validity

Content validity of a test refers to the proper representation of contents in the test. Content validity of test is ensured by subjecting the test to the judgement of several subject experts.

Criterion-related Validity

When the test developer intends to predict the future performance of the test takers or evaluate their current performance in a test against some criterion, it is presumed that she/he is concerned with criterion-related validity. Concurrent validity is concerned with correlating the results of a new test with the results of a currently available standardized test, which measures the same traits as intended in the new test. For example, a test developer develops a test of creativity and correlates the results of her/his test with the results of Torrance Test of Creativity and finds out the correlation coefficient to establish the validity of her/his test. A significant positive correlation between the two tests is an indicator of concurrent validity of the test.

Construct Validity

When the objective is to measure certain psychological constructs, the test maker must ensure construct validity of the test. According to Koul (1984), a construct is a trait or

ability, temperament, or attitude which is hypothesized to explain certain aspects of behaviour such as, achievement motivation, intelligence, creative thinking or test anxiety etc. Construct validity is established through a long continued experimentation based on imagination, reasoning and observation. Even the results of test can be compared with like and unlike tests. For example, the results of an attitude test can be compared with the results of another attitude test (like test) as well as with the results of an intelligence test (unlike test).

Validity Coefficient

The validity of a test is always reported in terms of validity coefficient.

Reliability

The second important characteristic of a test is reliability. In common parlance, it refers to consistency. The same meaning is also applicable to the reliability of a test. When a test is administered to the same individuals under the same conditions and there is consistency of test results at both the times, it can be conceded that the test has reliability. Reliability refers to consistency of measurement from one testing situation to another. For example, a teacher of class IX has developed an achievement test in mathematics, which is administered to students. After six months, she/he administers the same test again to them. If the test results in two situations match with each other, the test seems to have reliability. Reliability of a test is estimated through four methods. These are: test-retest method; alternate or parallel forms method; split-half method; and rational-equivalence method. Let us discuss each of these methods.

Test-retest Method

This is the method in which the same test is re-administered after a gap of time. The earlier example is a case of test-retest method of estimating reliability of test. The time gap given in between the two administrations of the test determines whether the reliability of test results is overestimated or underestimated. If the time gap given is too short, immediate memory, practice and the familiarity of the test may overestimate the reliability of the test. Similarly, if the time gap is too long, maturation of the test takers may under-estimate the reliability of the test. In order to overcome the shortcoming of test-retest method, the test developer may prefer other methods of estimating reliability.

Equivalent or Parallel Forms Method

In this method, two equivalent or parallel forms of the test are prepared. Both forms of the test are administered to the same group of students. The results obtained from the administration of both the forms are taken to estimate the reliability of the test.

Split-half Method

You, as a test developer, can estimate the reliability of test from a single administration. In this case, after administration of the test, the test is divided into equal halves. While dividing the test, you keep items with even numbers in one half and odd numbers in the other half. The results obtained from both the halves are correlated to estimate the reliability of half test.

Reliability Coefficient

Like validity coefficient, reliability of a test is reported in terms of reliability coefficient.

- **Objectivity**

Objectivity of a test refers to consistency of test scores when evaluated by different evaluators. Suppose, you have scored the responses of subjects on a test and again their responses to the items are evaluated by another evaluator. If scores awarded by both the evaluators match, then, we can say that there is objectivity in scoring between the two evaluators. Objectivity is also called inter-scorer reliability.

- **Usability**

Before using a test for the research purpose, the researcher should look into certain practical considerations, which determine its usability. These include practical considerations such as ease of administration, time required for administration, ease of scoring, and ease of interpretation.

☞ **Pre-testing**

It is necessary that you conduct a pre-testing or pilot testing of the tool, be it an interview schedule, a questionnaire, or any other tool that you plan to use for data collection in your study, which will help you in eliminating irrelevant questions/items and also in adding a few questions/items based on your actual experience in the field. The pre-testing should be done in the same geographical area and the participants should be similar to the ones you intend to include in the sample. You may choose about 5 to 10 percent of the sample size for pre-testing. This will help you in making a more accurate study. After the pre-testing of the tool, you can finalise the interview schedule/questionnaire/test for data collection and make sufficient number of copies; whether through printing or through photocopying. Always make sure to keep about ten additional copies which can be used in any eventuality.

☞ **Statistical Techniques**

These have contributed greatly in gathering, organizing, analyzing and interpreting quantitative (numerical) data. In the analysis of quantitative data with the help of statistical techniques, the researcher is required to understand the concepts involved in use and applications of these methods. Their strengths and limitations need to be understood so that there is no ambiguity in the use of these techniques. Quantitative data analysis techniques include the use and application of various descriptive statistical measures: (i) measures of central tendency or averages; (ii) measures of dispersion or variability; (iii) measures of relative position; and (iv) measures of relationship. Inferential statistics, with the help of various parametric and non-parametric tests, enable the researcher to make generalizations or inferences about populations from the observations or measures of the characteristics of samples. Z-test, t-test, analysis of variance and co-variance, regression analysis, chi-square test, median test and Mann Whitney U Test are examples of some parametric and nonparametric tests which are widely used in the analysis of quantitative data.

This brief recapitulation would have helped you realise the significance of a thorough grasp of research methods in planning and conducting research work. The course MCFT-005 on “Counselling and Family Therapy: Research Methods and Statistics”, and the supervised practicum counterpart MCFTL-005 of the same, that you did in the first year would hold you in good stead as you embark on your dissertation work — in fact, if you have forgotten the contents of the same, it would be a good idea for you to undertake a quick revision. In the meantime, let us move on to an overview of dissertation.

SECTION - 4

DISSERTATION: AN OVERVIEW

SECTION 4

DISSERTATION: AN OVERVIEW

Let us start by reviewing some things, which may seem obvious.

The dissertation is a lengthy, formal, systematic, usually extensive written discourse, especially one written by a candidate for a Doctoral or Masters degree at a university. The MCFTP-002 Course – Dissertation – is part of the requirement for M.Sc. degree in Counselling and Family Therapy offered by IGNOU. M.Sc. candidates will complete a dissertation that will be a rigorous investigation of research questions related to the teaching, learning, and applied aspects of counselling and family therapy; in the context of human development across the life span and family life cycle, socio-emotional and behavioural problems, etc.

The dissertation is a technical work, a piece of individual research which presents an argument and used to document and set forth proof of one's thesis. What do we mean by *thesis*? One's thesis is a *claim* — a hypothesis, a proposition, a conjecture, etc. To illustrate, a thesis can be that Process/Strategy X is more effective than Strategy Y or Strategy X is a better way to do Task Y than any previously known method etc. You would realize that every research has a thesis, which is different from another.

The dissertation describes, in detail, how one proves the hypothesis (or, rarely, disproves the claim and shows other important results). In fact, the dissertation is a formal, stylized document used to argue the thesis. It is a piece of work that will define you as an independent researcher.

The dissertation, therefore, is an opportunity to take a topic that interests you and carry out your own research i.e. expand the frontiers of knowledge. We expect a structured, coherent and well-presented piece of writing that:

- shows evidence of independent research using appropriate methodology,
- shows evidence of primary/secondary reading,
- shows that you can locate the particular issue you have studied in the context of wider debates, making reference to the relevant literature,
- shows evidence of being able to structure and support arguments, and
- shows evidence of engagement with relevant conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Remember, all researchers need to communicate discoveries; the M.Sc. dissertation provides training for communication with other researchers/scientists. The end product; i.e. the dissertation report, will demonstrate your data collection skills, your analytical skills, your ability to identify and apply appropriate methodologies, your ability to apply theoretical concepts and knowledge of appropriate literature and your ability to integrate theoretical, empirical and methodological material.

All this sounds quite technical and a bit tough. Is it! Do not panic; we will guide you and take you through this entire exercise with much ease and comfort.

So where do we begin? The dissertation work should follow in sequence the steps of the research process. These are enumerated herewith.

Essential Steps in Research

The steps involved in research are as follows:

- 1) ***Selection of the subject, field, theme, topic and the specific problem of the research:*** This first step sounds simple, but is the most crucial basic step i.e. selection of the subject for research. This is a key decision, and needs to be given considerable thought. How to decide on the research subject and/or topic? While deciding on the topic, you need to keep various factors in mind. Some of these factors are:

Suitability of the topic

Relevance of the topic

Your interest in the topic

Researchability of the topic

Availability of literature related to the topic

Finance and other resources at your disposal

Feasibility of data collection and completion of research within the limited time frame.

Obviously, it goes without saying that you would like to research on a topic that deals with aspects linked with counselling and family therapy; in the context of developmental and other issues and concerns among individuals and families at different stages of the life cycle, pertaining to aspects such as interpersonal relationships, career, marriage, family and social influences, etc., that you have learnt about as part of the study of the Master's Programme in Counselling and Family Therapy. You may go a bit further and explore issues linked with human development, family life cycle stages, effectiveness of a family therapy technique or counselling process, mental health domain, family relations, use of yoga in therapy etc. Some examples of the types of research that you as a student might undertake in this area are as follows:

- Experimental designs and correlational studies that depend on empirical research methods and materials.
- Observational and/or descriptive studies which can be related to and lend support to theoretical issues.
- Intervention studies that attempt to offer intellectual insights into issues of counselling and family therapy.
- Observation and analysis of events, programmes, strategies, institutions, and individuals that contribute to contemporary issues related to policy planning in this field.

