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Master One

Research Methodology

Syllabus

Section of English, Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

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Lecture Five:

Theme 3, Sections: 1 to 5

I. Objectives

At the end of the theme, you should be able to:

- explain what the review of literature is;
- identify and describe the objectives and sources of the review of literature;
- discuss what the functions of the review of literature are;
- explain how to conduct the review of literature and present what precautions a researcher should take into consideration in library use; and
- describe how the review of literature should be reported.

II. Content

1. Meaning of Literature Review
2. Need of Review of Literature
3. Objectives of Review of Literature
4. Sources of Review of Literature
5. The Functions of Review of Literature

1. Meaning of Literature Review

The phrase 'review of literature' consists of two words '*review*' and '*literature*'. From the traditional meaning, the word literature is used with reference to the language, e.g. Hindi Literature, English Literature, Sanskrit Literature. It includes a subject content: prose, poetry, dramas, novels, stories, etc. In research methodology, the term literature refers to the knowledge of a particular area of investigation of any discipline which includes theoretical, practical, and its research studies.

The term '*Review*' means to organise the knowledge of the specific area of research to evolve an edifice of knowledge to show that this study would be an addition to this field. The task of review of literature is highly creative and tedious because the research has to synthesise the available knowledge of the field in a unique way to provide the rationale for his/her study (Singh, 2006, p. 35).

The term 'Review of Literature' has been defined in the following ways:

- **According to Good, Barr and Scates**

“The competent physician must keep abreast of the latest discoveries in the field of medicine. Obviously, the careful student of education, the research worker and investigator should be familiar with location and use of sources of educational information”.

- **According to W. R. Borg**

“The literature in any field forms the foundation upon which all future work will be built. If we fail to build the foundation of knowledge provided by the review of literature, our work is likely to be shallow and naive and will often duplicate work that has already been done better by someone else”.

- **According to C. V. Good**

“The keys to the vast storehouse of published literature may open doors to sources of significant problems and explanatory hypotheses and provide helpful orientation for definition of the problem, background for selection of procedures, and comparative data for interpretation of results. In order to be creative and original, one must read extensively and critically as a stimulus to thinking”.

- **According to J. W. Best**

“Practically all human knowledge can be found in books and libraries. Unlike other animals that must start a new with each generation, man builds upon the accumulated and recorded knowledge of the past. His constant adding to the vast store of knowledge makes possible progress in all areas of human endeavour”.

Reviewing the literature has two phases. The first phase includes identifying all the relevant published material in the problem area and reading that part of it with which we are not thoroughly familiar. The second phase of the review of literature involves writing this foundation of ideas into a section of the research report. For the researcher, it establishes the background in the field. For the readers, it provides a summary of thinking and research necessary for them to understand the study (ibid).

2. Need of Review of Literature

The review of literature is essential due to the following:

- One of the early steps in planning a research work is to review a research done previously in the particular area of interest.
- It is very essential for every researcher to be up-to-date in his/her information about the literature related to his/her own problem already done by others.
- It avoids the replication of the study of findings to take an advantage from similar or related literature.
- It provides as source of problem of study.

3. Objectives of Review of Literature

The review of literature serves the following purposes in conducting research work:

- It provides theories, ideas, explanations or hypotheses which may prove useful in the formulation of a new problem.
- It avoids replication when it indicates whether the evidence already available solves the problem adequately without requiring further investigation.
- It provides the sources for hypothesis. The researcher can formulate research hypothesis on the basis of available studies.
- It suggests method, procedure, sources of data appropriate to the solution of the problem.
- The conclusions drawn in the related studies may be significantly compared and maybe used as the subject for the findings of the study.
- Literature in one's area of activity is good avenue towards making oneself.

4. Sources of Literature

There are various sources of literature which may be used for this purpose.

Examples of these are:

- Books and textbooks material;
- Periodicals;
- Abstracts;

- Encyclopaedias;
- Handbooks and Guides;
- Special Dictionaries;
- Dissertations and Theses; and
- The Internet.

5. The Functions of Literature

There are four functions of review of literature:

1. The conceptual frame of reference for the contemplated research.
2. An understanding of the status of research in problem area.
3. Clues to the research approach, method, instrumentation, and data analysis.
4. Probability of success and significance of findings.