



“शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो यह लोकतंत्र की भावना का आधार भी है । जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमाताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है ।”

- इन्दिरा गांधी

“Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.”

- Indira Gandhi



School of Continuing Education

BPRP-004 **Project Work**

PROJECT MANUAL

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Dear Learner,

Welcome to the project work component of the Diploma in Panchayat Level Administration and Development being offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University through the Distance Mode of Education. This project work component is compulsory and carries a credit value of 6 credits. The main objective of this project component is to help you develop basic research skills and to provide you an insight in to issues involved, constraints and problems being encountered in effective implementation of Panchayati Raj system in the country. The project work is also expected to provide you an opportunity to visit panchayats and rural areas and interact with the common people as well as elected members of panchayats as a researcher and have an indepth knowledge of problems and issues involved in materializing democratic decentralization through Panchayati Raj. The Panchayats are also expected to be involved in the planning and implementation of various development programmes. This type of research investigation is also expected to provide you an understanding of the existing conditions in order to make the formulation and implementation of development programmes more purposive and meaningful.

Since there is no separate material given to you as an introduction to the research methodology, the first section of this project manual is aimed at introducing you briefly to the basics of social research to the extent it provides you some idea about the research so as to help you to complete your project assignment. In the second section, we will provide you with some guidelines which will help you to conduct your study and prepare the report. Towards the end we will also provide you a suggestive list of topics to help you to arrive at an appropriate topic for your research investigation.

We hope that you will be able to identify a relevant problem, appropriate for research investigation, study it thoroughly and arrive at some meaningful findings and conclusions, which will hopefully improve your knowledge and understanding and help you perform better.

*(M. Aslam)
Programme Coordinator &
Professor of Rural Development*

May, 2011

1. BASICS OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY¹

Introduction

It is quite possible that many enrolled learners of this Diploma may not have any knowledge or understanding about research or how to undertake it. It is not our intention here to impart knowledge on the whole spectrum involved on the subject of, 'Research Methodology' that could be a separate course as we have under M.A. in Rural Development. Here we intend to give you very brief and basic information about the research to the extent, it is necessary for you to understand and undertake project work. Therefore, the objective of this manual is very limited.

It is essential that learners pursuing study in the field of Panchayat Raj, visit some Panchayats in rural areas observe and interact with the rural people in general and elected members of Panchayats in particular to gain firsthand knowledge about the functioning of Panchayat Raj Institutions and make an in-depth study on any area or issues associated with local governance. In order to make your task of conducting an empirical study an easy one, this project manual will help the learners at various stages.

The main objective is to briefly provide you an understanding and orientation on meaning, various methods and techniques of Social Research and to equip the learners with necessary knowledge and understanding needed to develop research design and undertake studies in rural areas.

WHAT IS RESEARCH?

If you have not undertaken any research so far, you must be curious to know what research is all about. Broadly speaking, research can be viewed as an overall scheme of scientific activities in which scholars engage themselves in order to produce knowledge or to extend/modify/verify existing claims of knowledge or identify knowledge gaps and how they can be narrowed down. The research is also undertaken to provide an insight in to issues involved, constraints and problems being encountered in effective implementation of Panchayati Raj system in the country. The outcome of such research can lead to better and effective planning and implementation of development interventions by the panchayats. The studies on various forms of local governance generally fall under the domain of Social Research. Let us very briefly discuss what Social Research is all about.

SOCIAL RESEARCH

As in natural science, research in social sciences is basically a scientific exercise. Two most important characteristics of social research are that:

- it must be social and
- it must be empirical in nature.

¹ Some portions of this have been borrowed and adapted from, 'Methods in Social Research' of PGDRD programme of SOCE, IGNOU, September, 2005 (Reprint) and also from Project work Handbook – MRDP-001, SOCE, IGNOU.

By social is meant that the phenomenon studied must be somehow related to the group life of individuals, community or functioning of social institutions. For example, research can be undertaken to study problems relating to the family, community, or organizational and institutional aspects of society. Similarly, a research study can be undertaken to study functioning of panchayats as institutions of local governance or participation of women elected members in decision making.

By **empirical** is meant that the investigation must be based on direct or indirect observation of social reality. The information is directly collected from the respondents and then analyzed and inferences drawn. It also implies that any conclusions drawn are based upon hard evidence gathered from information collected from real life experiences or observations. In other words, the findings of research are supported by sufficient evidence.