Some current/recent/topical research areas are also included in this Manual for your perusal and consideration. By no means is this a complete exhaustive list. You can identify your own unique research area. Once the broad area/field has been identified, you can move on to identify the specific research problem or topic of research (within the broad area). How? Ideas for topics may come from many sources: a core course, readings and review of journals, books and other references, your job, a discussion

with your counsellor(s), a discussion with a colleague at your job, or a discussion with a fellow student. The more you read the literature, the easier topic selection will be. Most importantly, select a topic that you can do in the time that is available and meets the requirements of the course/programme. To illustrate, you may decide to work in the area of cognitive-behavioural family therapy. Within this broad area you may choose to study the decrease in the psychosomatic problems among the patients over a substantive period of time which would be your specific topic of research. The topic chosen should be relevant to the field, and of your interest. Further, it should be feasible to do the research within the time constraint. Dissertation work is a compulsory component of the M.Sc.(CFT) programme. You are required to complete it within the stipulated time. Thus, the dissertation topic selected by you should be such that your research work can be completed in the second year along with the rest of the course work. And last but not the least, your dissertation topic should have the approval of your supervisor!

- 2) ***General survey of the pertinent literature to understand the problem of the research:*** To assess the level of theory and research that have been developed in the field of study i.e. to find out what is already known and further what remains to be investigated in the specific area of study (you have identified), examine the literature i.e. the course material, textbooks, latest journals (in the area of Counselling/Family Therapy/allied areas and disciplines) review articles, monographs, other writings, documents, bulletins etc. or perhaps browse through the internet. This will give you a good insight into the currently researched topics (within the broad area identified by you). Dialogue and discussions with the dissertation counsellor/guide (allotted to you by the programme incharge of the programme study centre where you are attached) would further help you understand the problem/issue and frame the research questions.

Once the topic has been finalized, and literature review undertaken, what to do next? Read on and find out.

- 3) ***Definition of the problem, including differentiating, defining and classifying its components:*** The development and refinement of the research question/topic that identifies and investigates a knowledge gap in the related literature is what is required. This would require determining the parameters needed to be studied towards the solution of the problem, choosing the methodology to study the parameters, standardizing the methodology and testing its suitability for the specific problem, designing the experiment, field study, survey or any other requisite research tool/technique/method with appropriate statistical background. Once the various components have been defined, the next step involves data collection.
- 4) ***Collecting the data and information and systematic classification, tabulation, presentation, analysis and interpretation of the collected data:***

Some General Tips in Collecting Data

Data collection is the most important stage of your dissertation work. While the exact nature of data to be collected depends on your topic, there are certain rules to be kept in mind.

It is always better to overcollect the data than undercollect it. Eventually, you may be using less than half of the data you collected. But every piece of information collected at this stage contributes to your knowledge of the field. Do not leave opportunities

for data collection, or put it off for another day. You may not get the same opportunity again. Your sources, whether in the form of books, documents, or people may not be always available to you.

Analysis, Synthesis and Interpretation of Data

As you have read in the previous Section, we make use of various types of techniques in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Statistical techniques have contributed greatly in gathering, organising, analysing and interpreting quantitative or numerical data.

Qualitative data in the form of responses and narratives are analysed to study or discover inherent facts. These data are studied from as many angles as possible to explore new facts or to reinterpret already existing facts. Content analysis, inductive analysis and logical analysis are mostly used in the analysis of qualitative material.

Once the data have been analysed, you can proceed to the stage of interpreting the results. The process of interpreting is essentially one of stating what the results show. It is not a routine and mechanical process, but calls for a careful, logical and critical examination of the results obtained after analysis, keeping in view the limitations of the sample chosen, and the tools selected and used in the study. There is always an element of subjectivity, which should be reduced to the minimum by the researcher while interpreting the results. At times, a co-rater or co-observer is also used in data gathering and analysis.

In the light of interpretations of the results, you have to use all care and caution in formulating your conclusions and generalisations. This final step in the research work demands critical and logical thinking in summarising the findings of the study and comparing them with the objectives and hypothesis formulated (if any) in the beginning. The generalisations drawn on the basis of research findings should be in agreement with facts.

You need to be clear about how you would analyse the data, even as you collect it or better still, while you are still conceptualising and planning your research study.

- 5) ***Reporting the data in the form of a dissertation report:*** We have in our discussion above broadly highlighted the process you would go through while carrying out your proposed research work. Having decided on the research topic and defined a clear research question or set of questions, together with appropriate methods of seeking answers, you now need to convey your plan of research clearly in a research proposal. What is a research proposal? Section 6 focuses on this aspect. Before that, in the forthcoming Section, we will look at and get a feel of some of the research areas in this field.

SECTION - 5

**BROAD AREAS AND TOPICS FOR
RESEARCH**

SECTION 5

BROAD AREAS AND TOPICS FOR RESEARCH

In order to enable you to choose a topic for your empirical study, we have listed below some broad areas. This does not mean that you cannot choose another topic of your interest pertaining to counselling and family therapy. The areas or topics listed below are only to give you some idea about the numerous titles which will guide you in selecting a relevant topic. You must discuss your topic and take necessary approval from your Supervisor before going ahead with the collection of data. Your Supervisor will advise you regarding preparation of the dissertation proposal as well as in selecting appropriate tools for the collection of data. Kindly ensure that you take prior approval for your proposal from your Supervisor. Original copy of the approved proposal must be attached with the dissertation before binding it.

Domains of suggested topics are as under:

- **Life cycle stages:** Studies to focus on specific life stage like young adults, preschool children, adolescents, old age etc. The topics, for example, may be:
 - Individuation and development of self in adolescents.
 - Attitudes towards marriage and divorce among young adults.
 - Impact of maternal stress on young children.
 - Aspects of perception/social cognition in preschool children.
- **Family life cycle stages:** Examples of topics to focus on include the following:
 - Family life cycle adjustments among parents suffering from empty nest syndrome.
 - Roles and responsibilities of parents having preschool children.
 - Issues during adolescence and dealing with the same among adolescents and their close family members.
 - Investigation of lifestyle of family having matriarchal system.
- **Mental health issues:** Elucidate the role and issues of mental health problems in various contexts like psychological, psycho-social, familial, work place, etc. For instance:
 - Psychological adjustment among individuals cured after being diagnosed with schizophrenia.
 - Mental health issues among persons employed in MNCs (multinational companies).
 - Stress among women suffering from postpartum syndrome.
 - Social phobia among children born with HIV/AIDS.
- **Impact of Family Therapy/Counselling/Allied Theories and Therapies on life style management in different life cycle stages** with particular emphasis on dealing with specific psychological problems and issues; for instance:
 - Yoga therapy to reduce stress related to examination phobia.
 - Cognitive behaviour family therapy efficacy in patients with bipolar affective disorder.

- Emotion focused marital family therapy to relieve patients with depression having marital discord.
- Play therapy with sexually abused young children.

☞ **Given below is a range of topics to help you decide on your dissertation topic:**

- 1) Primary caregiver's role in helping young children come out of social phobias.
- 2) Psychological recovery among individuals diagnosed with severe depression.
- 3) Attitude towards help seeking among youth in early 20's.
- 4) Child rearing practices perceived by children of alcoholic parent(s).
- 5) Mediation of yoga therapy and cognitive behaviour therapy in patients with obsessive compulsive disorder.
- 6) Personality of children with emotional problems.
- 7) Adjustment and scholastic achievement among children with learning disability.
- 8) Life satisfaction and relationship between 'satva', 'rajas', 'tamas' factors among individuals who are no longer alcohol dependent.
- 9) Adaptation, life quality and adjustment among patients with chronic renal failure.
- 10) Spirituality and religiosity among substance abusers.
- 11) Life skill development among substance abusers.
- 12) Preparedness for marriage and later marital quality.
- 13) Attitudes towards mental health among married couples.
- 14) Attitudes towards cure of cancer among patients diagnosed with cancer at stage I or stage II.
- 15) Factors contributing to alcohol use among women.
- 16) Cognitive behaviour family therapy in social anxiety.
- 17) Yoga and meaning of life.
- 18) Development of social anxiety scale.
- 19) Life satisfaction and concept of death among the elderly.
- 20) Family functioning, parental attitudes and parenting styles.
- 21) Suicidal tendency among college students.
- 22) Reasons and impact of suicides among the farming community.
- 23) Childhood attachments, attachment styles and scholastic achievement during middle childhood years.
- 24) Impact of knowledge of being an adopted child on the child's psyche.

