

Lecture Five: Review of Literature

I. Objectives

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

1. explain what the review of literature is;
2. identify and describe the objectives and sources of the review of literature;
3. discuss what the functions of the review of literature are;
4. explain how to conduct the review of literature and present what precautions a researcher should take into consideration in library use; and
5. 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). 20

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;
- The Internet.

4.1 Primary Vs Secondary Sources

Primary Sources: These are immediate, first-hand accounts or original information directly related to your research topic. Examples include diaries, speeches, original manuscripts, articles and photographs. Primary sources provide direct evidence about the people, events, or phenomena being studied. They are essential for making new discoveries, providing credible evidence, and offering authoritative information for your arguments.

Secondary Sources: These sources are one step removed from primary sources and include works that describe, interpret, analyse, or evaluate information from primary sources. Examples of secondary sources are books, documentaries, and critical analyses. Secondary sources add a layer of interpretation and analysis to the information found in primary sources. They are valuable for gaining a comprehensive overview of your topic, understanding how other researchers have approached it, and supporting or contrasting your arguments with existing research

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.

6. How to Conduct the Review of Literature? To conduct the review of literature, the researcher should go through these stages:

Stage 1: Try to gain some impression of what the source is about; what a question or questions the author is trying to answer; how the source is structured, and whether, in fact,

the questions tackled and the answers put forward are relevant to your needs. 22

Stage 2: If you decide that the source is relevant to your research subject, then you must formulate the question or questions you anticipate will be answered in the source. This enables you to locate the required information and will save you time and effort as you cannot afford to go reading aimlessly through the source. At this stage, you must adopt an active and analytical attitude.

Stage 3: After formulating the main question or questions that you anticipate the source will answer, you must review the source to look for answer for your questions. This involves locating the parts of the source where your questions are dealt with. You must then look for the answers or conclusions that the author has drawn, and also at how the author arrived at them.

Stage 4: Supposing that you have extracted the relevant information from the written report, you must now record your data in note form, so that later you can retrieve it and use it easily at the appropriate stage (Walliman, 2001).

7. Some Hints for the Review of Literature Some miscellaneous hints are provided here on how to review the literature. These concern mainly:

- a. To realise that reviewing the literature is essentially the library phase of the project, and so we must become thoroughly conversant not only with the way in which libraries in general function, classify, and catalogue, but also with the way in which the specific library in which we work does these things.
- b. To recognise that there are only two criteria for good bibliographic research; accuracy and consistency. Therefore, from the very beginning of the review of

literature, it is sound practice to begin recording the essential information accurately and exactly in the same way.

- c. To copy direct quotations and note the page number of the book or journal on which it appears because this will be needed in referring to the quotation.

8. Precautions in Library Use The following precautions are to be taken in the use of library for review of literature:

- a. Avoid intellectual dishonesty.
- b. Guard against being conditioned by the view point of an earlier researcher and the temptation of blindly following his/her procedure.
- c. Merely listing of previous studies without reviewing them or giving their characteristics is not enough.
- d. It is always helpful to arrange the previous studies in chronological order so that the growth of the field is clearly known to the researcher as well as to the readers.
- e. A researcher should have a good grasp of library procedures which will help him/her to locate books and references needed by him/her without wasting most of time and energy. This process can be classified into two categories:
 - (a) **Preliminary Reading:** For the bird's eye view of the whole thing.
 - (b) **Critical Thinking:** The references and material which seem useful as a result of preliminary reading are noted down and are read critically and serious evaluation of the available data and information.

9. Reporting Review of Literature Generally, the review of literature is reported in the second chapter of the dissertation. The following procedure should be followed in reporting it:

- a. the research should go through collected research studies of the field;
- b. the researcher should try to relate the collected research studies with his/her own study; and
- c. at the end, the researcher should show that his/her study is a derivation from the other studies. The reporting review of literature makes the research study very specific and up-to date. It is an essential part in writing a dissertation.