The Social Research operates at two distinct but interrelated levels – conceptual-theoretical and observational-empirical. At the conceptual-theoretical level research is concerned with abstract statements or generalizations of social reality. These are in the form of concepts, hypotheses, rules, principles, laws, and theories. On the other hand, at the observational-empirical level research is concerned with facts, evidence, and data. In research there is a constant interplay between these two levels. Each level has a bearing on the other. For example, the right type of theoretical constructs or hypothesis facilitate the process of procuring relevant data. Similarly, sound empirical data may help to generate adequate theoretical formulations of social reality.

Social research begins with the selection and formulation of the research problem and ends by drawing some conclusions about the research finding. In between there are a number of other steps involved in research i.e. preparation of research design, data-collection, data processing and data analysis. All steps are important in conducting social research.

RESEARCH DESIGN

All research begins with a question, issue or a problem which warrant to be addressed. This leads to selection of a research problem. Problems initially chosen generally require more precise formulation so as to make them worthy of research. Starting from a general idea one must decide specially what one wants to know; for what purpose one wants to know; how to carry out a particular social investigation and such other questions. Now, from the very beginning a researcher is supposed to make several crucial decisions such as, for instance:

- What entities (i.e. individuals, groups, organization or institutions) are to be studied;
- What should be an adequate theoretical framework of the study;
- What kinds of hypotheses (if any) are relevant and useful;
- What types of data are relevant;
- How and from where to collect the required data;
- What kinds of relationships among different sets of data are to be anticipated.

All such matters relating to research must be decided in advance.

TYPES OF RESEARCH DESIGN

Broadly speaking research studies can be categorized as follows, based on the main purposes for which the research is being conducted:

- **Exploratory studies** whose main aim is to explore a phenomenon, to develop an understanding of the phenomenon so that it helps to formulate a precise research problem for some future study.
- To describe a particular group, community or situation through **descriptive studies** as precisely and completely as possible.
- **Diagnostic studies** which determine the frequency with which some phenomenon occurs and the manner in which phenomenon is associated with some other factors which influence it.
- **Experimental studies** which test a hypothesis so that a causal relationship between variables is revealed.

It is important for the learners of this Diploma Programme to have some basic information about the types of research design so as to understand and decide as to which type of study is being undertaken. The type of study also has direct implications on the type of research methodology to be adopted. It is also necessary for the learners to gain firsthand knowledge about the Panchayati Raj system operating in the countryside by undertaking empirical studies on any area or issues associated with implementation or impact of the democratic decentralization process. This project manual is intended to facilitate learners to undertake these empirical studies.

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The main purpose of this manual is to provide you basic understanding of the term research in general and social research in particular and to facilitate you to acquire necessary basic skills needed to prepare a research design and to undertake a research study. We shall try to equip you with those necessary skills which are needed for you to:

- choose a topic of your interest relating to Panchayat Raj for in depth study;
- develop a project proposal for research;
- identify tools for data collection;
- analyse data collected;
- write down a project report of good quality; and
- make suggestions or recommendations.

Since the whole work is to be carried out as a project, let us now turn to as to what is Project work?

WHAT IS PROJECT WORK?

Project work is an indirect and enabling method, which helps you to acquire fresh information in an organized way regarding a topic. Project work constitutes practical component of this programme. You will gain enough theoretical knowledge inputs by going through various courses of this programme. It is equally important that the learners are exposed to the field situations not only to gain insight in to a rural situation but also to the problems and constraints being encountered in materializing process of democratic decentralization in the country. In the project, a systematic approach is adopted for collecting new facts, tabulating them and then analyzing data and discussing the findings and draw some inferences and conclusions.

WHEN TO UNDERTAKE PROJECT WORK?

You are expected to go through various courses being offered under this Diploma Programme. It is expected that a learner will undertake project work only after gaining necessary basic knowledge about various aspects of local governance through the theoretical component of the programme. Once you acquire necessary knowledge, you may identify an area/problem, which you feel qualifies to be subjected to research investigation. This may lead to identification of a topic for research. You should then try to seek all the possible information on the topic of your interest and if possible make a study of existing literature on the subject. You may also try to discuss this with the Counsellor/Supervisor. This will not only broaden your knowledge base but also help you to prepare a realistic proposal for research investigation. We shall now try to discuss various steps involved in project work.