- 25) Attitude towards same sex relationships among college going students.
- 26) Social acceptance perceived by cohabitating unmarried couples.
- 27) Mindfulness based therapy for reducing obsessive-compulsive disorder.
- 28) Acceptance by family members of mentally ill women.
- 29) Sexual behaviour of middle adulthood unmarried individuals.
- 30) Study of psychological well being of youth migrated to urban slums.
- 31) Ego identity and work satisfaction among employed population.
- 32) Impact of male impotency on woman's psyche, family, social and self values.
- 33) Family relationship dynamics among patients having conduct disorders during late adolescence.
- 34) Dimensions and impact of female sexual abuse by family members.
- 35) Social relationships of persons suffering from HIV/AIDS.
- 36) Parent-child interaction and cohesiveness among parents of children displaying behavioural disorders.
- 37) Gender stereotypes and its impact on marital relationships.
- 38) Therapeutic interventions effective in asthma.
- 39) Impact of mental illness on close family members.
- 40) Family therapy interventions in depression.
- 41) Stress management among agricultural community.
- 42) Behavioural intervention in hypertension.
- 43) Personality and adjustment pattern of persons suffering from diabetes mellitus/heart condition, or any other chronic illness.
- 44) Relationship attributions and marital quality in couples with psychotic wives.
- 45) Sex therapy efficacy in management of male sexual dysfunctions.
- 46) Psychiatric problems and role of family therapy in the aged.
- 47) Behavioural intervention to decrease substance abuse among the youth.
- 48) Perceived parental acceptance, self-esteem and social identity of children of drug dependent/neurotic parent(s).
- 49) *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* factors and life goals among college students.
- 50) Personality profile of alcohol dependent individual/substances abusing/nicotine dependent adolescents.
- 51) Prevalence and pattern of psychological disturbance in 8-12 year old school going children.
- 52) Impact of retirement on family decision making.

- 53) Impact of transactional analysis on orientation to achieve and social acceptance.
- 54) Relapse in substance abuse (you may take any one specific abuse or mental health problem).
- 55) Personality profile and coping styles of alcohol dependent men/their wives.
- 56) Personality profile of criminals/rapists.
- 57) Adjustment problems of alcoholics.
- 58) Counselling and tobacco cessation.
- 59) Creativity as related to psychopathology.
- 60) Study of attitudes and knowledge regarding schizophrenia among their family relations.
- 61) Effectiveness of family therapy in the cure of schizophrenia.
- 62) Family functioning, family history and prevalence of mental disorder.
- 63) Acceptance and adjustment of mentally ill-cured patients.
- 64) Body image, personality and psychosomatic problems.
- 65) Punitive reaction in adolescents.
- 66) Anxiety and stress among the family members of cancer patients.
- 67) Child cartoons and *Chitrakatha/Panchatantra* — Impact on child's social cognition.
- 68) Marital problems of parents of children with disabilities (or a specific mental health disorder).
- 69) Child rearing attitude among the street dwellers.
- 70) Effectiveness of relaxation techniques.
- 71) Mother-child relationship in the families of alcoholics/delinquents/destitute/prostitutes.
- 72) Mother-child relationship in gay relationships — A case study.
- 73) Relationships among the third sex people.
- 74) Factors influencing rehabilitation of (delinquents, alcoholics, schizophrenics, substance abusers, etc.)
- 75) A study of families with a member suffering from (specific mental health disorder, disability, problem etc.)
- 76) Poverty and marital adjustments.
- 77) Poverty and disability.
- 78) Mass media influences on marital life and expectations.
- 79) Use of relaxation technique among hypertensive people.
- 80) Use of yoga therapy to reduce anxiety.
- 81) Counselling approach to help orphans (or people who have lost interest in life, etc.).
- 82) Effectiveness of emotion focussed couples therapy in handling marital disputes.
- 83) Effectiveness of systemic family therapy in promoting well-being.
- 84) Use of family therapy to resolve intergenerational disputes.
- 85) Impact of solution focussed therapy to resolve family conflicts.

SECTION - 6

**PREPARING THE RESEARCH
PROPOSAL OR SYNOPSIS**

SECTION 6

PREPARING THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL OR SYNOPSIS

Preparation of a Research Proposal

After identifying and formulating the research problem, you are required to prepare a research proposal for dissertation. Research proposal is also called ‘synopsis’ of research work to be undertaken by the researcher. Research proposal is the most important component of a research activity. It is like the blueprint, which an architect designs before construction of a house. It conveys the entire research work the researcher intends to carry out. It is basically a plan of action. If the proposal is prepared properly, the rest of the work in the process of research becomes smooth and easy. While you prepare a research proposal for dissertation work, you need to be clear about a set of questions. The answers to these questions constitute the different components or aspects of a research proposal. In Table 1, the questions to be addressed by you and the corresponding components in the research proposal are given. Please go through them carefully as you have to highlight the questions while you formulate the research proposal for dissertation.

Table 1: Questions and Corresponding Aspects of a Research Proposal

	Questions	Themes
1.	What do you propose to study?	Title of the study
2.	Why do you intend to conduct the proposed study?	Context, justification/rationale of the study
3.	How do you define the study?	Statement of the problem
4.	What earlier researches tell you about the research study?	Review of related literature
5.	What do you intend to address through your study?	Research questions
6.	What do you intend to achieve through your study?	Objectives of the study
7.	What tentative solutions do you formulate for the research questions?	Hypotheses
8.	How do you operationally define the terms used in the title of the study?	Operational definitions of the terms
9.	What will be the scope of your proposal?	Delimitations of the study
10.	How do you propose to conduct the study?	Methodology of the study
11.	What is the total number of units for which the research study is proposed?	Population of the study
12.	What is the small number of units to be selected for the purpose of conducting the study?	Sample
13.	What means do you propose to use for collection of research evidences?	Tools and techniques of data collection
14.	How do you propose to collect research evidences?	Procedure of data collection
15.	How do you propose to analyse the obtained evidences?	Method of data analysis
16.	What implications would your proposed study have in the field of counselling and family therapy?	Results, findings and suggestions

From the above questions, the research proposal can be formulated.

So then, how do we go about to plan and prepare a research proposal? Let us find out.

Developing a Research Proposal: Basic Considerations

The proposal should be 6-10 double-spaced typed pages in length, and should set forth a description of your research plan. Here is a simple guide on how to prepare a proposal. We begin with a review of the typical parts of a research proposal. These parts are highlighted in the Box below.

Typical Components of a Research Proposal/Synopsis

- Title
- Introduction (including Statement of Problem, Justification/Rationale of the Study, Objectives, Hypotheses etc.)
- Review of Literature
- Methodology (including details of Sample, Tools and Techniques of Data Collection, and Method of Data Analysis)
- List of References

Let us review these parts and focus on proposal writing, next. We begin by first highlighting the points you need to consider while writing the title of your study in the proposal.

● Title of the Study

On the first page of the proposal, the title of the proposed research study is mentioned, along with name of the researcher, name of the Guide and Name of the University.

The title of your study should be comprehensive enough to indicate the nature of the proposed work. But, it should also be concise and brief. Think of an informative but catchy title.

● Introduction

The introduction of your proposal should begin with a capsule statement of what is being proposed and then should proceed to introduce the subject/area/topic under study. Thus the introduction should be comprehensive and give enough background to enable any reader/expert to place your particular research problem in a context of common knowledge, and should show how its solution will advance the field or be important for some other work. Be careful not to overstate, but do not neglect to state very specifically what the importance of your proposed research is.

The introduction in your proposal should cover the following elements:

- 1) State the research problem, which is often referred to as the *purpose of the study*.
- 2) Provide the context and set the stage for your research question in such a way as to show its necessity and *importance*.
- 3) Present the *rationale of your proposed study* and clearly indicate why it is worth doing.
- 4) Briefly describe the major *issues and sub-problems to be addressed* by your research.

- 5) State the operational definitions of the terms used in the title of the study.
- 6) Identify the key independent and dependent variables of your research/experiment. Alternatively, specify the phenomenon you want to study.
- 7) State your **objectives, hypothesis or theory or thesis**, if any.
- 8) Set the **delimitations** or boundaries of your proposed research in order to provide a clear focus.

Remember, a good proposal begins with a clear idea of the goals/objectives/hypotheses of the project. **Objectives/Hypotheses** pertain to what you intend to examine in any fieldwork. They are based upon the literature review — which will provide support for the things you are expecting to find (the hypotheses) in the situation you are studying. In addition, you will of course expect to find new things relevant to the specific problem. This will be your contribution to knowledge — and provides the basis for any conclusions and/or recommendations.

General objective or what we may also refer to as the *working hypothesis* is a broad statement of what you expect to find — based upon a preliminary study of the literature in all its many forms e.g. academic journals, texts, newspapers and magazines etc. This should come at the proposal stage (but repeated in the finished dissertation).

The **specific objectives** or the *supporting hypotheses* are more detailed statements based on a thorough analysis and understanding of a wide range of literature sources. Usually, these statements are supported individually by reference to, and a development of, the relevant literature. They are the foundation upon which any fieldwork is based, and they underpin the questions to be explored in the primary research.

Once the introduction is in place, the next step in writing your proposal is to prove that your particular piece of research has not been done yet. This section is usually called *Review of Literature*. Let us get to know how to develop this section.

- **Review of Literature**

Review of literature is a critical summary of research on a topic of interest, generally prepared to put a research problem in context or to identify gaps and weaknesses in prior studies so as to justify a new investigation.

Sometimes, you will notice that the literature review is incorporated into the introduction section. But the literature review serves several important functions. These are as follows.