Sample of Literature Review

Divorce and Labour Force Participation

A simultaneous rise in divorce rates and female LFP rates occurred during the post-World War II era. As noted by Becker, et al. (1977), one possible explanation for these trends is that wage increases and greater earnings ability among females increased the opportunity costs of being married. In addition, wives working outside the home may invest less in marriage-specific capital than their non-working counterparts, reducing the gains from marriage for both men and women. This interpretation of Figure 1 suggests that the increase in LFP among women was a causal factor that led to the increased divorce rate. However, it is also possible that the causality moves in the other direction. If a woman becomes divorced, she may need to enter the workforce to support herself and her family.

The number of divorced women working would naturally increase as divorce rates increase, thus raising the female LFPR. As more women observe the incidence and impacts of divorce among their mothers and peers, they may adjust their own expectations regarding divorce risk upward, and subsequently increase their own LFP while married to insure financial independence. Becker, et al. (1977, pg. 1181) state, "...the secular growth in wages, which contributed significantly to the growth in the labor force participation of women, especially married women, probably also contributed significantly to the growth in divorce rates. Again causation probably flows both ways: divorced women (and women who anticipate divorce) have higher wages because they spend more time in the labor force." To examine the relationship empirically, Michael (1985) included lagged divorce rates and lagged LFP rates as independent variables in time-series equations explaining subsequent divorce and LFP rates. He found that lagged divorce rates were positively correlated with subsequent LFP rates, but there was no significant relationship between lagged LFP rates and subsequent divorce rates. Johnson and Skinner (1986) analyzed data from the Michigan Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), which allowed them to estimate predicted divorce probabilities based on actual divorce. They then used this predicted probability of divorce and actual divorce in estimates of female LFP, and though both variables had positive coefficients, they were statistically insignificant.

Green and Quester (1982) utilized U.S. Census' Survey of Economic Opportunity data to generate a predicted divorce probability based on the demographic characteristics of married women. They found married women's labor supply increases with divorce risk. In addition, although it is often hypothesized that working could increase marital instability for married women, this relationship was found to be statistically insignificant in both papers (Becker, et al. 1977). Haurin (1989) used a dynamic model to

estimate the labor market reactions of women who experience a deviation in husband's actual work hours from the expected amount of work hours, as would occur when a husband loses his job, falls ill, passes away, or when a couple separates. He concluded that there is a significant increase in a woman's LFP following a divorce or separation. He also confirmed Johnson and Skinner's (1986) finding that increases in the likelihood of divorce lead to increases in married women's labor force activity.

More recent studies on divorce suggest that divorce risk may not be as influential on female labor supply as the earlier studies suggested. Sen (2000) compared responses to divorce risk among 1944-1954 and 1957-1964 birth-cohorts using sub-samples from the National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS). The panel structure of this data allowed Sen to proxy current divorce risk using actual divorce in the future, which was then included in an LFP regression. Age at the time of marriage was also used in the LFP estimation as an instrument for divorce risk because research suggests that divorce risk decreases with age at the time of marriage. The results indicated that the impact of divorce risk on labor supply is significantly smaller for the younger cohort than the older group. Though divorce had a positive effect on both cohorts by each measure, divorce risk had a substantial impact on LFP for the older cohort while having a small (yet still significant) effect on the young cohort. Because having a female child is associated with higher divorce risk, Bedard and Deschenes (2003) used sex of first born child as an instrumental variable for divorce risk when testing for labor market outcomes of divorce.

Though the estimates of person-adjusted household income without this variable indicated that the economic well-being of divorced women is lower than married women's economic well-being, the instrumental variable results refute this. They found that ever-divorced mothers have higher levels of income than neverdivorced mothers and they concluded that divorce does not affect the decision to participate in the labor force, but does increase the hours and weeks worked by mothers. As noted in the introduction, the potential endogeneity of using actual divorce or divorce rates to measure divorce risk makes research based on these variables somewhat suspect. In response, researchers have used exogenous changes in divorce law to examine the relationships between divorce and female LFP.