STEPS INVOLVED FOR CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT WORK

A systematic approach for carrying out project work involves following steps:

1. Selection of topic

The selection of topic is very important. What has been observed is that the learners in general do not take it seriously and in many cases depend on what others chose for them. As a result they face lot of problems which could have been avoided if serious attention would have been paid in selecting the topic. *It is necessary that a student/learner first study theoretical courses to gain sufficient knowledge base. Then a learner should also (if possible) make a preliminary visit to a panchayat or nearby rural area to identify an issue or a problem which can be subjected to research investigation.* Further, the learner is also expected to keep in mind various factors while selecting the topic, which among others include:

- suitability and relevance of the topic;
- learners own interest in the topic selected;
- availability of literature/information on the subject;
- financial feasibility in terms of costs involved;
- feasibility of the data- collection within the limited time-frame available with the learner etc.

In order to choose a relevant and useful topic of your interest, you may also like to browse through the course material. There are several courses and for each course there are several blocks. Within each block you will find several units and each unit has several sub-titles and sub-sub-titles. These titles may also help you in the selection of the topic. We have also listed out some of the broad areas as indicative but not conclusive, in the *part- 3* of this Manual, to facilitate you selecting an appropriate topic for project work. Please remember that selection of topic for your project work is very important and that due consideration and attention should be given to it.

2. Consultation with your supervisor

After selecting the topic of your interest, you should discuss it with your supervisor/guide. The supervisor or guide could be one of your Counsellors. He may help you in understanding the positive and negative aspects pertaining to the investigation concerning your topic and also subsequently help you in preparing project proposal and provide necessary supervision. The Study Centre Coordinator may facilitate identification and your interaction with the supervisor/ counselor from empanelled Counsellors.

3. Project proposal

The next step is to prepare a project proposal. The project proposal should clearly clarify the conceptual framework and should contain a brief statement of the problem, objective, sample size, proposed tools for data collection, tabulation and proposed statistical calculation and analysis and tentative report structure. We are providing you a brief guidelines for preparation of a project proposal in *part-2* of this manual. The project proposal prepared has to be then got approved by the Supervisor and a copy to be submitted to the Regional Centre through your Study Centre.

4. Tools for Data Collection

After the project proposal has been approved by the supervisor, you should start developing tools for data collection. Most research studies collect fresh data from the respondents even though already existing data are utilized for developing the research design or supplementing the data to be collected. For collecting data the tools like questionnaire, interview schedule, interview guide, observation guide and case study formats, as the case may be, have to be prepared. It would be desirable if guidance of the Supervisor is sought in identification of and preparation of appropriate tools. You can then proceed further with finalization of tools and the actual data collection. Some of the common tools for data collection pertaining to social research include:

i) Questionnaire

Questionnaire implies to prepare a set of question, keeping in mind the achievements of objectives of the study in order to seek answers from the sample respondents. As far as possible, questions are to be kept specific. There are normally two types of questions-open ended or close ended. These are also called structured or unstructured. Wherever the question is made structured or close ended, pre-coded set of answers are included. For example if we ask a question like, '*What is your marital Status?*' The structured responses given are as '*unmarried/married/widowed/divorced*' etc, and respondent is asked to indicate or tick which one is applicable to him/her, then it becomes a closed ended or structured question.

Open ended or unstructured questions are flexible and generally designed to gather qualitative information. For example, we may ask a question like , 'What are your views about the functioning of your panchayat? In response to such a question, the respondent is expected to express his/her opinion based on his/her experience.

Adequate number of questions are be included which will enable you achieve the objectives of the study. These questionnaires are then mailed to the respondents or distributed to them for being filled by them without the help of an investigator or researcher. It is self-administered.

However, in the type of studies undertaken in the field of panchayati raj, invariably the respondents identified are not fully literate, therefore instead of a questionnaire, use of interview schedule is suggested and encouraged. Further, at times response to mailed questionnaire has not been found satisfactory for short term studies.

ii) *Interview Schedule*

The use of interview schedule facilitates learners to have direct interaction with the respondents and secondly as stated above, in many cases the respondents may not be literate to be able to answer the questions.