The review of literature:

- 1) Ensures that you are not “reinventing the wheel”.
- 2) Gives credit to those who have laid the groundwork for your research.
- 3) Demonstrates your knowledge of the research problem.
- 4) Demonstrates your understanding of the theoretical and research issues related to your research question.
- 5) Shows your ability to critically evaluate relevant literature information.
- 6) Indicates your ability to integrate and synthesize the existing literature.

- 7) Provides new theoretical insights or develops a new model as the conceptual framework for your research.
- 8) Convinces your reader that your proposed research will make a significant and substantial contribution to the literature (i.e., resolving an important theoretical issue or filling a major gap in the literature).

While presenting the literature review, avoid being repetitive and verbose. Cite influential papers and recent developments by presenting a critical evaluation of the cited papers. Very often students' literature reviews suffer from the following problems: citing irrelevant or trivial references, depending on secondary sources, lacking focus, unity and coherence, lacking organization and structure. This should be avoided.

There can be different ways to organize your literature review. Make use of subheadings to bring order and coherence to your review. For example, having established the importance of your research area and its current state of development, you may devote several subsections on related issues as required.

There are many sources from where you can locate the literature. These include:

- ♦ the university or the programme study centre library,
- ♦ libraries in other universities and colleges/departments,
- ♦ dissertations submitted by other research scholars in this specific area,
- ♦ general libraries, such as NML (National Medical Library), New Delhi
- ♦ the internet,
- ♦ personal collection of researchers in the field (for example, your dissertation guide and other scholars etc.).

Having reviewed the literature related to the topic, and documented it, we approach now one of the most difficult parts of writing a research proposal i.e. the methodology.

● **Methodology**

The Method section is very important because it indicates how you plan to tackle your research problem. It will provide your work plan and describe the activities necessary for the completion of your dissertation work.

The method/methodology section typically provides information about the following:

- 1) *Research Design* — The research design is the investigator's overall strategy for answering the research question. The choice of the design will be the first decision you will make about how the study will be performed. Is it a quantitative or qualitative study, is it an intervention or descriptive study, is it a cross-sectional/longitudinal study, is it a prospective/retrospective study, is it a true experiment/quasi-experiment study? What kind of design have you chosen?
- 2) *Subjects or participants* — Who will take part in the study? What would be the sample size? How will the subjects be recruited? What would be the inclusion/exclusion criteria for selection of subjects? What kind of sampling procedure (simple random, stratified random, cluster sampling etc.) will you use? What would be the method of assignment to study group etc? These details also need to be provided in the synopsis.

- 3) *Instruments* — What kind of measuring instruments, interview schedules, rating scales, or questionnaires or other research tools and techniques would you use to collect data? Why did you choose them? Are they valid and reliable? Your proposal will highlight the techniques/instruments/tools you plan to develop and use for collection of data.
- 4) *Procedure* — How do you plan to carry out your study? What activities are involved? How long will it take; for example how long will be the intervention period, what would be the total study duration etc? The proposal will elaborate on these issues.

Very often the method section also includes the *statistical considerations* such as *sample size determination* as already mentioned above and also ***data analysis techniques/procedures***. Obviously you do not have results at the proposal stage. However, you need to have some idea about what kind of data you will be collecting, and what statistical procedures will be used in order to answer your research question or test your hypothesis.

Ethical considerations, if any, are also included in the method section of the research proposal.

The guiding principle for writing the Method section in the proposal is that it should contain sufficient information for the reader to determine whether methodology is sound.

Once your methodology has been finalized, you are ready with a blue print to start your research work. The final section of the research proposal deals with references.

- **List of References**

It is important that at the end of the proposal you list the references, literature or a bibliography you have reviewed so far in developing your proposal i.e. your plan for the research work. This section will contain an alphabetic list of all source material to which reference has been made in the proposal.

Now keeping these guideline(s) in mind prepare your proposal. Obviously you would prepare this document (proposal) in consultation with your counsellor/research guide, but you may interact and call upon other experts/specialists too working in the area if so desired. This will help you plan and prepare a sound and doable research proposal. Remember, your research is only as good as your proposal. An ill-conceived proposal dooms the research; even if it somehow gets the approval from your counsellor/guide. A high quality proposal, on the other hand, not only promises success for the dissertation work (as each and every step has been meticulously planned beforehand), but also impresses your guide and subsequently the dissertation evaluator about your potential as a researcher.

Note : The research proposal should be written in concise sentences, in future tense, because it pertains to the work you intend to do.

The example presented herewith will help you understand the concept better.

Example: The present study is designed to assess the impact of XYZ on ABC. To do so we shall analyze XXX by developing ZZZ. Study will be carried out in SSS. FFF subjects will participate in the study and the study duration will be MMM. Questionnaires would be developed and field-tested etc.

Now based on the information presented so far, get down to preparing the research proposal (in consultation with the counsellor/guide/supervisor allotted to you by the programme incharge of the programme study centre where you are attached). *You should have a clear idea of the primary research you would conduct – and the proposed study needs to be clearly explicated.*

Please limit the size of the proposal to 6-10 pages. Prepare your research proposal in consultation with your counsellor/guide. Once the proposal is finalized, get the project proposal approved by the counsellor and start work on your dissertation research work. **Attach your approved research proposal or synopsis along with duly filled in Annexure II (Certificate of Approval of Research Proposal), in original, in your dissertation submission.**

For your dissertation, you will complete a series of activities as specified in the proposal, that will culminate in a 100 - 150 page dissertation report, typewritten in English, **complete with the requisite certificates (given at Annexures I, II, and III of this Manual), and other appendices and enclosures.** There would also be a formal oral presentation (viva-voce). We will learn more about the viva-voce in a little while from now. But first, let us review the components of the dissertation report.



SECTION - 7

**THE DISSERTATION REPORT:
BASIC COMPONENTS**

SECTION 7

THE DISSERTATION REPORT: BASIC COMPONENTS

Reporting is an important component of the investigative process. The research report i.e. the dissertation is a document that you shall prepare at the end of your research work, to communicate the findings and other features of your research work. It is a detailed, accurate, and cohesive account of the investigation (undertaken by you) accomplished to solve a problem and reveal new knowledge. It is written in the *past tense* (unlike the proposal which was in future tense) and indicates what you have accomplished in executing the investigation. Your report must be logically organized, complete, and objectively written. Present the sequence of ideas and concepts in a clear, straightforward, and orderly manner.

Very often reports are organized into different sections as Introduction, Method/Methodology, Results and Discussion and this format is referred to as the IMRaD system (or IMRaD); the acronym of these four sections. Research reports and dissertations thus have basic certain components. These components are highlighted in the Box below. Prepare your report based on these components. The Sections listed in the Box may also be called ‘Chapters’.

Dissertation Format

Box 3 Dissertation Format

The structure of the dissertation report includes:

Title (on the first page along with your name and academic affiliation)

Certificates (Duly filled-in Annexures I, II (along with the approved synopsis) and III as provided at the end of this Manual)

Acknowledgements

List of Contents

Lists of Tables and Figures

Abbreviations Used

Abstract

Section 1 : Introduction

Section 2 : Review of Literature

Section 3 : Method/Methodology

Section 4 : Results and Discussion

Section 5 : Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Section 6 : Bibliography/References

Appendices (including tools used in the Research Study)

Let us review these components in some detail; especially how they can be effectively written while you prepare your dissertation.

Title

As already mentioned earlier in the project proposal stage, the title of the dissertation should be clear, concise and adequately descriptive of the content of the report. The title of the dissertation report should be the same as the title stated in the research proposal/synopsis that you got approved by your research Guide/Supervisor.

Abstract

An abstract is a short (*one page or less*) summary of the research work undertaken by you including the research question, the rationale for the study, the hypothesis (if any), the method and the findings and major conclusions drawn from the research undertaken.

It is important to recognize that an abstract intends to help the reader understand the content of a report without having to read through the entire body of the report.

While writing the abstract, ensure that your abstract answers three basic questions. These are:

- 1) *What is the question being researched;* what is the research about? (Include general problem, objective and scope of the study).
- 2) *What research method did you use?* (Description of the method may include the design, procedures, the sample and any instruments that you used).
- 3) *What did you find?* (Summary of the results, only the most significant results).

An abstract usually also contains key words related to the research study. But make sure it does not contain any reference to bibliography, tables, figures etc.

Remember, the abstract should be written in short and concise sentences, in past tense, and in passive voice, as far as possible, because it pertains to a work done.

Do not confuse the term ‘abstract’ with the term ‘summary’. Summary is given at the end, after the discussion as explained later in this section. It is much more elaborate than an abstract, and it would have to be in numbered paragraphs, sections etc. running into more than one page. We will learn more about this later in this document.

Next, let us review points to consider while writing the introduction.

Introduction

The ‘Introduction’ introduces the specific subject of research to the reader. The main purpose of the introduction is to provide the necessary background or context for your research problem and justify the choice of the topic and to state clearly the objectives or hypotheses of the investigation undertaken by you.

To begin with, you should present a relatively broad background/idea of the topic of your investigation. In this process, information from pertinent primary literature and other technical sources may be cited (in-text citation). A brief review, limited to influential studies and findings that relate directly to your study, may be included, to provide some sort of orientation to the reader (who may or may not be familiar) to what is known and what is not, related to the topic of investigation, thus identifying the general ‘gap’ in the literature.