Johnson and Skinner (1986) included residence in a state with no-fault divorce legislation in their predicted labor supply equations. They concluded that living in a state with a no-fault divorce law has a negative impact on women's labor supply. However, Johnson and Skinner's (1986) analysis used PSID data from 1972, when only a few states had changed their divorce laws to no-fault; this created a small comparison group and a limited amount of time for the laws' effects to occur. Alternatively, Peters (1986), using 1979 CPS data, found a higher probability of women participating in the labor force in no-fault states. Parkman (1992) also used the 1979 CPS and a similar methodology to Peters (1986) to estimate the effect

of no-fault divorce legislation on married women's labor supply. Consistent with Peters (1986), he also found about 2 percent higher rates of married women's LFP in no-fault states.

However, he attributed this difference to lower compensation for women's marriage-specific investments in states with no-fault divorce law. In particular, he used differences in property division laws to illustrate that married women's LFP is greater in states with no-fault divorce because at the time of divorce, women's human capital losses from not engaging in market work are compensated at lower rates than in mutual consent states. In later research using the Time Use Longitudinal Panel Study, 1975-1981, Parkman (1998) again concluded that no-fault divorce laws were associated with a greater number of hours worked among married women. He suggested that women work to protect themselves from the potential costs of divorce. Gray (1998) utilized Census and CPS data, and he tested for the effect of no-fault divorce law in 1980 across states. His results indicated that the probability that a married woman participates in the labor force is 1.6 percent higher in states with no-fault divorce law. He then used data from 1960 to 1980 to measure the change in married women's LFP in states with and without no-fault divorce laws. The results from this analysis found a small and insignificant impact of no-fault divorce law and Gray suggested that without considering the marital property laws of a state, "divorce legislation has no significant impact on married women's increasing labor-force participation rates during the 1970's" (Gray 1998, pg. 634).

Gray (1998) categorized states into three types of property law: common property, community property and equitable distribution. With the enactment of no-fault divorce laws, common property favors the wife in divorce settlements, community property tends to lead to redistribution of assets to the husband, and equitable distribution gives the court discretion on property division and thus does not favor either party. The property laws were accounted for in Gray's (1998) analysis by interacting them with the no-fault variable. Consequently, the results from analyses using the Census, CPS and PSID all indicated that the adoption of a no-fault divorce law in a common property states is associated with decreases in married women's LFP. In addition, married women in states with community property laws had significant increases in LFP after no-fault legislation was enacted. Chiappori, et al. (2002) used PSID data from 1988 to test the effect of divorce and property legislation on married women's labor supply.

They created a "divorce index" comprised of four attributes associated with the favorability of each state's divorce law towards women: no-fault divorce laws, property division laws, support order enforcement, and the settlement value of educational degrees. This index was then used in a regression of the hours worked by married women. In their analysis, the "divorce index" was negatively correlated with hours worked. In other words, in states where the divorce laws are more favorable toward women, married women are likely to work fewer hours than in states where divorce law is less favorable towards married women. The research presented in this subsection indicates the myriad of findings regarding the relationship

between divorce rates and female LFP. Empirical results consistently show that increases in divorce rates are associated with increases in LFP rates for females. Though a causal relationship between female LFP and divorce is theoretically possible, empirical research has not found strong evidence for this; increases in female LFP do not appear to have led to increases in divorce rates. There has also been evidence suggesting that women's LFP response to divorce risk is not as strong for recent cohorts of women when compared to earlier cohorts.

Research addressing the effect of divorce law changes in the United States on the LFP of married women was also presented in this section. Though Johnson and Skinner's (1986) analysis suggested that no-fault divorce had a negative impact on married women's LFP, later research has consistently found that married women living in states with no-fault divorce laws are more likely to work, but the effects are small. Recent research in this area has also highlighted the complexity of the LFP decision for married women because marital property laws and other legal factors are found to be related to the effects of no-fault divorce laws on women's LFP. Previous research has ignored the possibility that the various laws have differential impacts among married women with and without children. The impact of no-fault divorce law on female LFP could be larger than suggested by previous research because the results reported were the average effect for mothers and non-mothers. By separating married women into mothers and non-mothers, this paper allows for varying impacts of no-fault divorce law on the two groups.