The Interview Schedule refers to a set of questions related to the subject of study, printed or typed in a definite order administered among the respondents by the research investigator in person. It is a device used to collect both qualitative and quantitative information. It is not self administered, instead answers are obtained from the respondents in a face-to-face situation. The interview schedule is prepared keeping in mind the objectives and hypothesis of the study. In the construction of an interview schedule, you may keep following in mind:

- It will be useful, if a tentative list of areas on which questions are to be asked is drawn up first and discussed with the supervisor or any other subject specialist.
- A crucial aspect of schedule relate to the formulation of questions. Apart from socio-economic background (if necessary), the questions should aim at achieving the given objectives of the study.
- It will be useful to limit the questions to most essential, which are extremely important to fulfill the requirements of a study;
- Questions seeking already known or obvious information should be avoided;
- The opening questions should be neutral and such that are able to draw respondent's attention;
- There should be a logical sequence of themes starting from simpler ones and gradually leading to complex ones.
- In order to enhance the quality of a schedule a 'pretest' should be conducted. It means administering the schedule to a sample respondents. The feedback may help to reformulate or add a question/questions. We will further discuss pretest at a later stage.

iii) Interview Guide

An interview guide contains a set of questions related to the main research problem. All the questions may not have same form. You may also need to collect lot of secondary information, which is normally available with various officials of the concerned departments. Although a mailed questionnaire can be used to collect secondary information from the officials, we encourage use of interview guide for collecting such additional information, general in character, but qualitative in nature from key stake-holders such as government officials, local leaders of Panchayati Raj Institutions, NGO functionaries and others who matter in a village. Usually, interview guide is a set of general questions or points. A series of questions are formulated and asked during the course of interview so as to probe deeply the given social phenomenon. In certain situation a researcher is allowed to re-phase questions, keeping in view the understanding of a particular situation.

iii) Observation Guide

Observation guide is also for helping the investigator to keep in mind certain important points. This will help in observing some real-life situations and events from the place of data collection. This instrument is never final but keeps building up as the research progresses.

iv) Case study guide

In case you are interested to supplement your study by a specific case study of an individual or institution/ agency, which you feel will further strengthen your findings, you may have to plan in advance and prepare a small guide for the same, which will comprise collecting information about important areas such as information about the individual (personal data), family, finance, social life, specific area of concern etc. background of the institution, its functioning, problems and constraints encountered etc depending upon the nature of case study to be undertaken.

5. PRE-TESTING

Please remember that it will be very useful to pre-test all the tools in the field. The pre-testing exercise to be taken up with a small sample of respondents help you in eliminating irrelevant questions and also in adding a few questions based on your actual experience in the field. The pre-testing may be done in the same geographical area. You may choose about 5 to 10 percent of the sample for pre-testing. This will help you in making your tools of data collection more relevant and accurate. After the pre-testing of the tools, you can finalize the interview schedule/questionnaire as the case may be and make sufficient number of copies.

6. TIPS FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEW

While administering the interview schedule among the respondents you may follow some of the points mentioned below:

- Establish rapport with the respondents before the interview is held;
- Make a respondent feel comfortable;
- Ask only one question at a time.

- ❑ Repeat a question if you feel that the respondent has not been able to understand;
- ❑ Listen carefully to the respondent's answer and if necessary help the respondent in articulating the answer, but strictly avoid suggesting answers to questions
- ❑ Allow the respondent sufficient time to answer the question, but do not let the interview drag on and on.
- ❑ 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 or sensitive issues during the interview;
- ❑ Try to be as objective as possible in recording responses. At the same time, your attitude should be sympathetic;
- ❑ Do not allow respondents to gather an impression as if you may be using this information against their interest; and
- ❑ In the unstructured interview, you may ask additional questions to follow-up clues or to obtain additional information.

7. DATA COLLECTION

The data collection is a very important component of your field work part of the project work. Before you embark on field work, it will be advisable to establish contacts with your field, if you have not done so during pre-testing. Other than filling your interview schedules, you may also be required to take extensive notes and observe many other things. For all this, you will be required to develop rapport with your respondents so as to get frank and reliable responses.

You may be required to collect data and/or information not only from the general masses, or respondents but also from officials and local leaders, which you may do so, as per the interview guide.