Having presented the broad background, next the introduction should focus or narrow down to the specific problem that is being investigated. With the help of suitable references, citation from primary literature, the need for studying, investigating and solving the specific problem should be justifiably presented. Highlight the significance and rationale of your research study.

Finally, the *general and specific objectives* or hypotheses of your investigation and the material of investigation should be stated clearly but briefly. *Research objective(s)* is a clear statement of the specific purpose of the study, which identifies the key study variables and their possible interrelationships and the nature of the population of interest. Research objectives/questions can be *general* in nature, and/or *specific* enough to narrow down the focus of your research as we have already highlighted earlier in the proposal stage. The objectives/hypotheses framed earlier at the proposal stage should be repeated in the finished dissertation in the 'Introduction' chapter or section. Set the *delimitation* or boundaries of your research in order to provide a clear focus.

Contents of 'Introduction' Chapter

Background and rationale of the study
Statement of the problem
Research questions
Objectives of the study
Hypotheses of the study, if required
Operational definitions of the terms
Delimitations of the study

After the introduction, including the objectives of the research study, we start with the review of literature. The next section focuses on how to present a good literature review.

Review of Literature

As already mentioned earlier (under the research proposal guidelines), the literature review is a critical summary of research on the topic of interest, generally prepared by you to put your research problem in context or to identify gaps and weaknesses in prior studies so as to justify your investigation. It involves a systematic survey of publications relevant to the selected field of study.

As you may have realized by now, the process of literature review begins even before the stage of defining the research topic or problem and in fact continues till the submission/publication of the report. While writing your proposal, you would have already carried out an extensive and thorough examination of literature i.e. the research papers and articles in journal(s), textbooks, monographs, bulletins and other writings, which deal with your specific research area. This review would have helped you then, and will help you now in presenting in the report a summative review/critique of research studies pertaining to your research problem, with respect to::

- level of research, knowledge that has been developed in the field of study; thus presenting what is already known and what remains to be investigated in the specific area of research,
- understanding and stating the basic definitions, concepts, principles, variables, etc.,
- identifying and adopting the research design, analytical methods, tools, techniques, instruments etc. for the research, and
- orientation to the limitations, problems, difficulties encountered by other researchers, and thus avoiding the obstacles and ensuring efficient utilization of resources.

There are different ways to organize your literature review. Make use of subheadings to bring order and coherence to your review. For example, having established the importance of your research area and its current state of development, you may devote several subsections on related issues, concepts etc.

The review of literature should be quite extensive, exhaustive and detailed. Remember, the choice of research topic, research objectives/questions and methodology should spring forth from your literature review. It should at the same time be analytical and critical in nature. Further, the literature review will be useful, while discussing your results and drawing valid inferences from your results.

Next, let us understand the methodology section.

Method/Methodology

This section is primarily designed to show that based on your knowledge of the literature you had a relevant and realistic approach to meeting your objectives, and exploring and testing your working hypotheses / propositions.

Put in simple words, the method/methodology section in your report will deal with defining and detailing the material, methods, procedures, techniques, instruments etc. used to carry out the study. The purpose of this section is to provide necessary details related to the process involved, describe the activities and your work plan during the research. This would help any reviewer, examiner to ascertain that your methodology was appropriate and applicable and at the same time provide accurate information to any other researcher interested in replicating your study.

In our discussion above, we have mentioned about procedures, techniques, methods, instruments etc. to be detailed in the Method section. What do these terms indicate? Let us find out.

Method is a systematic means and orderly arrangement of parts or steps to accomplish an end. It explains how the procedure(s) is to be carried out.

A *procedure* is a way of doing a thing i.e. it is a set of established norms or ways for conducting research. In other words, it is a particular course of action intended to achieve a result.

A *technique* is a well-defined procedure used to accomplish a specific activity or task. More than one technique may be available for accomplishing a specific activity or task. Selection of the technique should be based on research approach, available tools, etc.

Protocol refers to the step-by-step course of action planned for each technique, experiment etc.

Research *design* is a plan of what data to gather, from whom, how and when to collect the data, and how to analyze the data obtained.

An *instrument* here refers to selected measuring or observing devices such as tools, scales, questionnaires etc. used for data collection.

Your method section should be described in detail. The following are some general suggestions for writing the method section:

- 1) Normally it is written in past tense (i.e. the study *was carried out* at ABS.....), since it is recording of the work already done,
- 2) This section or chapter may be titled as ‘Method’ or ‘Methodology’, and both materials and methods are described herein. However, several headings, sub-sections may be created within this section/chapter.
- 3) Research *design* should clearly describe the type of study design (i.e. descriptive or observational or experimental or intervention study etc.) used, what kind of data was gathered, from whom, how and when. *Graphical representation* of the study design would add to the presentation.
- 4) Justify the methods chosen. Mention any problem that was encountered in obtaining data and how you overcame them. Present the different approaches to data collection e.g. face to face, small group (focus group), post, telephone, e-mail, observational etc. you adopted.
- 5) In dissertations involving experimental design and use of control group, specify how you controlled the settings and explain how the research study was conducted and control and experimental groups compared.
- 6) While describing the *technique(s)*, if a standard protocol and tools already standardised and/or published were used, then you should cite appropriate references.
- 7) Any technique that was developed and standardized by you or a standard technique, which was modified or adapted for use in your study, should be described with sufficient details.
- 8) While describing the *instruments*, detailed procedure related to identification, development and use of the tools, questionnaires, intervention strategy etc. should be provided. Preliminary work (such as any pilot studies, pre-testing etc.) and activities related to standardizing/finalizing/validating the instrument (such as post-test, validating studies etc.), if carried out should be described in detail. The report could include the graphical/pictorial representation of the instrument/tool. If an intervention package was developed, then the process should be explained. A sample of these instruments (such as questionnaires, scales etc.) could be attached in the method section or alternatively in the Appendices at the end of the dissertation report.
- 9) In field-based research studies, it is important to include details regarding the setting of the study. Depiction of the field of study in the form of an appropriate layout plan/map may be considered.
- 10) Subject profile and characteristics (in terms of age, social class, religion, education and other relevant details) should be included. Information related to subjects/participants who took part in the study — how they were recruited, what was the sampling procedure (i.e. simple random, stratified random, cluster sampling etc.), how they were assigned to the study group etc. — need to be clearly spelled out. The statistical formula used for deciding the sample size should also be included.
- 11) Details with respect to *procedure* — How did you carry out the study? What activities were involved? What was the duration of the intervention/experiment etc.? What was the total study duration? — should be elaborated upon in the report.

- 12) Routine methods used for *statistical analysis of data* (e.g. arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA, correlation, multiple regression or any other advance technique etc.) may be mentioned under a separate heading entitled “Statistical Analysis”. If any software package was used for data analysis, e.g. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), etc., it should be cited with appropriate reference.
- 13) *Ethical considerations* linked with the study, if applicable (for example, while working with human subjects, individual and/or parental consent is required), and how they were incorporated in the study needs to be mentioned.

The guidelines presented above were quite exhaustive. Note, good methodology can be described by the “two Cs”: *clear* and *clean*. While writing the method section make sure that your presentation of the methods follows some logical sequence. A good methodology describes clearly and fully (a) the design or strategic plan for making the research question operational; (b) the sample and sampling method; (c) the instruments and/or materials, as appropriate, (d) the procedures for data collection; and (e) the statistical analysis. Further as a researcher ensure that (a) there is no confounding in the sample variables (e.g., controlling for socioeconomic status, education, age etc.), (b) the sampling technique is appropriate, (c) the instruments and/or materials (if applicable) are reliable and valid, and (d) the statistical procedures are sophisticated enough to examine the data and are appropriately applied.

Methodology of the Study
Research design
Population of the study
Sample of the study
Tools and techniques used for data collection
Procedure of data collection
Procedure of data analysis

The logical sequence followed in the methodology must be consistent with that followed in the result section of your report. Next, then let us focus on issues to be considered while writing the result section.

Results and Discussion

Results

This section presents the findings of your investigation, possibly using text, tables and figures. Concentrate on selecting and presenting the significant results in a logical and clear way. Include the sample size and resulting sample size after cleaning the data or removing ambiguity in the data. If sample size was substantially different enough to change your probability level, add that information. Include any exploratory research results that you tested as well.

Here are a few general guidelines to guide you while writing the Results:

- 1) Present the findings and results of your investigation with accuracy, brevity and clarity.
- 2) Record the results in past tense (e.g. *XXX participated* in the study and data was collected from *YYY* subjects.....).
- 3) DO NOT present any raw data in this section, but only *processed, summarized, discriminatorily selected data*, in the form of text, tables and figures. For example, do

not include the individual subject responses as obtained in the questionnaire form, but summarize this entire data collected from the group of respondents, and present the same.

- 4) If the data is qualitative (e.g. response of focus group meetings, observational data etc.) they may be presented descriptively with utmost clarity in the text. The text however, may also be used to describe and highlight certain important aspects/data given in the table, figure, but avoid redundancy of results i.e. data shown in tables or figures should not be repeated unnecessarily in the text. To illustrate, the results of statistical analysis of the data may be presented in the tabular form, but we need to give only the summary value and significance in the text.