Please remember:

- Establish contact with all those who are expected to extend support including those who will be instrumental to connect you with the sample group. It means that you may have to make a preliminary visit or reach field location a day or two in advance.
- Get to know about important customs and traditions about the field of your study, so that you can keep in mind any sensitivity involved while interacting with the people in general and your sample group in particular.
- Establish rapport with the sample group before you actually introduce interview schedule or interview guide.
- Avoid such questions which touch upon sensitivities involved. Maintain a neutral attitude with respect to some controversial issues during the interview.
- Avoid becoming suspicious by giving an impression that as if you are noting down everything what the respondent is saying. In such a situation try to remember the

questions to be asked by heart and answers given by the respondent and note them on the Interview schedule as soon as your interview is over.

8. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis is a very important part of project work. At times it involves application of number of statistical techniques and methods. However, since we intend to only introduce you to the basics of research, we do not expect advanced statistical analysis for this type of project work, unless you are already familiar with statistics. Some of the major steps involved in the simple analysis of data include:

Scrutiny of the Assembled data

While conducting this preliminary exercise, the researcher should seek answers to the following questions:

- Are the data complete enough to reveal patterns of behavior, sequence and relationships?
- Are the data objectively recorded and are they reproducible?
- Are the data susceptible to quantitative treatment?
- Are the data collected with the help of adequate sampling techniques?

Classification of Data

The main value of any classification lies in its potential for grouping together masses of comparable data in to relatively few classes and categories. It should be clearly borne in mind that the aim of classification is to discover such series, sequences and relationships as may throw light on the uniformities in one group of data and on the differences in another.

Coding

Coding is an operation by which numbers or symbols are assigned to all items according to the class or category in which they fall. The nature of coding operations depends mainly on three factors:

- ◆ The number of respondents or sources of data;
- ◆ The number of questions asked; and
- ◆ The number and complexity of statistical operations planned for the study.

Depending upon the nature of the study, coding can be done either at the stage of finalizing the schedule, or at the data collection stage.

Tabulation

After having completed the process of classification and coding, the next step involved in the analysis is the tabulation of data. The essential operation in tabulation is counting so as to determine the number of cases that fall in various categories. Tabulation can be done either by hand or by machine depending upon the quantity of data involved.

Data Analysis

The data analysis depends upon what researcher wants to know. In case you are interested to know causal relationship between independent and dependent variables, the foremost requirement would be to demonstrate that both variables are associated. Here comes the role of statistics to help us summarize the data and reveal the extent to which one may generalize beyond the data at hand. In the type of studies that the learners will be getting involved, we may not need advance statistical techniques for analysis. Therefore, the data collected may be transferred in to a sheet and subject to simple statistical analysis. In number of cases even calculating percentage should be enough to draw conclusions and inferences. To create percentage distribution, you divide the number of cases in each category by the total number of cases and multiply by 100. You can then draw the inferences. The personal notes, observations collected during the field visits and case studies prepared (if any) can be used as supporting evidence in the Report.

9. REPORT WRITING

Finally, the analysis of the data, inferences drawn from the analysis and conclusions arrived at have to be shaped in a report. The report is a factual presentation of all that a project has passed through. In general a project report could consist of the following:

- **An Introduction:** It means introducing the problem, its importance and need to undertake the study.
- **Review of literature:** It involves a summary of review of such literature which might have helped you in the identification of knowledge gap, which was then subjected to study under the project.
- **Methodology:** It may comprise a research design including objectives, hypothesis(if any), type of research, what type of tools were used for data collection, data analysis, how data was interpreted and limitations of the study.
- **Study Area:** An account of study area including a brief description of the say state, district and block or whatever the study area may be and its characteristics to the extent they are relevant to the study.
- **Study report:** It comprises presentation of the entire data collected in tabular form and each table described and subsequently analysis and interpretation of data.
- **Conclusions & Recommendations:** This is the final chapter and it provides a description of the conclusions arrived at and the recommendations/suggestions made for overcoming problematic situation.

10. REPORT SUBMISSION

Once the report is ready it has to be submitted for evaluation to the University as per laid down procedure as given below You have spent time, effort and expertise in developing this document. You could even later make use of it for other academic purposes or even publish it in a journal.

Please remember:

- The draft final report should be shown to your Supervisor. If there are any suggestions, they should be carried out and the final report should be typed in, 12 font in A-4 size (29 20 cm) paper.
- Before the report is finalized please read the typed version and correct the typing errors and check all the necessary details including illustrations (if any) ; page numbers and tables.
- Attach a declaration from you with the report that the work is original and has not been submitted to IGNOU or any other university or institution earlier.
- Attach a certificate from your Supervisor stating that the project work was done under his/her supervision and that it is a genuine and original work.
- The cover and first page should have your name, enrollment number, name of the supervisor etc.
- Proper binding is to be done preferably hard cover page.
- Two copies of the project report are to be prepared: one for IGNOU and the other to be retained by you as your personal copy.
- A copy to be submitted to IGNOU should be mailed by registered post or submitted by hand to: **The Registrar, SED Division, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi – 11068.**

2. GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF A PROJECT PROPOSAL

The project proposal may be prepared after discussing the same with your supervisor. The following steps are provided to you for preparing the project proposal.

1. Project Title

The title of the project means topic of research. It should clearly specify the type and nature of the project. It should be clear, brief and specific. It is suggested that the topic should be related to your field of work. As stated in chapter-I above the learner is expected to keep in mind various factors while selecting the topic, which among others include: suitability and relevance of the topic; learner's own interest in the topic selected; availability of literature/information on the subject; financial feasibility in terms of costs involved; feasibility of the data-collection within the limited time-frame available with the learner etc.

2. Introduction & Statement of the Problem

In the introduction, an applicant is expected to state the problem(s) as simply as one can and then discuss the importance of the topic particularly as to why the topic is important? The introduction should be interesting and make a strong case for the topic to be subjected to research investigation. In other words, it may briefly contain an analysis and relevance of the problem, what is a rationale for carrying out the study etc. A brief review of the existing literature on the subject will give you an added advantage.

3. Objectives

The determination of study objectives should receive a careful consideration after the statement of the problem and they have to be linked appropriately to the proposed area of study. It is important that objectives are clear and precise, because they have direct implications on the outcome of the study. Usually a research proposal contains three to four objectives. These objectives can be given in a sequential form, clearly stated without any ambiguity. Such objectives will thus spell out the scope of the study.

4. Hypothesis

Hypothesis is the probable answer to the problem you have undertaken. But not all studies involve testing of hypothesis (mostly experiment based studies have hypothesis). You can discuss with your supervisor as to the type of study you want to undertake and whether there is a need to have a hypothesis.

5. Universe of the Study

If the project involves field work you should define the universes of the study. Universe is defined as the entire area of population taken for particular study. This will depend on the geographical limits of the study and unit of the study. For instance, if you are studying the characteristics of households in a village, then all the households will comprise the universe of the study. You will draw the sample from the universe.

6. Sample

If your study proposal is based on field work you will have to choose a sample from the universe. A sample is representative of the whole population. Sampling can be done in

many ways such as random sampling, cluster sampling, purposive sampling or stratified random sampling etc. You may have to describe the sample size estimation and techniques to be used for the sampling and rationale for selecting the required number of subjects. To know more about the different types of sampling, please refer to any standard book on statistics or consult an expert on the subject. Please remember that sample has to be statistically relevant.

7. Tools for Data Collection

You should suggest what kinds of tools you intend to use for the collection of data from various sources. You may have to choose more than one tool for a particular study since social reality is always complex and multi-faceted. Some information about tools of data collection is given under 'Steps involved for carrying out the project work' under chapter-II above.

8. Data Analysis

The raw data has to be scrutinized and coded and then data analysis can be done, using statistical methods. Please also keep in mind the major steps involved in the analysis of data as given in Chapter-II above. It is desirable that the techniques, which you intend to use are mentioned in the proposal.

9. Chapter Plan

Chapter plan or chapterization will give a tentative plan for writing the report. This exercise will help you in completing your dissertation smoothly and in a systematic way.

For example a chapter plan could provide a very brief intended description under each of the following heads:

- *An Introduction*
- *Review of literature*
- *Methodology*
- *Study Area*
- *Study results and analysis*
- *Conclusions & Recommendations*

10. References

It will be very useful if various references quoted while formulating Study Proposal are listed in a sequential manner with the authors name(s), title of the article, name of the Journal, year, volume and page number.