However, if your study is primarily qualitative in nature, say involving the case study approach, then of course the detailed responses of the individual may need to be presented to make a point.

- 5) The reader often “gets the picture” of a study through tables and figures. The heart of the study is often found in these compact sources, so you should give them special care. Good tables and figures are those that (a) are structured, (b) are clear and stand alone with captions, (c) supplement rather than duplicate information in the text, and (d) the text should highlight the main points of the table.
- 6) Figures refer to graphs, diagrams, charts, illustrations or any other pictorial/graphical representation used to present your data. The best use of Figures is in reporting trend analysis using a line graph (e.g. if were to study the growth pattern of children over time) or comparing the several treatment/intervention levels using bar diagrams, or expressing quantitative data through pie charts etc.
- 7) Construct tables to quickly explain the statistical results you have obtained. Provide all the information necessary for any reader to properly review and evaluate the data in the table. For instance, you must give information related to sample size, clearly define or state the headings/sub-headings for the rows and column (within the table), give the name of the test, level of significance etc. as required.
- 8) All the Tables, Figures should be separately and serially numbered (i.e. Figure 1, Figure 2 ; Table 1, Table 2 etc.) and appropriately cited in the text. They should be numbered and placed (immediately after and as close as possible) in the same sequence in which they are first cited in the text.
- 9) Try not to include the same data in both a Table and a Figure. It is best to present the data in a Table unless there is visual information that can be best represented through a Figure. However, in some cases, if deemed necessary, then the same information may be presented in both Table and Figure.
- 10) Tables and Figures should include the legend (i.e. the caption) that explains the information that is being presented. The title should be clear, concise and self explanatory without requiring the reader to refer to the text. Note, *the table legend appears above it, while the legend for a figure appears below it.*

Do consider these points while writing the Results section.

Next we move to the Discussion section.

Discussion

It is important to convince the reader of the potential impact of your research work. This is done through the discussion section. The discussion is a concise summary of the research questions, methodology, and results. It explains in some detail what it all means from a narrow perspective, it explains how this research has provided new knowledge, if any, or how it has broken new ground or opened new areas of inquiry and/or also how it confines and adds to the established knowledge. This is the one section where it is appropriate to speculate a little and explain your interpretations of the findings.

The discussion section, you will realize, is the most challenging section to write. To write a meaningful discussion, you must be thoroughly familiar with the pertinent literature, up-to-date and have good academic insight and mastery of relevant subject/ topic/concept/idea under investigation.

Let us consider a few guidelines, which will help you write the discussion:

- 1) Begin the discussion section with an overview of the findings, put in more or less plain English and placed within the context of the original problem statement and the expected findings.
- 2) Next, present a consideration of the fine points: puzzling features in your data, inconsistent or unexpected findings, and occasionally mulling about what might have happened if the study had been slightly different. Note, any unexpected results or problems encountered during the research work must find a place in the discussion, because they may be important. Try to provide possible explanations.
- 3) Compare your results and interpretations to other studies citing references from the primary literature (i.e. literature review which you undertook), i.e. show how your data compares or contrasts with the previously published work.
- 4) The Discussion section must try to justify how your results have contributed to the existing knowledge and professional practice. Discuss the theoretical and practical application of the results with some notion of the broader implications of the findings.
- 5) Present the discussion in paragraphs, dealing with different aspects/variables studied. You may use headings for different paragraphs, as applicable. This would be useful to overcome the problem of discontinuity.

The discussion section is followed by the summary and conclusions.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In the 'Summary' and 'Conclusions' sections of your report, interpret, examine, and qualify the results of your investigation and draw inferences from them.

In the Summary section present a summary of the entire paper, written so that it could serve as a stand-alone document. It should be about four or five pages in length.

In the Conclusions section, clearly state the conclusions of the study based on the analysis performed and results achieved. Indicate by the evidence or logical development the extent to which the specified objectives have been accomplished. If the research has been guided by hypotheses, make a statement as to whether the data supported or rejected these hypotheses. Discuss alternative explanations for the findings, if appropriate. *Delineate strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the study.*

Summary and Conclusions

Brief restatement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, delimitations, methodology of the study

Major findings of the study

Implications and conclusions of the study

Strengths and limitations of the study

Suggestions for further research

Recommendations

The Recommendations section is the last section in the report, written in the end of summary and conclusions section/chapter, which should provide some practical recommendations for researchers and scholars, such as recommendations for further research or for change in research methods or theoretical concepts or how the research should be done differently, that spring from your research and results. As appropriate, present recommendations for change in academic practice, professional practice, or organizational procedures, practices, and behaviour.

With the recommendations your report is more or less complete.

But do not forget to include the bibliography, the appendices, the list of tables and the list of figures. The list of Tables and the list of Figures comes in the beginning of the report after the content page and before the abstract, while bibliography and appendices come in the end of the report.

• Bibliography/References

Bibliography is a list of references/publication/citations, usually arranged by author, consulted in the composition of the report. Your bibliography/reference list should appear at the end of your report (after the recommendations section). You would include in the bibliography the alphabetical list of all material i.e. writings/publications/citations used or consulted in preparing your study and the report. Each source you cite in the report (in-text citation) must appear in your reference list/bibliography; likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in your text. Follow the author-date method of *in-text citation*. This means that the author's last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, e.g., (Dua, 1998), and a complete reference should appear in the bibliography at the end of the report. Bibliography/Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the first author of each work.

What is the purpose of giving the bibliography? Some reasons include:

- To provide the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source you cite in the body of the report.
- To acknowledge and give credit to sources of words, ideas, diagrams, illustrations, quotations borrowed, or any materials summarized or paraphrased.
- To show that you are respectfully borrowing other people's ideas, not stealing them, i.e. to prove that you are not plagiarizing.
- To offer additional information to your readers who may wish to further pursue your topic.
- To give readers an opportunity to check out your sources for accuracy. An honest bibliography inspires reader confidence in your writing.

Therefore, there is no doubt that the bibliography is an important component of the dissertation report. Let us then next consider how to present the bibliography. APA (American Psychological Association) system is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. In our programme, we would use APA system.

Following this system, here are some guidelines for you to follow while preparing your bibliography.

The bibliography must include the following:

Author name

Give the last name followed by the initials of the author(s).

For example: Oliver P. A., Martin M., & Jordan, J. G.

Title, sub-title of the material (article, paper, chapter etc.)

- a) ITALICIZE or UNDERLINE the title and subtitle of a book, magazine, journal, periodical, newspaper, or encyclopaedia.
- b) DO NOT UNDERLINE the title and subtitle of an article in a magazine, journal, periodical, newspaper, or encyclopaedia.
- c) CAPITALIZE the first letter of the first word of the title (and first word of the subtitle). Rest of the title/sub-title of the paper or chapter should be in lower case.
- d) For writing the names of journals, you may use the title case. However, use LOWER CASE letters for conjunctions such as *and*, and for prepositions such as *in*, *on*, *of* and *for*; and for articles: *a*, *an*, and *the*, unless they occur at the beginning of the journal title.
- e) Separate the title from its subtitle with a COLON (:), e.g. *Qualitative Research: Impact of focussed group discussion on sexual practices used by today's youth in Rajasthan.*

Place of Publication (for books only)

Use only the name of a city or a town for indicating place of publication of a book. It is not necessary to indicate the place of publication when citing articles from major encyclopaedias, magazines, journals, or newspapers.

Publisher (for books only)

Be sure you write down the name of the Publisher, NOT the Printer.

Date of Publication

- a) For a book, use the *copyright year* as the date of publication,
- b) Use the most recent copyright year if two or more years are listed, e.g., ©1988, 1990, 2005. Use 2005.
- c) If you cannot find a publication date anywhere in the book, use “n.d.” to indicate there is “No Date” listed for this publication.
- d) For a weekly or daily publication use *date, month, and year*, e.g.: Newsweek 16 Oct. 2006.

Page Numbers

- a) Page numbers are not needed for a book, unless the citation comes from an article or chapter in a book that is a collection of works by different authors.

Before we come to the appendices section, let us take a look at some some examples of references as quoted in the text, and given in the bibliography/references section.

Given below are examples of how you would give citations in the running text of the dissertation report, as well as give detailed references in the 'References' Section.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Book

Single Author

Eric, N. (1997). *The public health consequences of disasters*. New York: OUP.

Note: All lines after the first line of each entry in your reference list should be indented one-half inch from the left margin. This is called hanging indentation.

Book

Three or more Authors

Ursano, R. J., McCaughey, B., & Fullerton, C. S. (1994). *Individual and community responses to trauma and disaster: The structure of human chaos*. U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Book

Edited

Vayunandan, E., & D., Mathew. (Eds.). (2003). *Good governance: Initiatives in India*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.

Chapter in Edited Book

Teutsch, S. M. (1994). Considerations in planning a surveillance system. In Teutsch, S., M., & R., E., Churchill. (Eds.). *Principles and practice of public health surveillance* (pp. 18-28). New York: Oxford University Press.