3. BROAD INDICATIVE AREAS AND TOPICS FOR RESEARCH²

The selection of appropriate topic for your research study is very important. It is not our intention here to suggest a list of topics so that you can choose one of them for your study. Our intention is to help you in choosing an appropriate topic for your research study. In order to facilitate this we are providing a list of broad indicative areas which can serve as an example and may help you in identifying an appropriate area for research investigation. This does not mean that you cannot choose another topic of your interest pertaining to rural setting. Hopefully these broad areas may guide you in selecting a topic relevant to your state, district or block which falls nearer to your place of stay or work. You must discuss your topic and take necessary approval from your guide before going ahead with the collection of data. Your guide will perhaps help you in the preparation of the project proposal as well as in selecting appropriate tools for the collection of data. Kindly ensure that you take prior approval for your proposal. Original copy of the approved proposal must be attached with the thesis before binding it. A very broad indicative areas to facilitate you to identify appropriate topic for your research investigation are as under:

1. A study of adequacy of administrative support system at Gram Panchayat Level.
2. An analysis of the strength and weaknesses of decentralization planning.
3. An analysis of emerging rural power structure with special reference to Panchayati Raj- A Study of two blocks.
4. A critical analysis of 'The Provisions of Panchayats(Extension to the Schedule Areas)Act, 1996.
5. An evaluative study of some selected programmes being implemented by Panchayats in a block.
6. A study of role performance of elected members of a Gram Panchayat.
7. A study of socio-economic background and role performance of Zilla Parishad Members.
8. A study of the role and impact of Television on Panchayati Raj.
9. A Study of the Functional Efficiency of a Gram Sabha.
10. A study on the innovative use of information technology in disseminating information under Panchayati Raj.
11. A study of the social status of rural women under Panchayat Raj in a block.
12. A study of Decentralised Planning and Panchayati Raj in a district perspective.
13. A study of Role of Mass Media in promoting Rural development through Panchayati Raj.

² A tendency to limit your area of research investigation to the suggestive areas may have to be avoided. A learner is expected to chose a topic based on the criteria given and his/her area of interest.

14. Social background and role performance of Sarpanches: A study of a block,
15. A study of State Election Commission's role in bringing transparency in Panchayat elections.
16. Democratic Decentralization and changing role of the Zilla Parishad.
17. Factors inhibiting effective implementation of development programmes implemented through Panchayats- A study of a Block.
18. Impact of Women's reservation in Panchayat Raj – A study of Block.
19. People's Representatives and Bureaucracy: An Interface in Panchayati Raj.
20. Planning at grassroots level – A study of a village Panchayat.
21. Role of Capacity Building in enhancing performance in Panchayats.
22. Role of District Planning Committee in decentralized planning.
23. Socio Political Empowerment of Scheduled Caste through Panchayat Raj.
24. Socio-Political Empowerment of Elected Women Representatives through Panchayati Raj Institutions: A case study of a District/Block.
25. State Finance Commission and devolution of finances – A study of a district.
26. The Role of Panchayats in addressing HIV/AIDS – A case study of a district.
27. The Role of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) towards Rural Health Services: A case study of a District.

For any further clarification please contact:

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We wish you all success in pursuing your Diploma programme in general and your project work in particular and hope that you will enjoy undertaking project work. We look forward to your report and its major findings.

About IGNOU & SOCE

The **Indira Gandhi National Open University**, established by an Act of Parliament in 1985, has emerged as the largest Mega University in the democratic world. The University offers 486 Certificates, Diploma, Degree and Doctoral programmes through its 21 schools of Study, 12 Divisions, 14 Centres, 61 Regional Centres, over 3,000 Study Centres, 67 Partner Institutions spread across 35 countries. Additional help is also sought from about 6,000 experts from conventional universities and other organizations, and about 45,000 part-time academic counselors.

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One of the mandates of the University is to reach out to the disadvantaged by offering programmes in all parts of the country at affordable cost. IGNOU, the National Resource Centre for Open and Distance Learning with international recognition and presence, is expected to provide seamless access to sustainable **and learner centric quality education, skill upgradation and training** to all by using innovative technologies and methodologies and ensuring convergence of existing systems for massive human resource required for **promoting integrated national development** and global understanding.

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