Multi-volume Work

O'Donnell, G., & P., Schmitter. (Eds.). (1986). *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Prospects for democracy* (Vols. 1-4). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

CITATIONS IN TEXT

Direct Quote/Paraphrase

If the author's name occurs naturally in the sentence as: Eric (1997) agrees with.....

If the name does not occur naturally as: Asphyxia due to smoke, pulmonary diseases, and respiratory problems occur in fire (Eric, 1997).

First citation

(Ursano, McCaughey, & Fullerton, 1994)

Subsequent citations

(Ursano et al., 1994)

(Vayunandan & Mathew, 2003)

(Teutsch, 1994, p.18)
in case of direct quote
or (Teutsch, 1994)

(O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986)

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Research Paper in a Journal One or two Authors

Steinglass, P., & Gerrity, E. (1990). Natural disaster and post-traumatic stress disorder: Short-term versus long-term recovery in two disaster-affected communities. *Journal of Applied Soc. Psy.*, 20, 746-765.

Journal Article Three or more Authors

Lillibridge, S. R., Noji, E. K., & Burkle, E. M., Jr. (1993). Disaster assessment: The emergency health evaluation of a population affected by a disaster. *Journal of Disaster Management*, 22. 715-720.

Journal Article Electronic

Mathew, D. (2005). Information technology and public health management of disasters. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*. Retrieved October 20, 2010, from <http://pdm.medicine.wisc.edu>.

Newspaper Article No Author

All set for privately-funded manned space flights. (2003, September 28). *The Hindu*. p.8

Magazine Article

(2005, August 15). Remains of the Bay. *Outlook*

Website

United Nations Development Program (UNDP). (2003). *Human development report*. Retrieved October 20, 2004, from <http://www.undp.org/ghdr2003/>

Citing a work with same last name as another in your References

Sen, Amartya. (1981). *Poverty and famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CITATIONS IN TEXT

Direct Quote/Paraphrase

(Steinglass & Gerrity, 1990)

First citation

(Lillibridge, Noji, & Burkle, 1993)

Subsequent citations

(Lillibridge et al., 1993)

(Mathew, 2003)

("All set", 2003)

(Outlook, 2005).
If there is an author, the name should precede the bracket, e.g. Mathew, D. (2005, —)

(UNDP, 2003)

A. Sen (1981) contends that
Or
A path-breaking study on famines (A. Sen, 1981)

- **List of Appendices**

Appendices include material that does not have to be in the main body of the report, but that nevertheless is significant for an understanding or development of arguments in the report. The appendices themselves appear as the penultimate section of the report, and it is useful to accompany each appendix with a couple of sentences explaining their purpose. Example of material that you should put in the appendix would include a sample of all the questionnaires, tools you developed for the study. Any reference material i.e. standards/charts you used to compare your data may be included here as well.

Show the title of appendices in the order they are first mentioned. The numbering of each appendix is taken from the section in which it is first mentioned. For example, if an appendix is derived from work covered in Section 3.0, the appendix should be numbered 'Appendix 3'. If there are more than one appendices in a particular section, you may number the appendices as 3.1, 3.2 and so on. Else, number the appendices and write the title of appendices in the order they are first mentioned in the report.

Now you have the entire dissertation format spelled out for you. While preparing the manuscript certain other points also need to be considered. These are elaborated next.

Some points that you need to make a note of, are given below:

Points to remember

- ◆ Remember to seek the consent of the respondents in the consent form as per your study. Consent form usage has been extensively done by you in the first year in supervised practicums.
- ◆ You can make a page of Acknowledgements for conveying your thanks to the significant people, participant, libraries, etc. You can also add a page of dedication of your research work.
- ◆ For writing the report, you must follow the following guidelines:
 - Make a chapter plan.
 - The length of each chapter should be judicious and balanced.
 - Each chapter should have a chapter number, chapter title, graphics/illustrations etc. Further, each chapter should be well presented with proper layout.
 - It is not necessary that every chapter should have tables.
 - Choose only the most important areas for presentation in tabular form.
 - Rest of the findings can be given in a narrative form.
- ◆ The Dissertation report submitted to IGNOU will not be returned to you.

SECTION - 8
**PREPARING THE DISSERTATION
MANUSCRIPT**

SECTION 8

PREPARING THE DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPT

Carefully write and prepare your dissertation report. Perhaps the best way to understand how the dissertation should look would be to examine the reports of several dozen dissertations that have already been accepted for a Master's Programme in related areas. Your programme centre library or other University libraries may have a collection of them. This is a good approach to see how an entire dissertation is structured and presented.

Besides the components described in the preceding section, your report would also include some additional information, resources, and matter, which is a basic requirement for dissertation reports. These basic requirements and basic format of dissertation report; which you have also been acquainted with in Section 7, is presented in the following Box:

Dissertation Format

The structure of the dissertation report includes:

Title (on the first page along with your name and academic affiliation)

Certificates (Duly filled-in Annexures I, II (along with the approved synopsis) and III as provided at the end of this Manual)

Acknowledgements

List of Contents

Lists of Tables and Figures

Abbreviations Used

Abstract

Section 1 : Introduction

Section 2 : Review of Literature

Section 3 : Method/Methodology

Section 4 : Results and Discussion

Section 5 : Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Section 6 : Bibliography/References

Appendices (including tools used in the Research Study)

As you would have noticed in the Box above, the report contains the front matter, in the beginning of the Report, which includes the title page, certificates, acknowledgements, list of contents, list of tables, and list of figures in addition to the abstract.

We shall now review these aspects to be included as the front matter of the report.

Title Page

A sample of what the first page i.e. the title page of the dissertation should include is given at *Annexure IV* (Specimen Title Page of Dissertation). Accordingly prepare the document.

Certificates

You must enclose the duly filled in Annexures I, II (along with the approved synopsis), and III provided at the end of this Manual (*viz.* Certificate for Assigning an Approved Guide for Dissertation; Certificate of Approval of Research Proposal; and Certificate of Authenticity) right in the beginning of the Dissertation Report that you submit to IGNOU for evaluation.

While submitting your research work for evaluation, it is important for you to certify that the present piece of work is your original work. The purpose behind this exercise is that you, the researcher, should take the responsibility of defending the content of the report, that you have undertaken under the guidance/supervision of the counsellor/guide assigned by the programme study centre. The supervisor too should authenticate that the work is original and carried out by the researcher under his/her supervision.

The Authenticity Certificate should include the declarations as included in the sample certificate given in *Annexure III* at the end of this Manual.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents given on the contents page contains the numbering and headings of Sections and subsections included in your report together with the relevant (starting) page number, which must be accurate. Use the structure given before each unit in your theory course as a guide. You may also refer to *Annexure V* for a sample of how the table of contents should look like.

Lists of Tables and Figures

The report must include a List of Tables and a List of Figures in the order in which they appear, again with accurate page numbers. The list of tables and figures at the beginning of the report should be prepared in the format given at *Annexures VI and VII* respectively. Make sure you also number each table and figure properly. The number is taken from the section in which the table or figure appears.

If more than one table appears for one concept, distinguish each table from the others by using an alphabetical suffix. To illustrate, if there are three tables to classify growth standards in Section 1.2, this would be distinguished as Table 1.2(a), Table 1.2(b), and Table 1.2(c). The same would also apply to Figures (i.e. diagrams).

A sample of the list of tables and list of figures is given at Annexures 6 and 7 respectively.

Abbreviations Used

A list of abbreviations may be appropriate if the report contains abbreviated terms that the readers may not be familiar with. Present the abbreviations in alphabetical order.

After the abbreviations, the abstract and the introduction would follow. These sections and the remaining sections will be presented in the manner already emphasized earlier. Given next are some guidelines on how to prepare the manuscript. Read these guidelines carefully before preparing the manuscript of the dissertation report.

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

The report should be typed/word processed and presented on *A4 (29 X 20 cm) paper with either one-and-a-half or double spacing between the lines*. The references and appendices can be *single-spaced*. Each page in the main report should be numbered with page numbers at the foot of the page. The dissertation should be around 100-150 pages in length.

You report may be double sided (type on both sides of the paper) — in which case watch the margins. There should be a margin of at least 1.5 inches (4 cm) on the left hand side of the page and top, right and bottom margins should be 1.25 inches (3 cm).

The main text should be in a font size more or less like this: 12 *point Times New Roman* or 11 *point Arial*.

Colour printing may be used for charts, pictures etc, but clarity is more important than colour or fancy graphics.

Once the report is ready, review the dissertation report for *style, spelling, and grammar* before submitting it for evaluation. You are responsible for the accuracy of the finished work, so after it has been completed, you should use the spell-checker to catch any typographical and spelling errors. You should also proofread it. Try reading your masterpiece aloud. Does it make sense; is it clear, concise, accurate?

Certainly these tips would help you in preparing a good report. Finally a word about manuscript binding.

MANUSCRIPT BINDING AND DISTRIBUTION

After the guide/supervisor has approved the final draft of the manuscript, the student will make arrangements, at their own expense, for preparing 3 bound copies of the dissertation. One copy (duly authenticated by the student, counsellor and the programme incharge) will be submitted by the student to the Regional Director of the Regional Centre concerned for the further necessary action.

The second copy should be mailed by the student to the Programme Coordinators at IGNOU Headquarters for records.

The third copy is for the student to keep as a personal copy.

In addition, if so desired by the counsellor/guide, the student may have to prepare a fourth copy for him/her.

The binding has to be hard bound and preferably use blue colour.

You should attach a copy of the approved project proposal and other requisite certificates and annexures while getting the copies bound.

SECTION - 9
DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT

SECTION 9

DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT

The dissertation assessment is planned at two levels - *internal and external assessment*. These two levels of assessment are elaborated herewith.

Internal Assessment

While preparing your dissertation report, you would be guided and supervised by the academic counsellor/supervisor. The internal assessment of the work carried out by you (in terms of preparing the proposal, conducting the research and preparing the report) would thus be the responsibility of the academic counsellor/supervisor allotted to you. This constitutes the *internal assessment*. This internal assessment would carry *40% weightage* (out of 100 marks).

Here are a few guidelines related to proposal submission:

- Submission of the proposal will normally be required by a certain time period/date (as specified by the programme incharge at the programme study centre).
- Proposals should be submitted to the counsellor (with information to the programme incharge) for approval. Only approved proposal should form the basis of your dissertation work.
- It should be noted that a later hand-in date would only be agreed in exceptional circumstances (specified by the programme incharge).

You must submit your finalized dissertation report to your Supervisor for internal assessment, before submitting the same to IGNOU for external assessment.

External Assessment

Once your report is ready and checked by your counsellor for content, accuracy, clarity of presentation, and accomplishments, it would be signed by the counsellor and the programme incharge, authenticating your work (Refer to Annexure III) and evaluated by your Supervisor. You may then submit the dissertation report to the programme incharge Regional Director of the concerned Regional Centre, for further necessary action.

The report would be evaluated by an expert selected from a panel of eminent experts identified by the university (in the relevant area of study) for external evaluation. The external assessment carries 60% weightage (out of 100 marks), which would include a small weightage (20 marks) for *viva voce* (oral defence).

Viva-voce: The Oral Defence

The oral defence is the formal presentation of the dissertation to the external evaluator. The oral defence will be conducted at the programme study centre, the Regional Centre, or any other place specified by the programme incharge and/or the Regional Director, IGNOU. *Viva-voce* would carry roughly 20% weightage (20 marks). During the oral defence, the student will present and discuss the questions that were investigated, the methods in which the questions were examined, and the results, interpretations, and conclusions. The oral defence would be characterized by a question and answer format with inquiries coming from the *evaluator only*. The oral defence will be open to the counsellor (supervising the concerned student), the programme incharge of the programme study centre and the representative from the Regional Centre, IGNOU.

Presentation Notes

You may choose to make a presentation of your dissertation to the evaluator. You may prepare a powerpoint presentation or transparencies related to your dissertation for presentation. Consult your programme study centre incharge in advance to make arrangements for the presentation equipments.

Your powerpoint and/or transparency presentation should be of 12-15 minutes duration maximum and should include the highlights of your research. Most of the presentation should focus on the results and discussion and recommendations, but it is also necessary to set it up with an introduction (brief) and discussion of the literature review (brief), research questions and hypotheses (brief, but thorough) and methodology (brief, but thorough). Make sure you know the material before presenting it and avoid the temptation to simply read the slides as they flash on the screen. Keep the information on the slides understandable and not cluttered.

After the oral defence is completed, the evaluator will ask the student to leave the room so that a brief deliberation may take place involving the counsellor and the programme incharge. If the content of the dissertation and the questions asked during the oral defence are completed to the satisfaction of the evaluator (in the presence of the counsellor, programme incharge and/or representative from the Regional Centre), the evaluator will indicate his/her approval by marking the dissertation and signing the Signature Page of the grade card provided by the University.

If the evaluator finds the research work NOT up to the standard desired, the evaluator may suggest minor/major changes and/or corrections to the dissertation manuscript and also can reject the manuscript. All instructions and advice to the student for subsequent modifications are made through the programme incharge. The dissertation counsellor will have the responsibility to have the student make the suggested changes for the final copy and resubmit the report for re-evaluation.

In case of failed students, a pro-rata fee of Rs. 2500/- by way of a demand draft in favour of IGNOU and payable at the city where the Regional Centre is located should be remitted along with the resubmission of the dissertation report.

If the student is unsuccessful in the dissertation, he or she has to re-do the whole cycle, right from requesting the Programme Incharge for a Guide and re-submitting the research proposal.

CHECKLIST

- The dissertation should be properly typed (preferably computer-typed) in double space, 12 font in A-4 size (29 x 20 cm) paper.
- The final draft should be shown to your supervisor, and approval obtained before binding.
- You must read the typed version and correct the typing errors; page numbers are to be given and relevant illustrations are to be placed in appropriate pages and chapters.
- You must enclose the duly filled-in Annexures I, II (along with the approved synopsis), and III provided at the end of this Manual (*viz.* Certificate for Assigning an Approved Guide for Dissertation; Certificate of Approval of Research Proposal; and Certificate of Authenticity) right in the beginning of the Dissertation Report that you submit to IGNOU for evaluation.
 - Do not forget to enclose a copy of the duly filled-in Annexure 1 whereby you were assigned at approved Guide that enabled you to begin your dissertation work.
 - You should attach a copy of the approved project proposal while getting the copies bound, together with the duly filled-in Certificate of Approval of Research Proposal.
 - For fulfillment of the requirements of the course in hand, a declaration from you that the work is original and has not been submitted to IGNOU or any other university or institution, must also be included in your dissertation, as well as a certificate from your supervisor stating that the dissertation work was done under his/ her supervision and that it is a genuine and original work. The same would be countersigned by the programme incharge.
- The title page of your dissertation report should be as per the format given at Annexure IV.
- Loose and/or spiral binding is not permitted.
- Proper binding is to be done with hard cover page in preferably blue colour.
- Three copies of the dissertation report are to be prepared: One to be submitted for evaluation, one for programme coordinators at IGNOU headquarter for records, and the third copy to be retained by you as your personal copy. One copy for the Guide if so desired by him/her would also need to be prepared.

UNFAIR MEANS

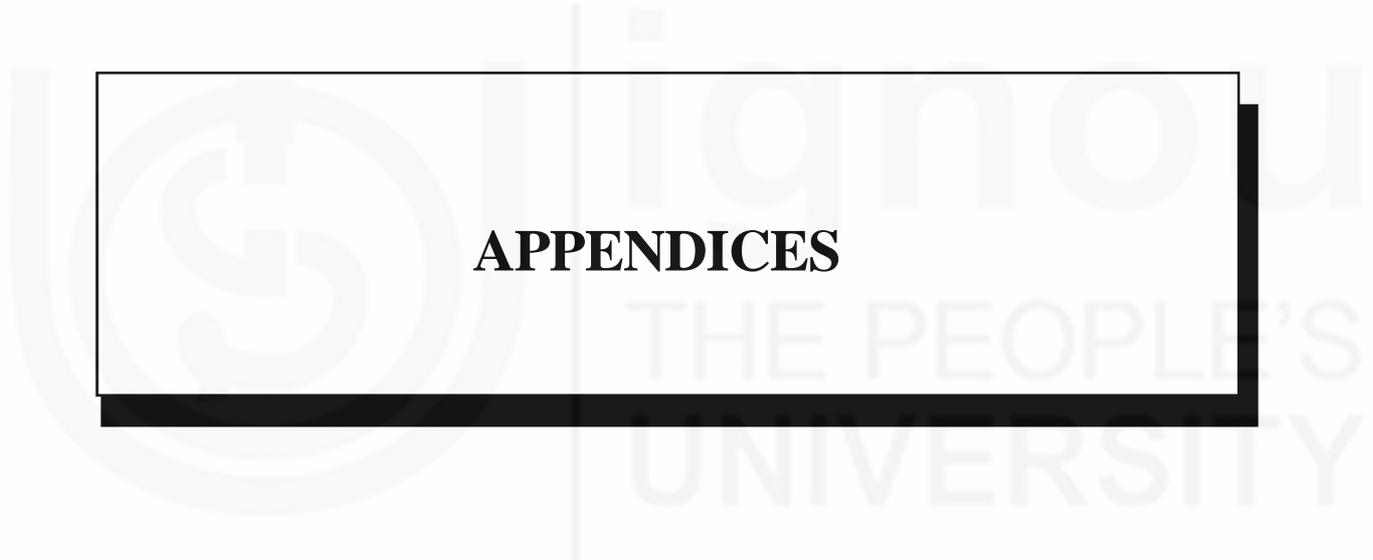
Students shall not use unfair means in connection with the research proposal/ synopsis or the dissertation report. The University will take the unfair means cases of dissertation synopsis and report seriously, and refer such cases to the Examination Discipline Committee of IGNOU for necessary action.

SECTION - 10
REFERENCES

SECTION 10

REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

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**TITLE OF THE
STUDY**

**A Dissertation Submitted
to
Indira Gandhi National Open University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirement
for the Degree of
Master's of Science in Counselling and Family Therapy**

Name of the Researcher/Candidate

Enrolment Number

**(Month and Year of Submission)
National Centre for Disability Studies
Indira Gandhi National Open University
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